

**Remarks by H.E. Dr. Ly Thuch
President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
at the Regional Conference on
Advancing Victim Assistance Implementation and Cooperation
27-29 August 2024, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

- *Honorable Marko Štucin, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs*
- *Your Excellency Tomaž Lovrenčič, Director, International Trust Fund's Enhancing Human Security*
- *Heads, Deputy heads and Representatives of Diplomatic Missions and Government Institutions*
- *Representatives of Mine Action Authorities and Institutions*
- *Representatives of Civil Society Organizations*
- *Esteemed Survivors, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies, and Gentlemen,*

Good Morning – Dobro Jutro

First, on behalf of all delegates, we thank you, Slovenia, for your warm hospitality and the opportunity to explore your breathtaking landscapes, charming towns, and rich cultural heritage.

Your warmth and kindness made our time in your beautiful country truly special.

Excellencies, My Esteemed Friends and Colleagues,

It is with profound humility and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today at this important gathering.

As we come together in this historic moment, we are reminded of the immense power of collective action—how the united will of humanity can overcome even the most devastating consequences of war and conflict.

Today, we are not just here to talk about victim assistance; we are here to recommit ourselves to the promise we made—to uphold the dignity, rights, and future of every mine survivor and victim.

Twenty-five years ago, the world took a decisive step by adopting the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, a treaty born out of a unique partnership between civil society and like-minded governments.

This was not just a legal instrument, but a moral declaration that the world would not stand idly by in the face of suffering.

Since then, we have made significant strides, especially in integrating victim assistance into broader national policies related to health, education, and employment.

We are grateful for Slovenia's engagement to the Convention – not only through the hosting of this regional meeting, but also throughout the years – in 2013, Ambassador Matjaž Kovačič of Slovenia, presided over the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties.

Cambodia, a nation that once bore the heavy burden of landmines, has transformed into a beacon of hope and resilience.

Through the dedicated efforts of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), and the unwavering commitment of our government and international partners, we have made tangible progress.

Thousands of survivors have received medical care, physical rehabilitation, and psychological support, enabling them to rebuild their lives and contribute meaningfully to society.

These achievements are not mere statistics; they are the stories of human triumph over adversity.

Our success would not have been possible without the relentless efforts of key international organizations and stakeholders who have stood by us in this noble cause.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Government of Slovenia and the EU for supporting and hosting this significant conference and to the Convention's Implementation Support Unit (ISU) for their invaluable contributions.

I want to show my appreciation to Slovenia for Chairing the Committee on Victim Assistance along with Burkina Faso, Netherlands and Zambia. I really appreciate all of your hard work. Thanks for doing what you do!

I also wish to acknowledge the tireless work of organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), and the Danish Refugee Council, among many others.

Your dedication—from providing critical medical care and rehabilitation services to advocating for the rights of survivors and promoting their inclusion in society—has made a profound difference in the lives of countless mine victims around the world.

Your commitment is a powerful testament to what we can achieve when we work together.

Excellencies, My Esteemed Friends and Colleagues,

Our achievements have been significant, but they are not enough.

The world is still grappling with the devastating consequences of landmines, and many survivors continue to face barriers to accessing the support they need.

As we look ahead to the new Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan, I urge each of you to not just participate but to lead with vision and compassion.

Our mission today is to explore new frontiers—new methods, new collaborations, and new commitments—to ensure that “no survivor is left behind”.

Let us remember that victim assistance is not a temporary measure; it is a lifelong commitment.

Every survivor’s journey is different, yet they all share the need for sustained support—medical, psychological, social, and economic.

We must think innovatively about how we can empower survivors, particularly in rural and remote areas, ensuring that they have access to the services and opportunities they deserve.

This conference is our chance to lay down the foundations of a future where every victim can live a life of dignity and hope.

Excellencies, My Esteemed Friends and Colleagues,

As we embark on these crucial discussions, let us carry the weight of our shared responsibility.

Let the stories of survivors, who have risen from the ashes of devastation, be our guiding light.

Their resilience is a testament to the indomitable human spirit—a spirit that refuses to be broken, even in the face of unimaginable loss.

We owe it to them, to their families, and to future generations to ensure that our work here today is not just a dialogue but a catalyst for profound, lasting change.

Let this conference mark a turning point—a moment when we, as a global community, reaffirm our commitment to leave no one behind.

Let us build a world where the promise of victim assistance is not a distant hope but a living reality, where the scars of conflict are not just healed but transformed into symbols of strength and renewal.

A world where peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, dignity, and hope for all.

Together, we have the power to shape that world. Let us seize this moment with the urgency it demands, the compassion it inspires, and the resolve it deserves.

Let our legacy be one of action, one of courage, and one of unwavering commitment to the victims we are here to serve.

To all of you, thank you for your dedication to this noble cause. Let us make history here today.

Thank you – *Hvala Lepa*