



THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION

**Standing Committee on General Status and Operation of the Convention
Geneva, 2 and 6 June 2008**

**Intervention on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team
Delivered by (Gustavo Laurie, UNMAS)**

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair,

Mister Co-Chair, the United Nations Mine Action Team, comprised of 14 UN entities, seeks to reduce the humanitarian and socio-economic threat and impact posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), while building the capacity of national mine action institutions so that UN and other international assistance will no longer be necessary. At this standing committee meeting we would like to report specifically on our efforts to support the universalization of the Convention and its implementation. Before doing so, we wish to warmly welcome Iraq, Kuwait and Palau for their recent entry into force of the Treaty.

Overview of the General Status of Universalization

On April 4, the world celebrated the third International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

Twenty-one 21 countries and territories ¹ hosted events in observance of the Day, with press coverage in at least 34 countries. Also the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States (OAS) delivered a message on the celebration of this International Day. These events provided a platform for countries and territories to promote mine action, to underline its humanitarian impact and to encourage governments to integrate mine action into development planning.

In New York, the main event was a photographic exhibit opened by the Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The exhibition highlighted the global impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war, with a particular focus on affected communities in Afghanistan, Angola, *Kosovo*, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lebanon and Sudan.

¹ Including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Cambodia, Cyprus, Ethiopia, Egypt, France, Jordan, Mauritania, Nepal, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Uganda, United States, Vietnam and Western Sahara

In line with Action # 1 of the Nairobi Action Plan (NAP), the Secretary-General used the opportunity to call on states that have not yet done so to ratify all disarmament, humanitarian and human rights law instruments related to landmines, ERW and to the survivors of the devastating effects of these devices.

Adherence to the Treaty was also promoted in General Assembly resolutions, as well as Secretary-General reports on a range of countries and in his report on Assistance in Mine Action (A/62/307), in furtherance of Actions 5 and 6 of the NAP.

The UN Mine Action Team recognizes the fact that there are still various mine-affected countries that have not adhered yet to the Convention. We will pursue and support with our advocacy efforts those countries, particularly those currently receiving UN support in mine action.²

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.

The United Nations Mine Action Team continues to assist national programmes to take a new approach to risk assessments promoting more efficient use of resources and more land being released to people in less time. We have put into practice a cost-effective and efficient web-based method for developing the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2008, allowing field programmes, including national and international stakeholders, to directly input data on-line, and monitor and update input throughout the year. Our 2008 Portfolio required for 404 million US\$ to address mine action initiatives by 110 appealing agencies in 30 countries and three territories.

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 a considerable number of UN programmes, including Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Iraq, Jordan, Lao PDR, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe. By linking mine action and development mine action can be planned and implemented in a more integrated, "joined up" manner. Mine action can be planned to ensure that the clearance does not happen in isolation but in support of governments development plans, poverty reduction strategy papers and to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The establishment of Inter-ministerial Committees in these countries has supported a more effective

² Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Iran, Laos, Lebanon, Nepal, Russia (Chechnya), Somalia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam.

prioritization of post clearance development programmes which require mine action support. Seventeen states have included mine action in either their national poverty reduction or development strategy paper or other national planning instruments.

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. The UN's vision sees a capacity building strategy developed and implemented in partnership with the governments of mine-affected countries to build on available resources while addressing gaps in capacity and capability. This will strengthen the ability to transition to national, sustainable ownership.

In February 2008, a first strategic planning workshop on Mine Action Transition Planning Process in Sudan was held in Nairobi. The Government of Afghanistan has also taken significant steps toward transitioning the responsibilities of mine action from the United Nations (UNMAS) with the establishment in January 2008 of an Inter-Ministerial body, chaired by the Department of Mine Clearance, which is now merging with the UN supported Mine Action Centre. Transition strategies to national government from UN-managed programmes are also being developed in Democratic Republic of Congo and Southern Lebanon. The UNDP's technical assistance to 40 programmes globally continues in support of national government's mine action capacities with a particular focus on meeting Convention obligations.

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 and in doing so to advance gender equality through all aspects of mine action under the Treaty. In 2007, we organized the second regional Gender Equality and Mine Action workshop involving representatives from programmes in Cambodia, Ethiopia, the temporary security zone between Eritrea and Ethiopia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malawi, Sri Lanka and Sudan.

Concluding Remarks

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.

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

Thank you.