

## Germany

### Statement on Mine Clearance

28.05.2009

Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen

By any standard, the Ottawa Convention is a remarkable and unique achievement not only in international disarmament but also in international humanitarian law and in humanitarian and development cooperation. The Convention has become a matchless success story since it opened for signature a decade ago. We are optimistic that a world without the impact of anti-personnel mines may be achievable in years rather than in decades. This is a fantastic and unexpected progress since in the past, the most concerned assumed that it would take decades or even centuries to even reduce the problem to an acceptable level.

The German Government has been involved actively in the anti-personnel mine ban movement since the mid nineties and we will stay appropriately committed to meeting our obligations in support of the universalisation and implementation of the Convention as specified in Article 6.

Our commitment has been confirmed by the some 250 million USD we have granted bilaterally to 42 mine affected countries thus far. This amount does not include our share of the European Commission budget for mine action which amounts up to another some 100 million USD. In total German tax payers have expressed their commitment to mine action by granting some 350 million USD since 1992 which makes Germany one of the most generous donors worldwide.

In 2008/2009 some 46 million USD will be granted bilaterally to 22 countries worldwide.

As for Germany, all effected regions are equally important. Our commitment is driven exclusively by humanitarian aspects. However, our mine action funding is directed with strong preference to States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty. Up to now, the Asian region has received our strongest support where some 65 million USD have been granted to

Afghanistan alone. Mine Action measures in Africa have been supported at the same period of time with around 60 million USD followed by the Balkan region with 48,6 million USD.

Germany does not distinguish between mine and ERW clearance as in reality in the field most mine clearance operations address both hazards, thus responding at the same time to the obligations of the Ottawa Convention as well as to the CCW Protocol V obligations.

Given the estimated three billion USD provided by the international community to mine action thus far mine action budgets are likely to decline in the future due to other urgent global tasks. In addition, the economic and financial crisis is likely to have a noticeable impact on future mine action funding. As a consequence a shift in thinking is urgently required. Governments of affected countries need to demonstrate that they are taking their Mine Ban Treaty obligations seriously and that they are prepared to take determined steps towards national ownership. At the moment mine action is still characterized in many cases by externally managed mechanisms and structures and mainly dominated by international organizations. Building up efficient and sustainable local capacities is of the utmost importance, since the responsibility for Mine Action lies exclusively within the affected countries. In the long term, national ownership is the key to success of the Convention.

Germany will stay committed to mine action in the near future. However, in the light of a possible global decline of mine action budgets we call on all concerned to consider an adjustment to the changing general set-up in order to achieve the vision of world free from the impact of anti-personnel landmines.