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Director of the GICHD**

**Opening statement  
3 May 2007**

**Check against delivery**

It is my pleasure to join with you in opening this workshop on the pursuit of the aims of the AP Mine Ban Convention in the Pacific.

The GICHD is an organization that is intergovernmental in character which shares a vision of world free of anti-personnel mines and of the impact of other explosive remnants of war.

Since the AP Mine Ban Convention entered into force in 1999, the GICHD has provided support to it. In 2001, this support was enhanced dramatically when the GICHD acquired a special role in the life the Convention.

In 2001, the GICHD was mandated by the Convention's States Parties to establish the Implementation Support Unit in order to provide you, the States Parties, with the support and assistance you may need in implementing the Convention.

The ISU's mandate states in part that the rationale for the unit is based on the support provided by the ISU being "critical to ensure that all States Parties could continue to have direct responsibility and involvement in the management and direction of the implementation process."

On this basis, the ISU continually examines how it can support implementation and participation of States Parties that have special needs.

A few years ago it became clear to us that one group of States Parties with special needs is small States.

Responding to the needs of small States Parties is important for us in the fulfillment of the ISU's mandate given that one of the chief characteristics of the Convention is its applicability to and relevance for all States.

When the Convention was adopted in 1997, different approaches were available, including provisions which may have favoured, or which may have been perceived to have favoured, relatively more technologically advanced, developed and larger States.

In the end, though, what was adopted was a simple set of comprehensive prohibitions and other provisions that suggest a certain equality of States.

This is consistent with the United Nations Charter, which speaks of certain rights and responsibilities that are held in common by all sovereign States.

Equality, though, does not imply sameness in that the States of the world are obviously vastly different.

Equal but different presents certain dilemmas:

- How can a State with means limited by size comply with its obligations under instruments of international humanitarian law and how can it actively participate in the multilateral implementation processes?
- In addition, given the size of such States and that the immediate impact of anti-personnel mines is, with few exceptions not found within their borders, what reasonable investment should be made in assisting such States in implementing the Convention and participating in the work of it?
- And, what is a reasonable amount of an investment in time and resources that can be expected of small States themselves in terms of Convention implementation?

My hope is that this workshop will help address these questions.

Moreover, my hope is that you, as representatives of States Parties in the Pacific, will feel well served by the Implementation Support Unit as it concerns your particular challenges and interests.

I look forward to a interesting discussion over the next day and a half.