



Standing Committee on Victim Assistance

Intersessional Meeting of States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production
& Transfer of Anti-Personnel Landmines
and on Their Destruction

12-16 May 2003

**Statement by John Wattam
of the
United Kingdom of
Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

As Delivered

Geneva, 13 May 2003

When this Standing Committee last met here in February, concern was expressed that some States Parties were not doing enough and had committed few resources to assist others in the care and rehabilitation of landmine survivors. In the case of the United Kingdom, we have earmarked a significant amount of financial resources to address this issue and I thought it would be worthwhile taking this opportunity to share our approach with you.

In a perfect world there would, of course, be no shortage of resources to meet this very real concern. But we need to be realistic. The world is not perfect and resources are not endless. They have to be accounted for, prioritised and where possible, co-ordinated, if they are to meet effectively the large and growing range of demands placed upon them and make a real difference and improve the quality of life for those victims of landmines.

Mindful of this, our Department for International Development (DFID) which leads on government policy in this area, has developed a strategy that promotes the globalisation of the anti-personnel landmines ban and seeks to assist developing countries to develop their own capacity to meet their Ottawa Convention obligations. Our global programme has a strong commitment to and, I believe, an excellent track record in supporting mines awareness and clearance programmes including, in particular, improving the linkage with poverty reduction in national planning and prioritisation. We are encouraging practical innovation to enhance safety and efficiency in operations; and want to see a strengthening of international systems for co-ordination and collaboration. The latter is particularly important if needs across the world are to be addressed on a more rational and equitable basis. Therefore DFID will be placing particular emphasis on strengthening the United Nations Mines Action Service (UNMAS) and associated UN system agencies so that they can improve their capacity and performance. We have a planned annual provision of around £10 million for mines action.

So, our objectives are clear and our commitment to achieve them undiminished, but there has been an important change in how we seek to implement them. We shall no longer be making commitments from our central fund through NGOs or guarantee funds for any particular countries. Instead, we shall be agreeing global programmes with UNDP and UN Mines Action Service (UNMAS) and perhaps UNICEF for mines awareness

programmes. These agencies will then be responsible for allocations down the line based on agreed criteria. These will include consideration of good country policies and performance in mines clearance, needs in terms of saving lives, preventing disability or obtaining urgent humanitarian access for displaced populations, and funding gaps after taking account of the contribution of others.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

On the specific question of victim assistance to landmine victims, this is additional to our mine action programme. Mine victims benefit from DFID's mainstream health and population and social development programmes, as well as specific programmes assisting the disabled e.g. through our contributions to the International Red Cross. The UK is a major donor to the ICRC's programmes worldwide. A key part of their assistance programme, as their literature on their special fund for the disabled highlights, is physical rehabilitation, where activities are designed to provide civilian and military disabled, especially amputees, with prosthetic/orthotic appliances so that they can recover their mobility and play an active role in society. This target population includes landmine survivors.