



**Meetings of the Standing Committees established by the States Parties to the Anti-
Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

Opening remarks – 2 June 2008

**Ambassador Stephan Nellen
Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining**

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, which, since the Intersessional Programme was established in 1999, has played host to the meetings of the Standing Committees.

I am aware that many of you have just returned from Dublin where you experienced all the hope, joy, and satisfaction of having created something new.

Our task this week is somewhat different.

It is to deal with the challenges of that which already exists, the ongoing challenges of ensuring, through the implementation of the Ottawa Convention, an end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines for all people for all time.

Unlike international negotiations, national implementation does not often make the headlines.

However, overcoming the incredible complexities of destroying emplaced anti-personnel mines or fulfilling for the long term with the imperative of guaranteeing the rights of survivors is a reality faced on a daily basis by dozens of States and their populations.

Their efforts and their requirements for assistance cannot be forgotten, even more than 10 years after the Convention was adopted.

This is the great value of the Intersessional Work Programme: It highlights the fact that the job is not done. And it does so by providing an opportunity for the voice of implementing States Parties to be heard and for all others to participate in bringing the cooperation and assistance provisions of the Convention to life.

I wish you the best as you proceed to make good use of this forum this week.

I also look seeing you at the cocktail reception I will host on Wednesday evening at 6:00 p.m. at the Attique Restaurant on the 9th floor of this building.

Thank you very much