

**Canadian Statement**  
**Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action**  
**Technologies**  
**The Land Release Process**  
**May 28, 2009**

Thank you Co-Chair

Canada would, once again, like to congratulate Norway for its dedicated work in advancing Land Release. Canada acknowledges that the "Land Release Process" is not totally new. The process itself is a combination of three sub-processes all of which have some level of acceptability – certainly mine clearance and technical survey are well recognized parts of this land release process. Many operators will say, indeed many have said, that release of land through non-technical means is something they have been doing for some time. That may well be true, but it is also true that use of non technical means for releasing land has not had the same level of professional scrutiny as other methodologies until very recently. In our review of extension requests last year, we noted that many countries that submitted those requests have some form of land release through non-technical means – all producing impressive results - but all have differing yardsticks for releasing land.

This was one of the reasons that States Parties at the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting "welcomed the proposal submitted by Norway on the full, effective and expedient implementation of Article 5 and agreed to encourage States Parties, as appropriate, to implement the recommendations contained within".

Canada also recognizes the work done by the Geneva Centre and the UN Mine Action Service for development of the relevant International Mine Action Standard. We well recognize the tremendous effort that this has taken. But Mr. Co-Chair, that work was nearly complete in the spring of last year, and again nearly complete, at the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties and, as we understand it, is still nearly complete. Canada urges the professional mine action community to get on with this job, finish the IMAS and put it in the hands of those that need it, so that mine affected countries can meet their obligations to "destroy all mines in mined areas". At the same time, we urge the professional mine action community, to take special care that an IMAS does not "de facto" create new Convention obligations, for example a need for domestic legislation that is not demanded by the Convention itself.

As we said at the 9<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties, in Canada's view, it is time to end the discussion on the land release process and to put this tool firmly in our mine action tool bag. To that end, we support the process itself, including the production of relevant, but appropriate, mine action standards so that this community can operationalize the process and fully implement it.

Thank you.