

**Statement of Sayed Aqa, UNDP Mine Action Team Leader, on the Status of UN Support to Stockpile Destruction
Standing Committee on Stockpile Destruction
5 February 2003**

I'd like to take just a few moments to supplement the remarks of other presenters and our colleagues of the European Union to update you on some of UNDP's activities in support of stockpile destruction.

Stockpile destruction is one of the pillars of mine action as defined under the UN policy on mine action. UNDP therefore considers that stockpile destruction should form part of each integrated mine action programme that it supports. In practical terms, this means simply that the UN staff in a mine-affected country stand ready to assist the government to destroy its stockpiles and will make available the expertise of UNDP's technical advisors to assist in this regard. In many countries this can happen almost routinely, as part of the overall mine action strategy. This is particularly true of those with adequate, overall funding and, of course, with smaller stockpiles. In other countries, UNDP has helped to mobilize funds earmarked specifically for this cause. In the past year, for example, Canada has contributed to UNDP stockpile destruction both in Chad and Yemen to assist these countries to meet their obligations under the AP Mine Ban Treaty. In another case — Ukraine — UNDP has worked for over one year to bring government agencies, donors, technical experts, and advocates to the same table in order to form a coalition that will destroy that country's stockpile of PfM mines. Ukraine has stated that PfM mines are an obstacle to its ratification of the AP Mine Ban Treaty. We hope that these collective efforts will soon yield a positive result.

Let me take this opportunity to focus briefly on our efforts regarding destruction of PfM mines.

At practically every intersessional meeting since 2001, UNDP has provided an update on the progress of the PfM destruction project in Ukraine. Members of the Standing Committee know well that the issue is extremely complex and, from the number of updates, it is clear that

progress has been slow. But it has also been methodical and, most of all, I am pleased to report there has indeed been *progress*.

On September 24, 2002, following the last meeting of States Parties here in Geneva, a meeting of the Coordination Committee on Stockpile Destruction (led by Ukraine's State Commission on Defence and Industrial Complex) was held at the United Nations House in Kiev. It included a high-level delegation from the European Commission's headquarters and the new Canadian Ambassador for mine action Mr Ross Hynes. The Coordination Committee considered a report by two technical experts recently deployed by the European Commission and the GICHD, which concluded, among other things, that the destruction of the stockpile probably could be accomplished far less expensively than previously estimated. We hope that this will make Ukraine's and UNDP's task of forming a coalition of prospective donors to support the project far easier.

The technical mission also determined the remaining physical tests that would need to be conducted prior to undertaking large-scale destruction. The technical experts are working closely with Ukrainian scientists to agree on a regimen and timetable for the conduct of these physical trials. The outcome of these physical trials, and indeed of the entire process, will benefit other countries that also possess PFM stockpiles and wish to destroy them.

Because this issue in Ukraine is closely tied to ratification of the AP Mine Ban Treaty, I would like to inform delegates in closing that UNDP is organizing a two-day workshop in Kiev from 11 to 12 February on exactly this question. Representatives from Ukraine or from UNDP can answer questions from interested delegates about this upcoming meeting — we are here until the end of the week.

Mr. Co-Chairs, as more and more countries look toward their respective deadlines to meet their obligations under the AP Mine Ban Treaty, I would like to reiterate that UNDP is ready to assist wherever it has a contribution to make, from the provision of technical expertise to facilitating a mine-affected country's attainment of its goal.

Thank you.