

tenure issues. Data collected centrally can be quite inadequate for identification of dangerous areas, especially considering the way minefields move.

In closing, McGrath noted that while the Treaty calls for reporting and clearance of anti-personnel mines only, exclusion of anti-tank mines and unexploded ordnance is not justified from the broad humanitarian perspective. All must be addressed as threats to human safety.

Mine-Affected State Perspective

Mr. Ranko Vilovic
Head, Department of Peace and Security,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Croatia

Ranko Vilovic of the Croatian Department of Peace and Security stressed that Croatia is very sensitive to the landmines issue and welcomes the Treaty initiative. He especially thanked Canada for its leadership in this process, Austria for drafting the text, Belgium for organizing the Conference in Brussels last June and Norway for hosting the Conference in Oslo in September 1997.

The Convention is especially valuable in its emphasis on the special needs of some countries for technical and financial assistance with mine clearance and rehabilitation for victims, and the obligation of countries which can provide such assistance to do so. Croatia has some three million landmines on its territory, which have so far caused over 700 fatalities and 1500 injuries. With 0.63 mines per inhabitant and 53 mines per square kilometre, Croatia is one of the world's most threatened countries. Vilovic pointed out the clear need for technical and financial assistance beyond that provided by the UN Voluntary Trust Fund. All efforts at assistance are valuable and will be appreciated, he said. It is Croatia's hope that the implementation of this Convention will contribute to faster solutions of problems related to mine clearance.

Although it is clear that much remains to be done, Vilovic concluded, this Treaty stands as a momentous achievement. He stressed Croatia's belief that regional initiatives, designed to include nations who have not yet signed the Treaty, offer the opportunity to build on this achievement and may be the most effective way to proceed.

Depositary Functions

Dr. Palitha T.B. Kohona
Chief, Treaty Section, Office of Legal Affairs,
United Nations

The depositary function for the Treaty is conferred upon the Secretary-General of the United Nations, said Dr. Palitha Kohona.

The UN role requires impartiality and strict adherence to legal requirements. Should a disagreement arise, the matter is brought to the attention of the signatory states and any international organization concerned. The final decision on the issue rests with these parties.

Details of the depositary function are listed in the 1969 Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. These include serving as custodian of the original text of the treaty, receiving signatures and keeping all parties, as well as states entitled to become parties, informed of all actions relating to the treaty.

The signature, ratification and approval of a treaty can be effected only by one of three recognized state authorities: the head of state, the head of government or the foreign minister, unless one of these parties has duly vested another person with "Full Powers".

The UN Secretary-General performs the depositary function for 491 multilateral treaties. He is not obliged to accept the role of depositary for treaties outside the UN ambit, but usually does so where the treaty's object is consistent with that of the United Nations.

Each year, the Secretariat publishes an updated version of the document *Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary General*, containing details relating to the status of agreements on deposit. It includes information on signatures, ratifications, declarations, reservations and objections. This document is available on the Internet (<http://www.un.org/Depts/Treaty>).