

Intervention of Denmark, 19 November 2007 at the 8th Meeting
of the State Parties of the Ottawa Convention, Jordan

Mr. President,

Denmark is grateful to the Kingdom of Jordan for hosting this meeting and congratulates you for the Presidency. We are very pleased to have contributed to this important event.

Now, on behalf of the Danish Government I'll give you a status on the Danish minefield on the peninsular with the name of Skallingen.

99% of the estimated 1.4 million landmines deployed during the Second World War in Denmark have been removed. The balance left is located on Skallingen, a peninsular in southwest Jutland on the North Sea coast.

According to information obtained from maps and other records, the mines left were laid in a random distribution and consisted of several types, including both anti-tank and anti personnel mines.

The mines remaining are located in dunes, beach, and marsh habitat.

Approximately 10 % of the total area of Skallingen is mine affected. The area is a very dynamic environment with fluctuations in ground levels over time due to the movement of the dunes. Due to the environment of extremely value, Skallingen is protected under several international directives and conventions including the Ramsar environmental convention.

Skallingen is not inhabited and the most common usage of the area is for grassing and tourism. No incidents associated with the mines on Skallingen have officially been recorded since 1946.

Danish Authorities have researched and monitored the mine affected areas and the functionality of the mines.

During the summer of 2005, an eight kilometre long IMAS compliant fence was erected to replace and compliment an old fence and sign postings. A total of approximately 295 hectares was fenced off from the public. This includes a buffer zone due to the inconsistency in the available mapping information. Of the approximately 295 hectares, 90 hectares is beach area, which is deemed to be mine polluted due to the eroding coastline.

In November 2005 the Danish Government concluded a political agreement regarding Skallingen with a view to the fiscal bill for 2006. The agreement allocates a total of 86 million DKK (approx. 16 million US Dollars) for the clearing of mines in the dune and beach areas on Skallingen. During 2006 a further 32 million DKK (approx. 6 million US Dollars) were allocated.

The Danish Coastal Authority was given the task of clearing the landmines. A project organisation has been established, and it was decided to execute the de-mining through a competitive international tendering process. Extensive historic research, surveying, mapping, technology review, and test trials were conducted and have formed the basis for the tendering process.

It was decided that part of the area was to be released to the public during mid 2006 and three areas were identified as giving the biggest net value to the public upon release. These three areas were released to the public as planned.

The time constraints imposed requires an interactive approach to the planning. We are pleased to record that the cooperation between governmental agencies, local authorities, NGO's, and other stakeholders

promoted this interactive approach and secured all required permits within time constraints. This cooperation has proven to continue since.

A British company was awarded the turn key contract for 2006 after a competitive web based bidding process. Initially 18 companies applied for prequalification and 5 were chosen to submit competitive proposals and bids.

A total area of approx. 18.5 hectares was cleared and released in 2006.

By the end of 2006 a large number of mines and mine components have been detected and removed or detonated. The majority of the finds have been rendered non-functional by the environment. A total of 67 potentially dangerous mines and mine components were found during this first phase with the majority being found in the dunes.

A new tender process for mine clearance in 2007 – 08 was initiated late in 2006 and followed the same procedure as for the previous tender. The total area to be cleared is 47, 5 hectares. A contract for the mine clearance was concluded in March 2007, with work commencing in April 2007. The contract for 2007 – 08 was awarded to a Danish consortium. This tender

process did draw extensively on the experiences from 2006 and benefited greatly from it.

By the end of October 2007 105 potentially dangerous mines and mine components have been found. The finding depth of the mines varies from surface level to several metres below the present surface. So far, the accumulated clearance figures from phase one and two are now at a total of 172 potentially dangerous mines and mine components. Since the work began in April 2007, one third of the total area has been cleared. It is therefore expected that the second phase will be concluded as scheduled by 15 October 2008. Mine clearance in the adjoining sea is conducted by special units under the Danish Armed Forces who coordinates their effort with the Danish Coastal Authority.

We have experienced that it is an intricate process to clear WWII mines under these circumstances and we look forward to continue to report on the progress over time and to continue to share the knowledge gained from clearing these antique mine fields. Many international partners have already

paid visits to Skallingen to learn about our experience and to gain access to our data.

We very much continue to be ready to share our experience to the benefit of our common mine clearance mission in the Ottawa community.

Mr. President, as one of the first countries to sign the Ottawa Convention, Denmark has pledged itself to work towards securing a world free from the manufacturing and trade in landmines. Since 1992, Denmark has donated approx. 200 mio. USD to mine action activities.

Denmark will continue to support and provide the necessary funding for mine action activities while landmines continue to constitute an obstacle to human security and economic development in communities affected.

Thank you Mr. President.