

**Statement of Canada
7th Meeting of States Parties**

Clearing Mine Areas

Thank You

Two years ago in Nairobi, and last year in Zagreb, we all reaffirmed our commitment to “finishing the job”, particularly in the area of mine clearance. We also recognized that, while this may be a challenge, it is certainly achievable. Canada fully supports the pragmatic, but attainable goal of a mine-free world in which mine-affected States Parties, with assistance when necessary, will clear all known or suspected mined areas.

Article 5 obligations are very clear, indeed unmistakable. Certainly, dealing with high and medium impact areas must come first but the obligation agreed by all States Parties is to destroy all mines in all mined areas. An interim phase of reaching a “mine-safe” or “mine threat free” status is important but is only a step along the road to meeting all of our Article 5 obligations.

Some mine affected States Parties courageously ratified or acceded to this Convention fully understanding the difficulties facing them in achieving the obligations of Article 5. Some of them may, despite their best efforts, require an extension to meet the obligation of destroying all of the mines in mined areas. Canada would like to congratulate the Presidency and is pleased to have contributed to establishing a process on how the States Parties may choose to handle extension requests. We urge all States Parties to support this process so that together, we will be in a position to decide upon extensions in a timely and effective manner, if and when that proves necessary.

The President has posed a number of questions to us regarding assistance in the area of mine clearance, and I would like to take a few moments to answer them.

In response to the first question, Canada remains fully committed to its Article 6 obligations and is working hard to ensure the maintenance of the same or a higher level of funding. Since the Nairobi Summit, Canada has maintained its funding level of just under 30 million dollars a year. That funding came from a number of Government sources and was and will continue to be used for all mine action activities, including but not limited to, mine clearance and mine risk education.

Our funding record to date includes \$155.4 million of dedicated funding with an additional \$62.6 million of funding, principally from development budgets but increasingly from peace and security budgets for a total of \$218 million reflecting some success in recent years from integrating mine action into peace and security and development programmes. This effort will continue and we will report on results on an ongoing basis. 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.

As we did at the intersessionals in May regarding, mine risk education, we would like to take this opportunity to encourage our bilateral partners and other agencies to recognize and support MRE in refugee and IDP camps as a key component of risk reduction for refugees prior to returning home.

Madame/Mister President/Vice President with 22 countries facing deadlines for clearance in 2009, it is critical that we redouble our collective efforts to meet these deadlines. This Convention has – and can continue to be - a remarkable achievement of which we can all be proud.