



# CROATIA

Statement by

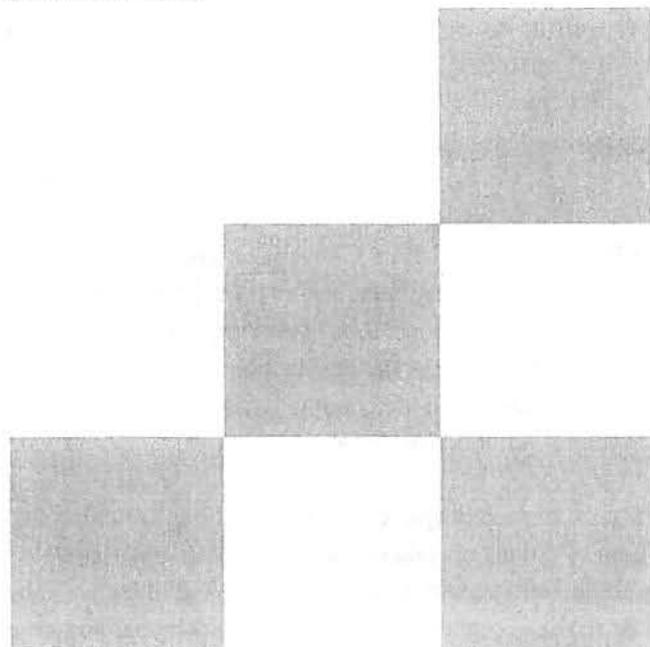
H.E. Ambassador Vladimir Drobnyak  
Permanent Representative of Croatia

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Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons

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Mr. Chair,

Since this is the first time I am taking the floor, allow me to start by congratulating you on your assumption of the chairmanship. You and all the Bureau members can be assured of my delegation's strong support.

Croatia fully aligns itself with the statement by the European Union, and wishes to add the following in its national capacity.

Mr. Chair, issues of disarmament and arms control remain high on Croatia's agenda. Complex realities of international security compel all states to advance even further their efforts to work multilaterally and reaffirm already achieved tangible results of our joint goals.

The dangers of indiscriminate use of certain conventional weapons and their widespread harmful effects on civilian populations as well as on combatants are at the core of the humanitarian objectives of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We remain fully committed to the Convention and its five Protocols. CCW is a valuable multilateral instrument that offers a credible platform to discuss both on-going issues as well as emerging ones. This is especially important against the background of new technologies that are changing the field of conventional disarmament.

Through regularly strengthening the Convention and its Protocols, and by ensuring our associated work is meaningful and with productive outreach, we have the unique opportunity to maintain the CCW as a relevant and robust International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and arms control instrument.

We are deeply concerned about the harm and devastation caused by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effect in civilian populated areas. Armed conflicts in Syria and Yemen, where the use of these weapons continues on a daily basis, only underscore the urgent need for the international community to make every effort to enhance the protection of civilians in conflict and improve compliance with International Humanitarian Law.

Croatia acknowledges and fully shares in this regard concerns voiced by the UN Secretary-General, relevant UN agencies and civil society organizations together with a number of States.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) sets up a strict set of rules for banning these inhumane weapons and has been seen as a crucial contributor to the strengthening of IHL. Croatia has been a steadfast supporter of this life-saving international instrument from its very inception and we remain committed to support the efforts aimed at achieving the goals of the Convention. As a country that still has mine contaminated areas on its territory, Croatia is all too aware of the threat these weapons pose to the everyday livelihoods of people.

That is why we remain deeply concerned by the information that anti-personnel landmines still continue to be used both by States outside of the Convention and non-state actors alike around the world. We strongly condemn these actions, which cause irreparable humanitarian harm. For us, the use of antipersonnel mines is therefore never acceptable; not by anyone under not any circumstances. If use has indeed occurred, the responsible ones must be held accountable according to applicable legislation in force.

Informal discussions on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS) have been taking place within the CCW for the last three years. Based on these discussions we now have a better understanding of lethal autonomous weapons systems; yet many unanswered questions remain, including those that raise fundamental ethical, legal, operational, technical and political concerns. For Croatia, a key question is whether these new technologies would be compliant with the rules of IHL, including those of distinction, proportionality and military necessity, as well as their potential impact on human rights and compliance with International Human Rights Law (IHRL). The principle of “meaningful human control” is of pivotal importance because we believe that the ultimate responsibility should lie in human hands.

Mr. Chair,

Bearing in mind the nature of modern conflicts we are determined in our commitment to strengthen the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to promote its universalization. Universalization of this Convention is essential because we have at hand indiscriminate and unreliable weapons which cause human casualties long after the conflicts end.

With pride and hope we remind that the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions was held last year in Dubrovnik, Croatia, where important documents were adopted. The Dubrovnik Declaration once again underlined the commitment of all States that have joined the Convention to eradicate this inhumane weapon, and the Dubrovnik Action Plan has set concrete actions and measures to achieve this noble goal.

We also warmly welcome the Political Declaration adopted during the 6th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, under the able leadership of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which condemns any use of cluster munitions by any actor and introduces an 'end date' for the fulfilment of obligations under the Convention.

We remain concerned about any instances of use of cluster munitions, particularly having in mind the influx of new reports about continued and increased use of cluster munitions in Syria in recent months (as well as with the earlier reports of use in Libya, Sudan, Ukraine and Yemen). We repeat our call to all States concerned to fully refrain from the use of cluster munitions and to clarify the reported allegations of use of these weapons in an open and transparent manner.

Once again, we call on all States who have not yet joined the Convention to add their voice to the vast number of States that have already recognized the dangers of this weapon, to express their solidarity with the victims and help eradicating this weapon.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.