

**FIFTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES
TO THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION**

BANGKOK, THAILAND, 15-19 SEPTEMBER 2003

**Notes for UN Intervention During General Exchange of Views
Presented by Martin Barber, Director, United Nations Mine Action Service**

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address the Fifth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention on behalf of the United Nations. All interventions of UN colleagues this week will be on behalf of the UN as a whole. Sadly, the UN family is depleted this week by the absence of Polly Brennan and Mohammad Younus, who are still recovering from the injuries they sustained in the tragedy of 19 August in Baghdad. On their behalf and mine, as well as on behalf of the UN, I want to stress how touched we all have been by the messages of sympathy and support we have received from you. The UN remains committed to helping the people of Iraq to clear their country of the vast quantities of explosive remnants of war.

Mr. President,

As you know, the United Nations Mine Action Strategy for 2001-2005 was presented to the 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2001. In April this year, the UN engaged in a process of revision of the strategy, through consultations with United Nations departments and agencies, mine-affected and donor countries, and relevant inter-governmental and non-governmental

organizations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). This revised strategy addresses new challenges that have emerged in the past two years. It reflects new priorities and establishes new timetables for achieving its objectives. As in the previous strategy, the objectives remain clustered under six goals:

Information

We all agree on the need for additional information about the precise extent of the mine problem in order to ensure that States Parties are able to devise accurate national plans to meet their obligations. In 2003, at the request of the governments, we conducted inter-agency mine action assessment missions to Tunisia and Malawi. Landmine Impact Surveys were commissioned in a further five countries, through collaboration between Governments, NGOs, UNDP and UNMAS. We are further developing E-MINE (a web-based information system accessible at www.mineaction.org) to circulate to donors and other partners standardized reports generated from IMSMA (the Information Management System for Mine Action) on the scope and impact of the landmine problem, resources available, and progress achieved.

Coordination of UN-managed programmes

X In March 2003, the United Nations activated for the first time the UN Mine Action Rapid Response Plan, in Iraq. We found a serious landmine and unexploded ordnance problem. However, ^{the} most immediate needs are related to the presence of abandoned stockpiles of items of explosive ordnance throughout the country, which anyone can have access to. This is a problem of quite astonishing proportions.

Assistance to national and local mine action programmes

The United Nations is providing support to national mine action programmes in more than 35 countries/regions, helping Governments devise national strategies to become mine-free. Victim assistance is an important area of work for these programmes. In order to provide more guidance to field personnel, we developed the United Nations Victim Assistance Policy. Sayed Aqa from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will say more about UN-sponsored mine action programmes during the segment of informal discussions on mine clearance, mine risk education and mine action technologies. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) will also make a presentation during the informal discussions on victim assistance and socio-economic reintegration.

Quality management

We are engaged in an important dialogue with our key international NGO partners on issues relating to quality assurance and control, as well as other aspects of the working relationship in the field between NGOs and the UN.

We have recognized the need for ^a more systematic and coordinated approach on the issue of mine action technologies. I have appointed a senior colleague, Noel Mulliner, to a new position as UN Mine Action Technology Coordinator to develop this area of work and help to bring together all stakeholders.

Mobilization and coordination of resources

This year, we have launched a new process for producing the Portfolio of Mine-related projects. This more field-based approach, featuring the appointment of Country Portfolio Coordinators in all countries represented in the portfolio, has contributed to a more coordinated approach to programming and resource mobilization. The 2004 portfolio will be launched later this year in hardcopy and electronically, so that it can be updated as funds are received. A more detailed briefing will be given on Thursday 18 September at 14:00 in Room 3.

Advocacy

The United Nations remains committed to advocating for a total ban on antipersonnel landmines and stigmatizing their use. The Secretary-General of the United Nations, as well as other senior officials, have continued to advocate for

the Mine Ban Convention; they also continue to use their high-level contacts with Governments to promote universalization of the Convention and full implementation of the obligations of States Parties.

In the revised strategy, the advocacy goal has been strengthened to include a focus on all instruments and commitments that address the landmine and unexploded ordnance problem and/or advance the rights of affected persons. In this context, we have been involved in efforts to promote a new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, working in partnership with the Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) to ensure that the needs of mine survivors are taken into account. We have emphasized the role of non-state actors as a significant area of involvement for the United Nations, recognizing that the mine problem cannot be solved if we do not include non-state actors as part of the solution. These and other issues will be highlighted in our advocacy strategy, now scheduled to be completed by end-2003.

Mr. President,

I should like to congratulate Ambassador Lint for his remarkable achievements as President. ^{I want to} thank you, Mr. President, and your government, for Thailand's wonderful hospitality at this meeting and wish you every success for your Presidency. The Departments and Agencies of the UN system are committed to working with you to promote the core humanitarian aims of the Convention and to

helping mine-affected states eliminate the threat of landmines to the lives of their people.

Thank you for your attention.

6.