

Mr Chairman,

It is a pleasure for me to be here on behalf of ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF), an observer to MASG, and to provide you with the information about our activities in 2016.

Hearing your remarks on Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Iraq, Ukraine, ITF welcomes the increasing focus of attention that is devoted to the challenges posed by improvised explosive devices (IEDs). In recent years, IEDs have proven to be a deadlier and more unpredictable threat than traditional mines and other explosive remnants of war. ITF has seen that in Afghanistan and in Libya where we have been present over the last few years, and we are seeing that in Syria and Iraq where we are aiming to assist affected communities. With the rise of non-state actors, we - as a collective of the mine action community - must partner up and direct joint efforts to ensuring that those addressing the IEDs in the field, those who put their lives at risk on a daily basis, are able to tackle these threats as safely and as effectively as possible.

ITF started its work in 1998 in a different environment, though, and with what was then a very specific goal -- to help Bosnia and Herzegovina in clearing landmines and helping victims of landmines. Since then, for more than 18 years, we have been a committed partner to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and we have seen great progress. Unfortunately, with a number of competing challenges facing the mine action world today, we must time and time again emphasize that countries like Bosnia and Herzegovina and their mine-related issues should remain in the focus of attention of international community. In the last two years, we have been successful in raising the interest of donors in finishing the work that was supposed to be finished a long time ago. We hope to continue with the current pace of activities, and assist in making Bosnia and Herzegovina mine-impact free.

At the same time, thanks to donors, ITF has in 2016 been able to enhance its activities in other South East European countries -- Croatia, Serbia and Albania. As a Slovenian institution we are glad to be able to maintain our focus on the region in our proximity, but at the same time share our expertise in other regions that require assistance. We are now present in Central Asia, including Afghanistan, South Caucasus, Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa and the Middle East, and our programs

expand across the entire spectrum of enhancing human security, beyond demining and mine victim assistance.

An example of that is Ukraine, where ITF has recently registered and opened an office that will serve as grounds for more active involvement in mine action in the country. In addition to the good relations with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, ITF is also willing to cooperate with other national and international institutions in the country. With the proposal for capacity building programs supporting the establishment of national structures, ITF would be glad to receive additional financial support for programs and will do its best to start expanding its work in Ukraine next year. We are also expecting the visit of president Porošenko in Ljubljana in November.

Another important task that lies ahead of us all is Colombia. On the basis of experience from 2008/09, when we have successfully been implementing projects in Columbia, ITF was again approached by Colombian authorities, and a Memorandum of Understanding was signed in September. ITF is now ready to start implementing capacity building programmes. We count on the support from partners in the Global Initiative for Demining in Colombia as well as the EU Trust Fund for Colombia and countries that have interest in helping Colombia bilaterally.

I briefly mentioned partnerships and cooperation - this is ITF's leading principle, and we strongly believe it should also be the guiding rule for all of us in the mine action community and our work in all affected countries and regions. Joining our efforts, rather than competing among ourselves, is the key driver of our success and thus a safer and more secure world.

Thank you.