

Intervention by CANADA : Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration. Geneva, Feb. 10, 2004.

1. Thank you Mr. Co-chair. Over the past several years the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance has made great progress in identifying practical means to restore the health and independence of landmine victims. Though the main focus remains meeting the needs of landmine survivors, Canada is extremely pleased that significant attention is also being given to assisting other family members and the communities in which victims reside, who also suffer as a result of these horrible weapons.

The obligations under the Ottawa Convention are clear. Both mine-affected states and states in a position to do so, must work together to meet the needs of mine victims in the immediate and longer terms. This implies significant and dedicated resources for projects and programs appropriately targeted to all who have been affected by landmines.

Canada pledges to continue fulfil its obligations to this end and is currently working towards new agreements for support of landmines victims in **Uganda, Sudan, Senegal, Eritrea, Mozambique, Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Colombia** among others.

Some of these will be supported under Phase II of the dedicated Canadian Landmine Fund, as have our past interventions in this area. However, for the first time ever, several will be funded outside the Landmine Fund as normal development projects being undertaken by various bilateral programs of the Canadian International Development Agency. This is happening as a result of ongoing efforts to mainstream Mine Action into the normal operations of participating Canadian Government departments, and our civil society partners.

2. Canada wishes to take this opportunity to express our deep appreciation of the efforts of mine affected states to develop or strengthen national legislation and policies that will meet the needs of mine victims within the broader context of the fulfillment of the rights of all disabled persons. If external support is required to put such laws and policies in place, Canada would try to be of assistance. These must then become manifest in national and regional strategies, plans and, ultimately, in high-impact programs that are cost-effective and adequately and predictably resourced.

Such efforts, in our view, should be regarded as normal high priority social sector expenditures, and also as extremely valuable ‘productive sector’ investments - - investments in people, in families and indeed in whole communities who must be allowed to remain full contributing members of society.

3. In closing, we wish to convey our gratitude for the excellent work of this Standing Committee, in particular, the consultative process that has identified four key areas respond to the greatest needs of victims and yield the most significant results: *emergency and continuing medical care; physical rehabilitation including the provision of prosthetics; psychological and social support; and full economic reintegration*. Be assured that these will inform and, to a large extent, govern our programming decisions in Victim Assistance.

We look forward to further refining our approach in this and other areas of Mine Action and to continuing to work in partnership with all of you so that we have the greatest collective impact possible.

Thank you.