

SC on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Mine Action Technologies

Assistance and Cooperation:

Firstly I would like to thank all mine-affected countries, which have given us detailed explanations about their mine problems in their countries. These interventions are very useful for donor countries and are exactly what is needed to ensure and to further increase the relevance of the intersessional meetings. This point is also highlighted in the none-paper by the presidency on the intersessional programme of work.

It is also very important that mine-affected countries provide information about their own efforts in the field of mine action. Donor-countries can quote a US-Dollar figure for their mine action programmes. The own efforts of mine-affected states are much harder to quantify in US-Dollar terms. However, they might represent a huge national effort. Information about such efforts would provide us with a more complete picture about global mine action.

Since we work together in a spirit of cooperation, I would like to stress that sharing information is a two way street. It might be useful for mine-affected countries to hear under what criteria donor-countries decide their mine-action programmes:

1) Financial:

Over the last three years Austria has allocated approximately US \$ 4 Millions for mine action programmes. For this year we have budgeted approximately 900.000 US Dollar. However, the final budget has not been approved. In addition to these funds, we are planning to allocate an amount of approximately 1.9 Million Euros for projects in Afghanistan over the next three to four years. We are aware of the arguments that have been put forward at the last Intersessional, mainly by Latin American States, about prioritisation by donor countries of their mine actions funds. This is indeed a very complex topic, which merits serious discussion.

2) Criteria for Austrian Mine Action Projects:

- Austrian funds shall be used as efficiently as possible to benefit mainly the local civilian population most affected by APM.
- The Austrian funds should be used in a way that supports the efforts of the international community to promote human security after the end of armed conflicts.
- Austrian mine action programmes shall benefit mainly the population of those countries, whose governments have permanently renounced the use of APM.
- Austrian mine action programmes are mainly concentrated on the priority countries of the Austrian development cooperation and on those countries of the Stability Pact that are most afflicted by APM.
- In addition, Austria is dedicated to support countries especially afflicted by the scourge of APM.

3) Austria has funded Mine Action Programmes in the last 3 years in the following countries:

- Mozambique, Uganda and Nicaragua,
- Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania and Kosovo
- Afghanistan and Cambodia.

Our projects are channelled through the ICIC, the United Nations System and in bilaterally through NGOs.

I hope that this information is useful for mine-affected states and I am convinced that this kind of exchange of information can enhance relevance of the intersessional programme of work.