

### **GICHD Director overviews cooperation projects with Lebanon**

The Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Ambassador Martin Dahinden, presented yesterday the activities and the objectives of the GICHD during a press conference held at the Officers Club in Yarzeh. The press conference was attended by the PRSG for South Lebanon Mr. Staffan de Mistura, the Director of the National Demining Office (NDO), Brigadier General Georges Massaad, and several Officers.

The press conference was opened by Massaad who reviewed the creation of the NDO and the International Support Group for Mine Action in Lebanon and their role.

He thanked the “United Nations and its specialized agencies, regional organizations, brother states, official institutions, international and local NGOs and associations, that are helping to solve the problem, thus resulting in the rebuilding of infrastructure, the acceleration of the return of the displaced to their villages and the farmers to their lands and the stimulation of socio-economic development.”

Dahinden reviewed the different stages of his visit to Lebanon and he described the work program of the NDO as “above average.” He commented on the following cooperation projects between the GICHD and Lebanon:

- A research on the role of the military and the use of mechanical assets in mine clearance operations with Lebanon as an example is to be published in June 2004.
- IMAS/National Technical Standard and Guidelines: for mine clearance operations, Lebanon follows IMAS established by the GICHD, as recommended by the United Nations, and Lebanon has also established national TSGs (Technical Standard and Guidelines) for this purpose.
- Socio-economic issues: A 4 member Lebanese delegation participated at the regional workshop on the “Socio-economic consequences” organized by the GICHD for UNDP in Jordan in March 2004.
- IMSMA: work is conducted according to IMSMA at the NDO and at the Mine Action Coordination Centre, which is related to the United Nations, in South Lebanon.
- In September 2003, a regional centre to support IMSMA in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) was inaugurated in Beirut.
- Work is conducted according to IMSMA in the following MENA countries: Cyprus, Eritrea, Iraq, Lebanon, Somalia, Sudan, Western Sahara, and Yemen.

At the end of the press conference, Massaad gave Dahinden two acknowledgment plaques, on behalf of the LAF Chief of Command, General Michel Sleiman, and in the name of the NDO.