Symposium on Mine Action

CENTRE FOR SECURITY COOPERATION
Cooperative and Security Environment with Focus on
Arms Control Pillar

Symposium on Mine Action

27-30 April 2015, Biograd na Moru,
Republic of Croatia

Organised in cooperation with the Federal Republic of Germany, the Government of the Republic of Croatia - Office for Demining and the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC).

Introduction

With this Symposium, RACVIAC is seizing the opportunity to merge again – in the framework of a much bigger event “Mine Action 2015” – the Workshop on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Ottawa Convention Seminar into one Symposium, supported financially by the Federal Republic of Germany.

The purpose of this Symposium was to provide a forum for discussions on security issues in the context of the Humanitarian Disarmament Treaties while focusing on technologies, both those currently available as well as the new and upcoming ones.

The Symposium provided an opportunity for all those involved or interested in mine action to broaden their contacts with the interested parties from both the private and the public sector, on both the national and the international level, by sharing their experiences and problems, both technological and managerial.

The participants (7) came from the following countries: Albania (2), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (1), Montenegro (2) and Russia (1). They were both senior and junior military officials and civilians dealing with related issues.

The Symposium was conducted with the assistance of three (+1) lecturers: Ms Amelie Chayer (Policy Manager, International Campaign to Ban Landmines / Cluster Munition Coalition), Mr Norman Lizano Ortiz (Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva), Cdr. (GEN) Wolfgang Heuer and Mr Herbert Simon (MoD, DE).

This Symposium as a whole was conducted as a continuation of the International Symposium and the Equipment Exhibition “Mine Action 2015” series, and was the 12th Symposium in the series, dealing with the topic of cluster munitions in particular.
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Ms Amelie Chayer, Policy Manager, International Campaign to Ban Landmines / Cluster Munition Coalition

It was carried out as a combination of lectures and presentations, followed by questions and answers, completed by a short discussion. This Symposium was designed with the goal to share expertise, experience and information. The Symposium also provided a favourable environment and atmosphere for valuable and focused discussions.

Execution

The Symposium began on 29 April 2015 with the welcome address of the Deputy Director of RACVIAC, Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop, followed by the opening remarks and a lecture which was given by LtCol Jörg Rauber, defence attaché of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Republic of Croatia, who proved also to be an excellent moderator.

After the opening presentations, the floor was given to Ms Amelie Chayer as the first presenter.

Ms Chayer gave a brief overview of the activities of the ICBL/CMC itself as well as an introduction to the threats that must be fought against. We can find the problem of the cluster munition on almost every continent, with some examples of highly contaminated areas, like Kosovo or Karabakh and the Western Sahara. He highlighted that the 94% of the victims are civilian casualties. Worldwide, there are 55,000 casualties in total. The 40% of the victims are children (where the status is recorded).


The next presenter, Mr Norman Lizano (Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of the Republic of Costa Rica to the United Nations Office in Geneva) informed the participants about the The Fifth Meeting of States parties to the CCM (Convention on Cluster Munitions) and the Costa Rican presidency. The meeting was held in San Jose, Costa Rica, on 02-05 September 2014.

At the end the floor was given to Cdr. (GEN) Wolfgang Heuer (Federal Office of Bundeswehr Equipment, Information Technology and In-Service Support [BAAINBw], MoD, Federal Republic of
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Germany), with the support of the expert on the issue, Mr Herbert Simon. The title of his presentation was “Cluster Munitions: Stockpile Destruction.”

The audience got an overview of the details regarding the destruction facility, the destruction process, the cluster munitions themselves, the financial side (f. e., the total cost of stockpile destruction of DE cluster munitions was ca. 44M EUR!), the destruction technologies and, last but not least, the risks and lessons learned.

Conclusion

According to the feedback received, the participants were highly satisfied with the execution of the Symposium and found it very interesting and very well organized. They appreciated the idea of merging two activities into one, in the framework of a bigger event (Mine Action 2015), which afforded an opportunity to listen to all lectures, take part in the field demonstration and take a closer look at the demining machines and other equipment.

Thanks to the cooperation between RACVIAC and the co-organisers, high-level lecturers took part in this Symposium. Their professionalism and experience, as well as their presentations, were highly appreciated by all participants.

Most of the participants were members of national authorities dealing with relevant issues in their countries and they considered it valuable for their future work. The participants were highly motivated during the Symposium and they showed deep interest in the subject matter.

This event proved to be a good example of strong cooperation between RACVIAC and the Office for Demining of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and CROMAC. RACVIAC, in cooperation with its partners in this successful event, will continue to promote the issue of the prohibition of mines and cluster munitions with all of the means it has at its disposal.

Compiled by the CSE Pillar
RACVIAC – Centre for Security Cooperation

* Republic of Turkey recognizes the Republic of Macedonia with its constitutional name.