



**Intersessionals May 2003
16 May 2003**

**Closing Remarks
by Ambassador Martin Dahinden
Director of the GICHD**

Mr. President,
Dear friends and colleagues,

Usually I start my final remarks by giving you the number of participants to the Intersessionals. But this becomes more and more difficult. Last time Susan Walker spoiled it by announcing the figures before I could take the floor as the last speaker. And this time it is even worse: Jean Lint announced five hundred attendees even before the meeting started.

Here is the figure anyway: 476.

On the first day and during subsequent meetings we were told that one of the problems of funding mine action was that the issue is often seen as neither being a humanitarian nor a long-term development issue. Therefore it would be difficult fit mine action in the foreseen funding structures of governments and international organizations.

What a challenge!

It reminded me the time I was living in West Africa. There I knew a man called McRory, who caught a unknown tropical disease. He tried to get cured - but nothing worked. Neither his strange fever was known nor a remedy to get rid of it. Quite understandably the man became increasingly displeased and insisted with the doctors to do something for him. The only thing they eventually could offer him was to call his disease McRory fever.

Regarding mine action funding the situation is exactly inverse but equally absurd. We know the problem. And we know how to solve it. However, it seems not to work, because the right label is missing. If this would happen it is even a stranger case than McRory's fever.

Having myself been in many occasions a bureaucracy victim – and a bureaucracy survivor as well – I am optimistic that the problem will be overcome and eventually the solution adapted to the problem and not vice-versa.

But it needs our continued convincing arguments and our relentlessness as well to make this happen. For this it is very good to have each time landmine survivors among ourselves – to recall what the real problems are.

Let me closing with thanking you for the many kind words you addressed to the Geneva Center and its staff.

I am looking forward to meeting with you again in Bangkok, here in Geneva or somewhere else.

Have a safe journey home.