

CANADIAN STATEMENT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION – ASSISTANCE

April 25, 2007

Thank you.

Stockpile destruction along with universalization continues to be a vital component of mine action. It is only through destruction of stocks and ensuring no laying of mines through universalization of the Convention, that we will achieve our goal of a mine free world. Even with the ever-decreasing number of mines being produced by fewer and fewer states, there remains a risk of use until such time as all stocks are destroyed. If nothing else, stockpile destruction is a cost efficient and effective way of ensuring no more mines are placed in the ground.

While Canada does not have a specific allocation for stockpile destruction, we do have a specific program under the terms of Article Six of the Ottawa Convention to assist States Parties experiencing difficulty in meeting their obligation to destroy their stockpiles. That assistance has consisted of any combination of the provision of technical expertise, the provision of material and equipment and the provision of financial support.

Since 2000, Canada, either on a bi-lateral basis or in cooperation with other partners including regional and international organizations, has assisted 22 State Parties to destroy more than six and a quarter million stockpiled mines at a cost to Canada of almost seven and a half million dollars, so far. This in addition to providing assistance in all of the other areas of mine action.

In 2006, Canada cooperated with Lithuania and Belarus in a NATO Trust Fund Project to destroy Belarus' non PFM mines. That project has been completed. Additionally Canada was a Co-Lead Nation with Austria in the destruction of more than 1.3 million mines in Serbia and in Montenegro. That project is nearing completion with the final destruction ceremony planned in mid May this year. And Canada supported a destruction project in Afghanistan which was very complex but fruitful because of the inclusion of unsafe, surplus or damaged ammunition.

Canada remains committed to this pillar of mine action, as to the others and we would urge other States Parties in a position to do so, to consider support for stockpile destruction in their mine action programming.