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Geneva International Centre for  
Humanitarian Demining  
Centre International de  
Démontage Humanitaire - Geneva



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

**Dead Sea, Jordan, 18-22 November 2007**

**Statement by Ambassador Stephan Nellen  
Director, Geneva International Centre  
for Humanitarian Demining**

Dear Mr. President, H.E. Prince Mired,

First, let me thank and congratulate the Government of Jordan for being the host of the Eight Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (AP MBC), and for having organised a very productive conference with key decisions to be taken by States Parties in light of obligations of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and the agreed actions contained in the Nairobi Action Plan.

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I wish to reflect today on article 6 of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the obligation for international cooperation and assistance. Where are we now - States Parties, non States Parties, international, regional and non-governmental organisations - with regard to the implementation of this article, ten years after the entry into force of the Convention? What has been achieved, and what remains to be done, to meet the deadlines of the Convention and to reduce the impact of the deadly legacy of war?

Did the affected States Parties seek and receive assistance, where feasible, from other States Parties to the extent possible, as Article 6 § 1 requires?

Did the mine affected States Parties have the right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, material, scientific and technological information as mentioned in Article 6 § 2 ?

To start, I would like to make some general comments on the progress that has been made in the Mine Action sector the past ten years: First, in-depth knowledge has been accumulated and allowed mine action to professionalize and to increase its performance more than ever. Second, better methodologies have been elaborated in the field of clearance and technology to ease the burden of demining by making it more productive. Third, quality management has been improved and standards raised to make mine action safer and to prevent unnecessary accidents. Definitely, some good results have been achieved in the context of Article 6 and the enumeration could go on for a while.

Nevertheless, we are still far from the goal, and big challenges remain in the field of cooperation and assistance. After years of generous donor support to mine affected countries, other issues have become more exciting and are now on the top of donor's priority list. Small arms and light weapons, cluster munitions and other ERWs, and in the field of human security the highly praised security sector reforms are timely and substantive topics to be addressed. However, these issues capture the attention of the international donor community and risk the neglect of the Convention's goals. Further, small and less well-known mine action programmes are disregarded compared to the big ones in Afghanistan, Iraq, or Lebanon. Therefore, it is important to remind that the realisation of the AP MBC's goals must be assured without any compromise in every country.

Now, without presenting our work in detail, I would like to outline the contribution the GICHD is making as an international organisation active in mine action in the implementation of article 6. How can the GICHD have a

share in the remaining challenges and try to prevent a decreasing attention of the international donor community? In other words, how can the GICHD help to make mine action safer, cheaper, faster, and more effective?

Regarding "safety", the GICHD continues to manage the review process for the existing International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and the Technical Note for Mine Action (TNMA) on behalf of the UN, produces new IMAS and TNMA based on requirements, and assists national authorities in the development of National Mine Action Standards (NMAS). Besides improving safety, IMAS and NMAS contribute to quality and efficiency enhancement in mine action.

To make mine action "cheaper", the GICHD elaborates improved land release methodologies. In most countries, the areas suspected to be contaminated with landmines and other explosive remnants of war are often exaggerated. As an example, during my recent visit to Tajikistan, I was told that the suspected area covers 25 million square meters, which would result in, if we take the clearance costs of the operator in that country of 4-5 dollars per square metre, financial requirements to clear the remaining area of an unrealistic figure of more than 100 million dollars. Our work in the area of land release methodology should contribute to reducing the amount of suspected land substantially, offering better and more realistic perspectives for rapid and more cost-effective clearance. We have just completed a preliminary mission to the Tajik Mine Action Centre to explore potential improvements in their ways of working and we are presently active in several other countries to assist them to introduce new methods. The GICHD has recently published a study which should stimulate mine action programmes into thinking in a more lateral way, and to consider more closely options for developing processes for releasing land in a non-technical manner. This study has been presented in a side event on land release during this 8 MSP.

With more realistic figures, donors will be more encouraged to finance the remaining work, and for many mine affected countries, the implementation of their Art. 5 obligations will become more realistic. We continue together with

our partners to develop this new methodology and to introduce it as rapidly as possible.

In respect to "faster", the GICHD develops improved methodologies and best practices on manual and mechanical mine clearance, as well as on mine detection with dogs and rats. The undertaken research on animal detection results in improved training and test methods and in revised international standards.

To make mine action more "effective", the GICHD initiated the project "Linking Mine Action with Development" or LMAD, as it is commonly referred to, in October 2006 with the support of Australia, Canada, Denmark, and UK. It is dedicated to strengthen the links between mine action and development in recognition that greater efforts are required to ensure that mine action is aligned with the development priorities and plans of mine-affected countries, and that improved communication and coordination is required between mine action actors and key development and peace building actors at the international, national and local levels. To help facilitate dialogue and raise awareness about this issue, we organized three events this year. The most recent seminar was held earlier this month in Yemen, and focused on bringing mine action and development practitioners from the Middle East, North Africa and the Horn of Africa together to share experiences, lessons learnt and good practice from incorporating mine action into national development plans and organizations.

These discussions have fed into the practical guidelines and tools that we are developing to support mine-affected states, official development agencies, mine action organizations and development NGOs with their efforts to link mine action with development more effectively. Once the guidelines are developed and disseminated to these key actors, the focus of our LMAD work will shift to assisting mine action and development actors to implement the guidelines.

By helping to make mine action safer, cheaper, faster, and more effective, the GICHD supports not only mine affected countries, but also donors in erasing

the vestiges of war. Nevertheless, the remaining challenge must be faced by all actors with firm and long-term commitments, since key deadlines are ahead of us.

After more than 20 years of mine action efforts and almost ten years of the implementation of the AP MBC, we have managed to get the "mine action business" rolling. International Cooperation and Assistance must maintain momentum if we don't want it to be slowed down.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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