

STATEMENT BY SWEDEN

Standing Committee Meetings to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines, and Their Destruction, Geneva, 2-6 June 2008

The overall goal of Swedish support for mine action is to assist people who have been affected by war and conflicts, to make it possible for them to return to an existence under peaceful conditions. Mine action is very much a tool to reduce poverty and facilitate development for individuals and for nations.

National ownership, strengthened national institutions and structures and the integration of mine action into national development plans are very important elements, as is an effective dialogue between donors and recipients about obligations that follow from being a States party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

National governments, through their poverty reduction strategies and national development plans, have an important role to play in providing for demand driven public service mine action. Some humanitarian mine action is continuously required. The large majority of mined areas are, however, well known. They should be considered long-term development problems which the mine affected country has the responsibility for.

However, very often mine action is, and will be dependent on donor countries. It is essential that support from donor countries build on a long-term perspective.

Over the last years, Sweden has continued to increase its technical and financial assistance to countries both on a bilateral basis and through international organisations, in order to fulfil the obligations set forth in article 6 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty.

In 2007, contributions from Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to Mine Action reached approximately 13 million euro. The funding for 2008 will total at approximately the same level and the modes of operation will continue to be cash contributions to well-established mine action organizations, such as the UN agencies, Swedish governmental organizations, and international NGOs. Some of the mine-affected countries that have received funding in 2007 are Lebanon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sri Lanka, Iraq, the Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Senegal, and Afghanistan. UNDP, UNICEF, and UNMAS have received support for thematic programmes and/or core funding in 2007.

Approximately 40% of the Swedish funds are integrated in long-term development cooperation programmes with our partner countries. This is a percentage that is likely to increase in the coming years.

As in the past, the mine action support will be focused mainly on mine-clearance, but also on mine risk education and advocacy. Support to victim assistance is an important part of our development assistance to the health sector.

Furthermore Sweden actively participates in the development work within the International Test and Evaluation Programme for Humanitarian Demining (ITEP) and the CEN Working Group for Mine Action standards.

Sweden believes that the Nairobi Action Plan is the way forward for donor countries as well as for recipients to fulfil the obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. We are thus committed to its implementation.

Thank you Mr. Co-Chairman.