

**CANADIAN STATEMENT TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION – ASSISTANCE
Seventh Meeting of the States Parties, September 2006**

Stockpile destruction, along with universalization, remains a vital component of mine action. It is only through destruction of stocks and furthering our universalization efforts can we ensure that no new mines are placed in the ground. Even as the use of antipersonnel mines continues to decrease, there still remains a risk that mines will continue to be laid until such a day when the last stockpiled mine is destroyed. To reach our goal of no new mine victims we must continue our assistance to ensure that all stockpile mines are destroyed.

While Canada does not have a specific budget for the destruction of stockpiles, we have supported and assisted 22 States Parties to destroy millions of stockpile mines through the Canadian Landmine Fund and our regular development, peace and security funds. Since 2000, Canada's assistance has included the provision of technical expertise, the provision of material and equipment and the provision of financial support to a total of almost \$10 million.

I would like to once again highlight an important new trend in stockpile destruction – the destruction of unsafe, surplus or damaged ammunition and weapons in addition to mines. Our ultimate goal is to protect civilians from the loss of life or injury, and many in the mine action community have already recognized that it makes little sense to segregate and destroy mines while leaving thousands of tons of dangerous ammunition that can have an even greater impact on the safety of the population.

An example of this initiative is in Afghanistan. Canada is continuing to support a large project under the Afghan New Beginnings Program for the disposal of munitions and mines – a project that aims to protect civilians in addition to assisting Afghanistan in meeting its Article 4 obligations. Canada would encourage other States Parties to consider similar projects, a cost effective way to reduce the number of new victims.

Canada would like to encourage States Parties, in a position to do so, to continue to support stockpile destruction projects in general. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Development Cooperation Directorate has confirmed that stockpile destruction is

recognized as Official Development Assistance in ODA eligible countries and thus donors could support such projects through dedicated or regular developing assistance funding.

With a total of almost 16 million stockpiled mines still held by 13 States Parties in the process of fulfilling their Article 4 obligations and millions more held by States not party, our job is far from finished and we must continue to ensure these mines are never placed in the ground.

Thank you