

FIFTH MEETING OF STATE PARTIES – BANGKOK, THAILAND
CANADIAN INTERVENTION - STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION

19 September 2003

Mr President

Stockpile destruction remains a vital and to date successful pillar of mine action. Once stockpiles are eliminated, and given the ever-decreasing number of mines being produced, the chance of use anywhere is substantially reduced. However, there remains a risk of use until such time as these stocks are destroyed. For this reason Canada has a specific program under the terms of Article Six of the Ottawa Convention, to assist states experiencing difficulty in meeting obligations to destroy their stockpiles within the permitted four years. That assistance can consist of any combination of the provision of technical expertise, the provision of equipment and the provision of financial support.

During the past three years Canada, either on a bi-lateral basis or in cooperation with other donor partners and regional and international organizations, has assisted thirteen State Parties and one non-State Party to destroy some 4,000,000 stockpiled mines at a cost to Canada of over two million US dollars, all of this in addition to our role in providing assistance in the other areas of mine action. This has included projects in Albania, Chad, Chile, Ecuador, Honduras, Moldova, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Romania, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen, and just last week in Congo-Brazzaville. A Canadian supported project is ongoing in Argentina with a completion date of 4 December this year. Projects are planned or under development in Bangladesh, Mauritania, Ukraine, Belarus, Serbia and Montenegro and Colombia to destroy a further almost 12 million mines. Initial discussions are ongoing with other State Parties. Canada is justifiably proud to have participated in these projects and will continue do its utmost to ensure the successful destruction of all stockpiled mines.

At the last meeting of the Standing Committee, Canada noted the expression of willingness of Italy and Portugal to assist State Parties in destroying their stockpiles. However we also have observed the apparent hesitance of yet other State Parties to participate in this area. This is perhaps partly because it is seen as an activity that States should be able to complete without invoking Article 6 of the Convention. Canadian experience has been that there is a legitimate need for assistance in the destruction of stockpiled mines. We would encourage yet more states to join in this very important pillar of mine action – a pillar that from donor states, very often does not get the attention it deserves.

Stockpile destruction has been yet another success story coming out of the Ottawa Convention and we would like to join other member states in congratulating the co-chairs on their very important work over the past year.