

## **CANADIAN STATEMENT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE, MINE RISK EDUCATION AND MINE ACTION TECHNOLOGIES – ASSISTANCE**

We all agreed in Nairobi and again in Zagreb that we, together, had to assign a high priority to “finishing the job”, particularly in the area of mine clearance. We recognized that, while this poses a challenge, it is nonetheless achievable. Canada fully supports the pragmatic goal, of a mine-free world in which mine-affected States Parties, with assistance where necessary, have a legal obligation to clear all known or suspected mined land.

The obligations of Article V are very clear, indeed absolutely unmistakable. Certainly dealing with high and medium impact areas must come first but the obligation agreed by all States Parties is mine free. The interim phase of achieving a “mine-safe” or “mine threat free” status, while important, is only a step along the way to full compliance. Such a step is a means for mine-affected states to develop priorities for clearance, and not as an end in itself.

Canadian support for all aspects of mine action, including the priority of leveraging greater resources collectively for mine clearance, will take fully into account the needs and plans of mine-affected States Parties in this regard. There should be no doubt; Canada remains fully committed to our common goal.

The Co-Chairs have posed a number of questions to us and I would like to take a couple of minutes to answer these questions.

In response to the first question, Canada remains fully committed to its Article 6 obligations and is working hard to ensure the maintenance of a significant level of funding until we do “finish the job”. That funding can come from any Government source and will be used for all mine action activities, including but not limited to, mine clearance and mine risk education.

Our funding record to date has been good at about 210 million from a dedicated level of 157 million reflecting in part some success in recent years from integrating mine action into humanitarian and development programmes. This effort will continue and we hope to report results in the future. Since Nairobi we have spent about 8.9 million of a total of 28.9

million on mine clearance and mine risk education or a little over 30 per cent on these areas of mine action.

In regard to mine risk education we would like to highlight the importance of this area of mine action and would also like to take this opportunity to encourage our bilateral partners and other agencies to recognize and support this mine action pillar in refugee and IDP camps as a key component of risk reduction for refugees prior to returning home.

We were also asked to report on the funding means by theme. Until at least 2008 Canada retains dedicated funding from the Canadian Landmine Fund and uses these funds to support all areas of mine action. Current plans call for dedicated funding to end in 2008 with funding thereafter to be achieved by integrating mine action into regular budgets of the three participating departments, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Department of National Defence. We have had some success, particularly within CIDA, with integration and we are currently examining funding opportunities within DFAIT which may be possible in the future. Our intent is to integrate mine action support into all of humanitarian, development, peace building and peace support programmes.