

CANADA

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

DRAFT STATEMENT

Thank you very much Your Royal Highness:

We are very pleased to see that in the last Landmine Monitor the number of known victims of landmines has been reduced to 5,751 – a decrease of 16% from the previous year; however, the fact remains that there continue to be new victims daily. Already there are more than 470,000 existing victims who will continue to call on member states to honour their commitments under the Convention to provide assistance in reintegrating, in an economically and socially productive manner, into mainstream society.

While discrete projects may offer sustainable solutions on an ad hoc basis, we all agree that the Convention expects us to ensure that there is long-term consideration of victim needs.

We have seen that in post conflict situations most mine affected countries have enormous reconstruction challenges to deal with. First care, health and social support systems are very often not sufficient to meet the needs of the population. This situation makes responding to the needs of landmine survivors more difficult.

For these reasons, it is urgent to explore an integrated approach to up-grading health and social services for all and to adopt an inclusive policy which does not distinguish between landmine victims, war disabled, otherwise disabled and the health needs of the community at large.

Over the past year Canada has provided support to victim assistance projects in Cambodia, Uganda, Burundi, Colombia and through the ICRC. This amounts to \$675,000 Cdn and corresponds to 20% of our dedicated funding. In addition to this direct funding, Canada has provided core and unearmarked support to multilateral organizations and international NGO, that can be used by the recipients for victim assistance.

CIDA has integrated an increasingly large portion of its mine action into humanitarian and development programming which includes victim assistance. Here are a few examples:

- a- Since 2005, CIDA's bilateral programme has provided \$22 million to UNMAS to continue its work with the government of Afghanistan; part of this assistance includes new victim and incidence collecting and reporting.
- b- In 2007, CIDA's bilateral Middle East program has launched the "Physical Rehabilitation of Landmine Victims in the Middle East" project

totalling \$2.2M over 3.5 years. This project will improve the quality of life of disabled people including survivors of anti-personnel landmines.

As part of our continuing effort to integrate mine action into ongoing programming, in two weeks Handicap International Canada, with the support of Canadian Landmine Fund financing, will host a two-day workshop in Ottawa. This event will raise awareness on the issue of Mine Action and, in particular, victim assistance among Canadian officials as well as among 'mainstream' Canadian NGOs. Concepts and tools will be introduced to promote the integration of Mine Action activities into development, humanitarian, peace-building and human rights programming within CIDA and Canadian NGOs.

Mr. Chairman, Canada's efforts are not limited only to those of the government. Allow me to take a moment to highlight the work of Canadians who have been recognized for excellence in the field of victim assistance in 2007:

- a. The 2007 Prize of Excellence for international outreach given by the 'Institut d'administration publique de Quebec' to Quebec institutions and individuals was awarded to the College Francois Xavier for its work on assisting victims of cluster bombs in Laos.
- b. A prestigious international Danish award, the 2007 Index: Design to Improve Life was given to Sebastien Dubois, a young industrial designer from Montreal for having developed a low-cost high technology artificial foot for amputees. He was inspired by his first encounter with landmine survivors in Nicaragua.