

Canada.
(Cooperation)

22-11-07 AM

8th Conference of the Members States Parties to the Ottawa Convention
Jordan November 18-22, 2007

Statement by Canada

Cooperation and Assistance

Mr Chairman,

In French
Canada is pleased to report continued progress in providing assistance under Article 6 of the Convention. As many of you know, Canada's dedicated funding, the Canadian Landmine Fund is being gradually replaced by integrated programming in three government departments: the Canadian International Development Agency, the Department of Foreign Affairs and National Defence.

In 2007, we continue to implement the provision of an interdepartmental agreement to share the responsibilities for assistance in relationship to Canada's obligation vis à vis the Ottawa Convention. This agreement it may be recalled was to undertake our best efforts to maintain the level of Canadian assistance to mine affected states at our average historical level of \$30 million per year.

In 2006, Canada reported an overall contribution to mine action of a little over Cdn \$34 million. This year, projections are in the area of Cdn \$40 million, or an increase of 17% relative to 2006. In both these years, we have succeeded in surpassing the level of commitment set as an objective not to fall below our traditional levels of assistance.

This level of assistance has been possible because we have made significant efforts to integrate mine action in regular humanitarian, peacebuilding and development programmes that are close to Canada's foreign aid priorities. This year dedicated funding will drop to 9% of total mine action funding in comparison with 30% in 2006.

Mr Chairman,

Let me dwell for a very short moment on some of the action steps Canada has initiated and continues to support in 2007.

We continue to provide support for universalization activities both as Coordinator of the Universalization Contact Group and through active engagement with States not Party. Last year Canada undertook visits to Laos, Kazakhstan, Nepal and Vietnam and was pleased to co-sponsor universalization and implementation work shops in Phnom Penn and Almaty. Various Canadian missions throughout the world have also engaged on this issue, conducting demarches with States not Party as have our senior level staffs at headquarters that regularly encourage states to accede to the Convention. We also have continued our support for stockpile destruction with two projects that were completed this year, one in Belarus and another in Serbia.

Canada, through DND, will continue to support and participate in the International Test and Evaluation Program (ITEP) for Humanitarian Demining. As well, DND efforts in

Canada, through DND, will continue to support and participate in the International Test and Evaluation Program (ITEP) for Humanitarian Demining. As well, DND efforts in Mine Neutralization continue to be actively pursued and will have application to Humanitarian demining activities.

On integrating mine action into development, our efforts span across the 'relief to development' spectrum of Official Development Assistance. This effort is mainly carried out by two departments, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Canadian International Development Agency. We have continued to integrate mine action in Canada's efforts to help countries coming out of conflict such as in Lebanon. In addition to a longer term development approach (such as in Cambodia, in Colombia and in Jordan), we also are working at integrating mine action into peace and security endeavours (such as in Sudan and Afghanistan).

Beyond the humanitarian character of the convention, which no one denies, lie the crucial issues of the ways and means to achieve our common objectives. The convention does not prescribe how to conduct cooperation and assistance, which should be the outcome of collaborative efforts among members to constantly improve our methods. Our experience has been that responsiveness to mine action needs is truly facilitated when affected countries place mine action high on their priority list. Furthermore, there is an imperative for sustainable and effective use of assistance offered, as well as the need for prudent utilization of aid and transparency in reporting progress. This imperative has been clearly demonstrated by the lessons we have learned, for example on land release approaches.

Over the long term, Mr. Chairman, we are convinced that development cooperation will play an increasingly important role in mine action, among the other instruments available to assist mine affected countries. Rather than discourage the development of new approaches to mine action, we should feel that this range of tools increases our collective ability to attain the objectives of the Convention.

This is why we are happy to have been associated this year with two international initiatives linking mine action to development. The first is the guidance being prepared by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD on Armed Violence Reduction. The other, more directly linked to the work of the Convention, the guidance on linking mine action and development is being developed by the GICHD. Both these sets of guidance are informed by experience and lessons from the field. They are scheduled to be approved and made public in early 2008.

They will illustrate some of the ideas that have been discussed since the Nairobi Review Conference and embedded in the Nairobi Plan of Action. The guidance to be presented in the context of mine action is the result of extensive research and consultations with governments, organizations and individual practitioners who have generously contributed their time to construct clear, concise and practical guidance. The main message is the following: if assistance in mine action is to be effective it has to be well placed within government development priorities, supported by both national resources and capable mine action institutions. For countries in a position to assist, it means assistance should

be consistent with the priorities set by mine affected countries in their development plans. Providing stand alone assistance outside this context may not be as effective and may not be the most effective use of scarce resources.

To this effect, let me take this opportunity to thank the GICHD, UNMAS and UNDP for their relentless work supporting national institutions and promoting greater national ownership through sustainable development. In 2007, Canada has provided financial assistance to these organizations for broad based capacity development, and intends to continue doing so in the near future.

Thank you Mr. Chairman