



**Sixth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition
of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Zagreb, 28 November – 2 December 2005

**Statement by Ambassador Stephan Nellen
Director, Geneva International Centre
for Humanitarian Demining**

Mister President,

Let me first congratulate you and your country for being the host of the Sixth Meeting of States Parties and for having organised yesterday's opening ceremony. It was an inspiring moment which will guide our deliberations over the next days and guarantee a successful outcome of our meeting.

One year after the First Review Conference in Nairobi, we can proudly look back at the various measures which have been taken by States Parties to implement the Summit's recommendations and decisions. I compliment you and the President of the First Review Conference, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, for an excellent Zagreb Progress Report. The Report will be a useful tool to highlight priority areas of work for all of us for the period between this meeting and the Seventh Meeting of States Parties.

The Zagreb Progress Report takes stock of the many accomplishments States Parties have reached over the last twelfth months. Let me congratulate Ethiopia, Vanuatu, Latvia and Bhutan for having joined the Anti-Personnel

Mine Ban Convention (AP MBC). The GICHD, through the Implementation Support Unit, as mandated by the States Parties, is ready to assist all States Parties and those countries which have made significant progress in their internal processes towards ratification or accession, by making available its knowledge and expertise.

With respect to the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, the GICHD commends in particular Algeria, Bangladesh, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania and Uruguay for having completed their programmes. The GICHD stands ready to assist the remaining States Parties – thirteen of them - in meeting their obligation to destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines. Moreover, it is ready to support with technical expertise those States Parties which have to destroy large amounts of PFM mines, as well as stocks of artillery delivered anti-personnel mines (ADAM).

Next to the universalisation of the AP MBC, meeting the clearance deadlines of 2009 and beyond will be our major challenge for the years to come. By providing the Information Management System of Mine Action (IMSMA) to 29 States Parties and 12 non States-Parties, the GICHD supports the efforts of mine affected countries, in particular when it comes to developing national plans and programmes.

The Centre is highly supportive of the general mine clearance efforts of States Parties by developing, among other things, sound mine risk education (MRE) tools and more efficient mine action technologies. On the latter point, the GICHD will be hosting a meeting of technology experts early next year, in order to allow in-depth exchange of views between field and research practitioners. In addition, the Centre is about to embark into a major study aimed at developing and implementing a risk management methodology, which will allow a faster and more efficient land release process compared to today's procedures.

The Centre will continue its work on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) in conjunction with the United Nations Mine Action Service. Six new IMAS - on contracts, national programmes, mechanical equipment, evaluation, environmental factors and on accreditation of MRE organisation - will be made available in 2006. In conjunction with the development of new standards, the Centre will provide assistance to national authorities for developing national mine action standards and/or translating them into local languages, as we have already done so in French and Russian.

Mister President,

Let me conclude by underlining that the Centre will support all mine action related efforts in its areas of expertise. The thought that children, women and men are facing a daily threat of anti-personnel landmines, is guiding the work of the GICHD when it is assisting States Parties in their endeavours to develop comprehensive national plans and to meet their objectives in alleviating the suffering of landmine survivors and guaranteeing their economic reintegration.

Finally, in order to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of mine action, the GICHD will do its utmost to ensure that mine action remains a priority in humanitarian policies, aimed at saving lives of human beings and those most in need of assistance. The Centre will, together with Canada and other partners, deepen reflection and discussions on ways and means to include mine action into development plans and programmes at UN, regional, national and sub-national level. Furthermore, it will also support discussions on mine action in relation to peace-keeping and confidence-building measures.

I hope that these remarks were helpful in showing how the GICHD can assist States Parties in implementing the Nairobi Action Plan.

Thank you very much.