



STATEMENT BY

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(GICHD)**

**ASSISTANCE TO MINE AFFECTED STATES PARTIES –
CLEARING MINED AREAS**

Madam Co-chair,

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) is pleased to provide a short update on our work to assist States parties meet their Article 5 obligations. As the Geneva Progress Report 2008 and the Nairobi Action Plan mention, the GICHD is one of the actors who are in a position to provide assistance to States Parties.

Standards

Action #21 mentions support for the International Mine Action Standards, or IMAS. The IMAS were developed to improve safety and efficiency in mine action by providing guidance, establishing principles and, in some cases, by defining international requirements and specifications. They provide a frame of reference that encourages the sponsors and managers of mine action programmes and projects to achieve and demonstrate agreed levels of effectiveness and safety. The GICHD manages the development and updating of the IMAS on behalf of the United Nations, and is currently finalizing a range of IMAS dealing with the topic of land release. The GICHD has developed an outreach programme and training package to assist mine-affected countries develop their own national standards, in order that they meet their obligations under Article 5 of the Treaty.

Information Management

Action #24 highlights making best use of management tools, such as the Information Management System for Mine Action, or IMSMA. The GICHD has produced IMSMA as a standard database for collecting, storing and analyzing mine action data. The system is

now deployed to 48 mine action programmes and six training centres, and is regarded as the “standard” system by the United Nations. The GICHD provides free installation of the system, operator training and system development. An updated version of the system has been installed in a number of programmes over the past year, and a major upgrade task is currently being undertaken for the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan. Currently the GICHD is implementing a number of measures to improve the utilization of the system. These include support to local customization of the system, help in making IMSMA a strategic tool of information and programme management, and undertaking a broader distribution of the system to relevant actors, such as national and international organizations as well as operators. Stronger partnerships are being developed with UNMAS, UNDP and other relevant actors. In this regard, a training workshop was recently held in April for 10 representatives from four organizations as part of our new implementing partner programme. These organizations will now assist us with field based support to IMSMA.

Technology

Actions 25 and 26 deal with the issue of improving mine clearance technologies. In September last year the GICHD, along with UNMAS, hosted a technology workshop for field users. The workshop covered a wide range of practical topics, including the use of new technology to enhance the process of land release through technical survey. The GICHD is committed to assist with the practical sharing of technical information and equipment between States Parties, and in line with this recently published a “Guidebook on Detection Technologies” as well as the usual equipment catalogues on detectors and machines. The GICHD has assisted a number of countries to undertake equipment trials.

Land Release

The Geneva Progress Report 2008 highlights the value of States Parties making use of the full range of emerging practical methods to release more rapidly areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. The GICHD has made the issue of land release a priority, and is undertaking a range of work. A publication titled “A Guide to Land Release – Non-Technical Methods” was published last year, and it gave best practice examples of non-technical methods to release land in six countries. We are currently working on another guide book on technical methods, and as mentioned earlier, we are in the last stages of producing a series of three International Mine Action Standards related to land release.

Linking Mine Action with Development.

Finally, the GICHD, along with Canada, the UK and UNDP, have been active in the area of linking mine action to development pursuant to Action #47. For the past two years the GICHD has had a full time research officer working on LMAD, and in that time the LMAD network has expanded to include over 200 mine action and development practitioners. The GICHD has produced a series of guidelines for donors, mine action authorities and development NGOs which were released at the 9 MSP. Finally, a regional workshop titled “Tackling Poverty in Conflict Affected Contexts: Linking development Security and the Remnants of Conflict” was held in Vietnam last November.

Madam Co-chair,

The GICHD notes with gratitude the encouragement mentioned in the Geneva Progress Report and Action 56 of the Nairobi Action Plan for the GICHD (and others) to continue to provide “invaluable support” to the work of the States Parties. We have done this with enthusiasm in the past, and we will continue to do so in the future with the same efficiency.

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