



Ninth 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

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

Geneva, 24 November 2008

Mister President,

Congratulations on your election as the new President of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. You can count on the strong support of the GICHD for your Presidency and the activities you will carry out in this position.

Let me also congratulate the Government of Switzerland on being the host of the Ninth Meeting of States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention.

The GICHD, through the Implementation Support Unit, as mandated by the States Parties remains ready to assist all States Parties and those countries which are progressing towards ratification, by making available its knowledge and expertise.

In order to fully achieve the aims of the Convention, it is crucial to continue to make Article 6 a reality. In the years to come the international cooperation and assistance mechanisms will be the key to success in the fight against antipersonnel mines. In this regard, the



GICHD, in partnership with others, supports mine-affected countries by providing capacity development support, undertaking applied research, developing the international standards for mine action (IMAS) and supporting the relevant instruments of international law.

The GICHD continues to develop and implement the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), with priority given to requirements identified by users in the field. The Information Management System provides national authorities and other key-players in humanitarian demining with improved capabilities in operational planning and decision-making. Today, IMSMA is installed in more than 50 locations around the world. We have recently developed a new version of the software that integrates the full data set of the former version and which will facilitate local customization. The GICHD will continue to provide the IMSMA system free of charge to the international mine action community and, in conjunction with national mine action authorities, work for a broader distribution of the system to relevant actors such as national and international organizations as well as operators.

The GICHD also supports the mine clearance efforts of affected states and their partners by developing more efficient mine action technologies. Together with the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the Centre convened a meeting of technology experts in September this year. The workshop allowed field practitioners to exchange views on the latest trends in mine action technology, and to explore ways and means of assisting operators in selecting the available technology for their specific needs.

Next year, the Article 5 clearance deadlines will expire for the first States which became Parties. One of the major challenges for States Parties in



fulfilling their clearance obligations, lies in the reduction of suspect hazardous areas. The GICHD is taking a leading role in the development of thinking on this subject. This is designed to help ensure expensive clearance resources are deployed to those areas where there is the greatest likelihood of finding mines and UXO. Our work involves both research and outreach to assist states and programmes in need of guidance. The ultimate goal is, of course, releasing safe land to affected communities. The GICHD has published a guide book looking at more effective ways to release land using non-technical methods, using six countries as case studies of effective methodologies. From this, general principles and recommendations have been created for mine-affected states and mine action programmes. Additionally, work is almost complete on a study of improved technical survey methods to release land. Finally, on behalf of UNMAS, the GICHD is developing a series of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) providing a framework for the guidance and support of national authorities and operators in land release.

The overall development of new standards, and the review of current ones, in particular in relation to gender sensitivity, will be important activities in the months ahead. The Centre will also provide increased assistance to national authorities to develop specific national mine action standards.

The GICHD is very much engaged in ensuring that mine action remains a priority in humanitarian policies. It is also becoming more and more evident that mine action efforts should be dedicated to reduce poverty. The Centre will continue to support the process of reflection and discussion on including mine action into development policies and programmes. Later on today, at the Linking Mine Action and



Development Contact Group, the GICHD will launch the LMAD Guidelines that provide guidance for practitioners and policy-makers on how to ensure mine action promotes development in mine-affected countries.

Mister President, let me reiterate our strong commitment to the AP Mine Ban Convention. Our work is guided by the vision of a world free of anti-personnel mines and from the threat of other landmines and explosive remnants of war, and of a world where the suffering and concerns of affected populations are addressed.

Thank you.