

**Meetings of the Standing Committees of the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction***

Geneva, 21<sup>st</sup> – 25th of May 2012

**Statement by Finland, Monday, 21st May 2012**

Finland has reached the final phase in the process of accession to the Ottawa Convention. After depositing the instrument of accession with the UN Secretary-General on 9 January 2012, the Government of Finland has finalized all the national constitutional measures required for the entry-into-force of the Convention for Finland. That will take place on 1 July 2012.

Finland has always had a responsible mine policy. Our mines were acquired for defensive purposes only and they have been stored in stockpiles that are in the possession of the Finnish Defence Forces. There are no minefields in Finland, we do not produce anti-personnel mines and we have never exported them. We started supporting of humanitarian mine action projects more than twenty years ago, in 1991. And, although we have not been a party to the Ottawa Convention, we have promoted its objectives.

As a member of the Ottawa Convention, Finland will follow this same responsible policy. We will fully comply with the Convention as we have done with all other arms control and disarmament agreements we have joined. We will destroy our anti-personnel mines according to the provisions of the Ottawa Convention and fulfill also all other obligations set to a State Party by the Convention.

Anti-personnel mines cost lives, cause injuries and hinder development around the world long after conflicts have receded. The Ottawa Convention banning their use, stockpiling, production and transfer is a key instrument for addressing these issues and preventing them from reoccurring. Although most countries have now banned anti-personnel mines, the universalisation and implementation of the Ottawa Convention are still as important as they have been during the existence of the Convention. Finland will promote these objectives also in the future.

Finland considers humanitarian mine action as an integral part of early recovery and support to partner countries' longer term rehabilitation and development efforts. Humanitarian mine action plays an important role in the transition from conflict to sustained peace. Integration of mine action in a country's poverty reduction strategy and development plans is a prerequisite for achieving the objectives of the Ottawa Convention.

Since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999, Finland has contributed about sixty million euro to humanitarian mine action. During recent years, the level our funding has been around five million euro annually. We intend to increase mine

action funding, subject to parliamentary approval, so as to reach the level of 6 million euro annually by 2014.

We have supported mine action in several countries, mostly in Africa and Asia, through our partner organizations. Support by Finland is based on a comprehensive approach. For us, mine detection and clearance, assistance for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic integration of mine victims as well as support to mine awareness projects are mutually reinforcing and complementary. As demining will continue to be a challenge both in scale and complexity, we must mobilize new donors to support humanitarian mine action.