



THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION

**Statement by Tim Caughley, Director of Branch, United Nations Office of Disarmament
Affairs, Geneva**

***United Nations Update on its Support for the Implementation and Universalization of the Anti-
Personnel Mine Ban Treaty***

**On behalf of the UN Mine Action Team to the Inter-sessional Meeting of States Parties
23-27 April**

Thank you Chairman and good morning to all distinguished delegates, participants and guests.

Madame President, as you and your colleagues are aware this is a historic year for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. The progress made towards a world free from anti-personnel mines is undeniable, and a testament to what can be achieved through concerted efforts of all - Members States, the United Nations, non-governmental organization and the mine-affected communities.

For our part, the United Nations Mine Action Team, comprised of 14 UN entities, seeks to reduce the humanitarian and socio-economic threats posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), while building national capacity so that UN assistance will no longer be necessary. At this intersessional standing committee meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, we would like to report specifically on our efforts to support the universalization of the Convention and its implementation.

Overview of the General Status of Universalization

Just a few weeks ago on April 4, the world celebrated the second International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, and it was a resounding success. In New York, the main event was a photographic exhibit opened by the Secretary-General who credited the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Treaty for much of the progress toward reducing the number of new casualties and returning previously dangerous land to communities for productive use. In line with Action 1 of the Nairobi Action Plan (NAP), the Secretary-General used the opportunity to encourage all States that have not already done so to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty, as well as to

Protocol V of the CCW and to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which now has 85 signatories and 1 State Party. And more than 30 countries hosted events in observance of the Day: The Mine Action Coordination Centre of South Lebanon hosted a fund-raising dinner, the proceeds from which will assist clearance of cluster munitions. In Jordan, Prince Mired presided over a public event hosted by UNDP and the National Committee for Demining at an archeological site in Mafraq Governorate, where 50,000 people live with the threat of anti-personnel mines. And in Vietnam, UNICEF helped produce programming for national television to raise awareness about landmines and the government's response to the problem. Adherence to the Treaty was also promoted recently in various General Assembly and Security Council resolutions, as well as Secretary-General reports on a range of countries, in furtherance of Actions 5 and 6 of the NAP.

The UN Mine Action Team, in collaboration with the Implementation Support Unit of the Treaty, also organized a half-day treaty workshop in the margins of the 10th International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisors. For national mine action directors and UN advisors from States Parties to the Treaty the workshop focused on a more thorough exchange on the implementation of Article 5 obligations and the process to request an extension. The second group of national mine action directors and UN advisors discussed the provisions of all relevant treaties for landmines and ERW - namely the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the CCW Convention and its Protocol V - as well as obstacles at the national level to joining these instruments.

Resource Mobilization and Other Matters Essential for Achieving the Convention's Aims

Many of our current efforts on resource mobilization are targeted at supporting States to fulfill the Cooperation and Assistance aspects of the Nairobi Action Plan. We believe that to do this, the United Nations and States are going to need to do more with less.

The United Nations Mine Action Team is working to economize through assisting national programmes to take on a new approach to risk management that ensures more efficient use of resources and more land being released to people in less time. We have also instituted a new, cost-effective and efficient web-based method for developing the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects which allows field programmes, including national and international stakeholders, to directly input data on-line, and monitor and update input throughout the year.

Along with economizing, we are also seeking to innovate. In many affected countries, the UN is advising States on mainstreaming mine action in multi-sectoral planning and budgeting to ensure the highest socio-economic impact of mine action activities, in accordance with Action 45 of the NAP. With UN support, mine action has been fully integrated into the Afghan National Development Strategy, the Afghanistan Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the national budget of Afghanistan, creating the opportunity for the Government to contribute to the programme through its finance mechanisms.

And the process of national ownership continues to evolve; UNMAS last year handed over the Mine Action Coordination Centre in Burundi to the Government, which now fully manages the centre with technical advice and support from UNDP. In Yemen, the national mine action programme has reached a stage where UNDP still provides assistance, but the support of a dedicated Mine Action Chief Technical Advisor is no longer required. As you know, the development of national capacity and the integration of mine action into development frameworks are key objectives of the UN Mine Action Strategy for 2006-2010 and, in our view, essential for achieving the aims of the Convention.

Concluding Remarks

Ultimately, mine action is about people, *all* people: men, women, boys and girls, equally. The United Nations Mine Action Team is dedicated to supporting national programmes to advance gender equality through all aspects of mine action under the Treaty. In September 2006, we organized the first regional Gender Equality and Mine Action workshop involving 6 country programmes (Jordan, Yemen, Iraq, occupied Palestinian territory, Sudan and Afghanistan) and we plan to convene a second regional workshop in 2007 to involve more national mine action programmes.

Finally, the United Nations Mine Action Team considers that the success of the Mine Ban Treaty in combating the suffering caused by landmines presents us with a model to adapt to tackle new threats. It is time for the mine action community to address with equal coherency and commitment the horrendous humanitarian and human rights effects, and development challenges, posed by cluster munitions. The Secretary-General has recently again welcomed and encouraged all endeavors to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, the impact of cluster munitions on civilians.

The United Nations Mine Action Team supports the development of effective norms that will complement the Mine Ban Treaty and advance the effort to protect people from the scourge of these weapons. We stand ready to fully assist all efforts to this end.

We conclude by emphasizing the unequivocal support of the United Nations for the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty and for its universalization. The Treaty is the keystone of our collective efforts to rid the world of landmines, and an inspiration for mine action across the globe.

Thank you.