

**Intersessional Standing Committee Meeting – Geneva – 26-30 May, 2009
Article 6- International Co-operation and Assistance – Statement by CANADA**

Thank you Mr. ^{Chair} Co-Chair,

Cooperation and Assistance is among the most important elements of our work.

Without resources, mine action simply cannot occur.

Our discussion of this item usually focuses on the international aspect of cooperation and assistance.

We must acknowledge, however, that the vast majority of resources – human, technical and financial – are provided by mine/ERW affected countries themselves.

We congratulate affected states who have made, and continue to make, a significant investment in this sector, and urge all affected States to treat mine action as a national priority in order to ensure both human security and development.

The international donor community plays a valuable role in providing supplementary resources and, notwithstanding some ups and downs over the past few years, support from donor countries has been solid overall.

It is critically important that it remain so.

I would like to take this opportunity to provide a short update on the Canadian experience in recent years. Many of you know that from 1999 to March 2008, Canada had in place a dedicated Landmine Fund, administered jointly by Foreign Affairs, CIDA and our Department of National Defence.

In the lead up to the conclusion of this fund, DFAIT and CIDA began to integrate mine action into broader, ongoing programmes within our respective departments. Overall things are going well, but we still need to work out a few glitches.

On the positive side, our level of support over the past two years has been the highest in our history – Approximately \$50M Cdn in 07/08 and \$47M in 08/09. It is notable that the vast majority of funds are provided by CIDA – in response to requests by States that have put mine action forward as a development priority, necessary to attain the Millennium Development Goals.

On the less positive side, a fairly narrow geographic focus of the funds we are now accessing, means that Canadian support has become concentrated in a handful of countries – good for them, not so good for non-focus countries that nonetheless still require international support. Over time, we hope to widen our focus to include other countries.

Also, because most of our funds are targeted geographically, we have had trouble accessing funds for things other than field activities, such as advocacy and what we call 'partnership programming'. This has meant, for example, that our annual contributions to the ICBL, Mines Action Canada, Landmine Monitor, the Geneva Centre including the ISU arrived late in the fiscal year last year, and the amounts were not what we would have liked.

This is particularly frustrating because we believe these organizations provide us with an excellent return on investment. Their work is essential to maintain an enabling environment and to facilitate the universalization and full implementation of the Convention.

In light of our limited flexibility on this front – which we hope is only temporary – and for that matter, even after we have worked things out, we encourage other donors who have not yet done so, or only in small amounts, to invest in these activities. I can think of no better way to ensure that mine action, which, increasingly, includes action on cluster munitions and ERW, stays in the consciousness of the global public and decision makers.

But again, overall, the funding picture is very positive and we have every intention of maintaining strong support until we achieve our collective goal of a mine free world.

Thank you,

28 May 2009