

Cooperation and assistance in clearing mined areas
Intervention by the ICBL
26 April 2007

Thank you Mr co Chair,

I would like to follow up on the intervention ICBL made on Monday about the negative consequences of the mainstreaming of the European Commission mine action funding into geographic and development budgetary lines. These consequences being the potential loss of thousands or even millions of euros for mine action, (as well as for Victim Assistance and Stockpile Destruction) **because of *the heavyness of a decentralisation process* and *the loss of a focal point for mine action in Brussels*.**

Over the past months, the Mines Advisory Group and the ICBL have called on Commissioners Benita Ferrero Waldner and Louis Michel, as well as the Vice President of the European Parliament to request they take action to ensure that the commitment of the EC to mine action is accompanied by a process to ensure access to funding by affected states.

We call on States Parties to the Convention, and particularly EU member states, to relay this message towards the Commission to maximise our chances that appropriate actions be taken.

Whereas we hear that Country Strategic Papers and National Indicative Programmes have already been adopted for some affected States Parties, without including mine action, **action is still possible now for (ACP) countries** who are now identifying priorities in relation to the programming of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF/FED). These countries need to make sure mine action is included in their national priorities, and the EC delegation locally and desk officers in Brussels should encourage them to do so.

For countries not concerned by the EDF, it is still not clear whether or not mine action has been finally included in draft CSPs and National Indicative Programmes. These documents are currently being reviewed by **management committees, composed of representatives of EU Members, who could raise concerns when mine action does not appear among identified priorities.**

Early May, concerned States Parties and EC delegations in country will receive a letter from the ICBL raising these issues.

Action is also possible at **the European Parliament** which eventually vote to pass the Country Strategic Papers into law. MEPs are able to raise their concerns, **and ask to add amendments to each CSPs, including requesting inclusion of funds.**

Finally, we would like to note that this potential problem with mainstreaming does not only apply to EU funding, though it is the first large-scale case that we are aware of. So we would also like to communicate the message to all donor states and organisations – if and when you mainstream mine action budgets, make **sure there remains a contact person or office that can facilitate communication with recipients**, and take every opportunity, including these Standing Committee Meetings and MSPs to communicate to recipient states when funding

procedures have changed. There also remains much work to ensure that persons on both the donor and recipient sides understand the connection between mine action and development and make mine action a priority within development budgets.

As you can see, mainstreaming of mine action into development programming can be either an opportunity or a threat. Possibilities exist to make sure funding is mainstreamed, but maintained at high levels. 2 years before the first deadlines for mine clearance, we need to make sure this happens.

Thank you.