



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

**Eighth Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction**

**Dead Sea, Jordan
21 November 2007**

Statement by the European Commission

Since the adoption of the Ottawa Convention the European Community has promoted action contributing to the elimination of mines and the alleviation of their human impact. The European Community has also demonstrated clear commitment to universalisation of the Convention.

“Mine action” has always been part of European Community's assistance and development programmes in third countries. It has covered the whole gamut of activities - stockpile destruction, mine risk education, mine victim assistance, rehabilitation and socio-economic re-integration. Special targeted regulations and budgets underpinned EC Mine Action Strategy and Programming between 2002 and 2007. This special EC budget was further complemented by funding from other budgets focusing on geographic areas and covering humanitarian, security, socio-economic and development needs of local populations in APL-affected countries. In total approximately EUR 275 million were committed over the 2002-2007 period making the EC one of the leading donors worldwide.

Established as EC input into realising the Nairobi commitments, the EC Mine Action Strategy 2005-07 comes to an end this year. An evaluation will be carried out to assess whether it responded adequately to the Nairobi Action Plan. A preliminary internal analysis shows positive outcomes.

Changes to the management of EC mine action occurred at the end of 2006. They were linked to the European Commission's overall revamp of its funding arrangements. Special budgets, including the landmine budget line, were replaced by new instruments for EC external assistance. Geographical budgets for development, pre-accession to the European Union or neighbourhood policy are now the key financial instruments. Action in the area of Anti-Personnel Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War can now only be funded by our geographical budgets or, in urgent cases, the humanitarian aid budget and the new Instrument for Stability, which both allow funds to be mobilised rapidly in cases of crisis or emerging crisis.

Although the special landmine budget was repealed last year, the EC's overall approach remains unchanged: landmines and other explosive remnants of war are still considered within a broader context of humanitarian assistance, long-term and sustainable socio-economic development programmes.

Countries requiring assistance for mine action need to prioritise mine action in their requests to the European Commission for assistance across the board. It is thus up to our partners to decide the degree of importance mine action is given within their own list of priorities. Where EC mine action used to be top-down, now it is much more bottom-up.

In sum, though means and methods have changed, the EC's efforts in mine action continue. In 2007 the European Community will support mine action in the following countries for a total of 33 million Euro committed so far this year:

Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Cyprus, Ethiopia,
Guinea-Bissau, Jordan, Lebanon, Senegal and Sudan.

Thus, the European Commission remains firmly engaged in supporting the implementation of the Ottawa Convention, assisting third countries in destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting victims.