

**Intervention of the International Committee of the Red Cross
Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the
Convention
16 May 2003**

**Approaches, including best practices, to reduce the humanitarian
impact of mines that may pose similar risks to civilian populations
as anti-personnel mines**

At the February 2003 meeting of this Standing Committee the ICRC proposed, and a number of States welcomed the proposal, that a process be pursued to reach an understanding before the 2004 Review Conference on "best practices" regarding sensitive fuses and sensitive anti-handling devices which would cause anti-vehicle mines to be easily detonated by a person. Such an understanding could be adopted without prejudice to any party's legal position concerning the article 2 definition of an anti-personnel mine. This process would seek to find a pragmatic "middle ground" to resolve this issue within the Convention framework. We had hoped that such a solution could be based on expert work done on this issue since 2001 and the evolution of policy and practice in several important States. To facilitate such a solution the ICRC offered to host a second expert meeting on "best practices" in February 2004.

The ICRC has held consultations on this proposal with a large number of interested States, including an informal meeting last night that was announced on Monday and was open to all States Parties. On the basis of these consultations we have concluded that there is not a willingness to resolve this issue through a "best practices" approach within the context of this Convention. The ICRC deeply regrets this fact - which will again shift the focus back to the legal issues under article 2 where there is currently less common ground. Consequently the ICRC does not intend to proceed with the expert meeting proposed for February 2004. We welcome and would be happy to participate in discussions of best practices in other fora including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. However we do not believe that addressing this matter in other fora can resolve the specific issues which sensitive fuses and anti-handling devices pose for States Parties to the Ottawa Convention.