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CANADA

Cooperation and Assistance – Statement by CANADA at 7th Meeting of States Parties

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In many respects, cooperation and assistance defines this Convention.

Collective effort and mutual support led to its creation, and has remained the chief hallmark of its implementation.

This approach produces results and is making a real difference in the lives of people in mine affected states around the world.

Maintaining this practice and our tangible support for all elements of Mine Action is essential to achieve our goal of a mine free world, and to maintain support to landmine survivors until the last one has been rehabilitated and reintegrated into society as a full productive member.

II

Nowhere is this more important than in affected countries themselves. We commend those countries such as Afghanistan, Jordan, Cambodia and others which have placed mine action as a national priority – where appropriate, as a development priority – and are investing significant amounts of their own budgets to get the job done.

We also commend our fellow donor countries for maintaining a high level of support, in particular countries such as Norway, Slovakia, Iceland, Denmark and Luxembourg and others who, on a per capita and percentage of GDP basis, are contributing truly impressive amounts to mine action.

III

Canada is also pleased to see increasing diversification in funding channels – with States drawing upon ongoing development, humanitarian, peace and security budgets to complement dedicated thematic budgets. This in our view, will expand our funding base over time, and make it more sustainable. Moreover, it enables us to address several areas that affect the lives of people at the same time.

IV

For our part, Canada continues to make the transition from limited thematic funding to full integration into humanitarian, development, peace and security programmes administered by CIDA and our Department of Foreign Affairs.

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Since 1999, we have committed \$172M through the Canadian Landmine Fund. Since we began development mainstreaming about 3 years ago, we've been able to generate an additional \$62 primarily from the regular development budget of the Canadian International Development Agency, and we envisage this amount increasing in future.

In almost all cases, when a CIDA bilateral programme takes on mine action, it makes a multi year commitment, usually 3 – 5 years initially. These are often renewed as well, providing a long term, predictable investment which makes it much easier for mine action authorities and practitioners to plan and see their work through.

CIDA and Foreign Affairs have recently come to agreement on joint effort to further integrate mine action into our respective departmental plans and budgets. If this plan is approved, Canada will maintain and we hope – exceed our current levels of support to Mine Action over the next five years.

V

Another way we have tried to do this issue justice is to have assembled what we like to be a strong inter-departmental team under the leadership of a Mine Action Ambassador. Some of you will recall our first mine action Ambassador, Jill Sinclair, followed by Dan Livermore and Ross Hynes.

Ambassador Hynes has just taken up new responsibilities as Canada's High Commissioner to Kenya with accreditation to five other countries in the region and to the UN in Nairobi centre. He has asked me to convey his warmest regards to everyone and to say what a pleasure it was to work with all of you. He's ready to do anything he can in his new capacity to facilitate our work in implementing the Convention and the Nairobi Action Plan.

VI

A decision was taken recently not to appoint another Mine Action Ambassador at this time, rather to create the new position of Senior Co-ordinator for Mine Action who will essentially take on many of the functions as the Ambassador, while retaining ongoing management of Foreign Affairs Mine Action and Small Arms Team. It's my great honour to have been appointed to this position. My colleagues and I will continue to do everything we can to continue to contribute to the important work of this community.

VII

If I might finish by reporting briefly on the inaugural meeting of the Linking Mine Action and Development Contact Group which met yesterday.

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We discussed the results of a questionnaire distributed over the summer to assist in determining the scope and direction of the group's programme of work, which will be carried out under four general heading: Awareness raising, networking, communication and providing guidance.

A key objective is to find ways our community can help build capacity through people and organizations that are on the ground, actually doing this work, first and foremost, mine affected states themselves, and their UN advisers .

Our group will continue to meet on the margins of MSPs and Intersessional meetings. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining has kindly offered to provide support services to the Contact Group on an ongoing basis and CIDA will cover the cost of recruiting a researcher who will be housed in the GICHD, and guided by the Contact Group. Among other things this person will help coordinate our contact with mine affected states, donors, the UN, International organizations and NGOs

Future meetings will feature case studies with a view to identifying best practices based on the real experience of practitioners who can tell us what is working, what isn't, and how the international community can better assist.

We invite representatives of mine affected states to please consider presenting at future meetings. We would also invite the UN development agencies, particularly UNDP and UNICEF, to relate their experiences through their worldwide network of offices and advisers, and to provide our contact group with advise and support on an ongoing basis. We in turn will try to help you with your important work through out missions and contacts in the field, and of course, with resources where we can.

We intend to carry out this work cooperatively and in full partnership with other contact groups, organizations and individuals. We will avoid duplicating effort and seek only to bring value added.

Please come out to the next meeting. In the meantime, please contact us if you have suggestions for us.

Thank You,

Earl Turcotte
Senior Coordinator
Mine Action