

**Standing Committees
Geneva, 1 February 2002**

Closing Remarks

by the

Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian
Demining

Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
dear friends,

It is Friday evening. The agenda is exhausted, and the delegates perhaps as well.

One of the roles as the host of the Intersessionals is to turn the light off at the end of the meetings. Involuntarily I referred already to this role during Tuesday's cocktail party.¹

We are looking back to a week of discussions I found intense and inspiring. There were many new ideas I took with me, and I hope you did the same.

467 representatives of governments, international and non-governmental organisations attended the Intersessionals! This is more than what we could expect. If all had been present at one time during the meeting we would have been forced to transmit the proceedings to an adjacent meeting room as well - for which we were prepared. But fortunately we managed to have the meetings without such a transmission.

The number of side meetings in most different formats is increasing as well. I think it is excellent that delegates take by this full advantage of their stay in Geneva.

Let me thank at this point for the kind words many of you addressed to the Geneva Centre. I would like to pass them over to my staff, who worked with vigour and enthusiasm.

¹ There was a breakdown of electricity supply during Ambassador Dahinden's reception on the 29 January

Let me close my remarks with a quotation from the famous Swiss writer - Max Frisch. Frisch worked and lived in the last century in my hometown Zurich. As it is the case with most Swiss writers the main topic of his literature was to criticise Switzerland and its inhabitants.

With a view to his fellow citizen Max Frisch once wrote: you are not a realist by having no ideas.

I think he was right. You are a realist if you change reality. And you need ideas to do so. Take the many ideas that came up during the past week and try to change reality for the better of people affected by landmines.

I hope to see you again in Geneva in May.² Have a safe journey home!

Martin Dahinden

² 27 - 31 May 2002