

**Closing keynote by**

**Ms. Selma Gušo, Advocate and Survivor from Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**21st International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers**

**Geneva, 13 – 16 February 2018**

Your excellency, Prince Mired bin Ra'ad. Distinguished delegates, dear colleagues.

Let me first congratulate you all for a successful week of work.

It was my first time to attend this kind of meeting. I am impressed by what I have heard this week, the work that you have done during this week, results achieved, but also challenges that are still ahead of us!

I have few remarks from my point of view.

- According to the landmine and cluster munitions monitor, sixty-one states and areas have an identified threat of landmine contamination and 26 states and three other areas are contaminated by cluster munition remnants. I want you to translate these numbers into human lives that are still living in danger posed by these weapons or number of people that can't access their land due to the contamination. You have been working on this issue for a long time, but as a survivor of a landmine, I would like to ask you to continue your commitment and make landmines and cluster munitions a history!
- In my opening speech, I said that mine free is not a victim free. I will ask you to keep that in mind and not forget the victims. I was highly disappointed learning that only 4% of the global funding for mine action is earmarked for assistance to people like me. This is not enough and should be increased! Assistance to victims is a continuous need and can't stop. Affected states should take even more responsibility, if they haven't already done so. Funding for assistance to victims should continue and should be available to all in need, delivered in a non-discriminatory way. Together with us, you are the ones that need to raise the plight of victims with other actors in other for a, with your line ministries responsible for health, education, labour, social welfare, and with other agencies and organization delivering services that allow for the survival of casualties and the inclusion of survivors and indirect victims.
- I was very happy and moved by the words of my sister from Colombia who shares similar life story as me. I believe it is still important to hear these stories how landmine accident changes lives. Therefore, I would encourage delegates of affected countries to make space for survivors in their delegations, not only to share speeches, but also to participate and contribute to all discussions, especially those related to victim assistance. In the last 20 years, the Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions gave some opportunity for better empowerment to survivors, to take active roles in their societies, planning and monitoring of VA in their respective countries, regional and international events.

- Panel discussion “No women no peace” made me think about the role of women in my country and the discrimination that I see and feel myself, not only in mine action but in daily life. One of the panellist said that “Women should not need to prove that they are better than men – to gain a job in mine action” and I fully agree. That panel demonstrated that women are unfortunately still being excluded at many levels and that it was not enough to have policies – but still have all men in the room deciding the new political dispensation without any women present. Women should actively contribute to all discussions. Not only because we are women, but because we are smart, skilled, capable, competent and therefore we should be equal.

There are still a lot of challenges and work to be done. As much as I am heartbroken to hear that there are still people being injured and killed even today, 20 years after these indiscriminate weapons are legally banned, I am more reassured by this big and committed community that works towards achieving a mine free world.

Thank you all, for taking care of what is the most valuable and sacred, human life and human limbs.

Thank you!