



[| Contents](#) | [| Editorial](#) | [| Focus](#) | [| Feature](#) | [| Book Review](#) | [| Making it Personal](#) | [| Special Report](#) |
[| Notes from the Field](#) | [| Country Profiles](#) | [| In Remembrance](#) | [| Research and Development](#) | [| News Briefs](#) |

Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

by Ian Mansfield [Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining]



The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining provides operational assistance to mine-action programs and operators, creates and disseminates knowledge, works to improve quality management and standards and provides support to instruments of international law.

This *Geneva Diary* installment details the recent GICHD activities from late 2007 through the first months of 2008, which include the release of two new publications, a new GICHD-administered sponsorship program, an update to the Information Management System for Mine Action and a change in organization leadership.

Land Release

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining continues to attach importance to the question of both technical and non-technical methods of land release. A publication titled *Land Release: A Guide for Mine-and ERW-Affected Countries*¹ was released at the Eighth Meeting of States Parties in Jordan in November 2007. The Guide has six case studies from countries like Cambodia, Croatia and Lebanon, where the respective authorities have developed procedures for the release of land by non-technical means.

GICHD has provided practical, field-level advice to a number of countries, including Angola, Cambodia and Laos, that are developing local policies and procedures for land release. In the context of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention,² Mozambique and Uganda received support on land release in the context of developing requests for an extension regarding their obligations to the Convention's Article 5.³ Work is also ongoing with the United Nations Mine Action Service to develop International Mine Action Standards⁴ for land release.

Ongoing research and a second study on the technical elements of land release are due to be published in late 2008.

CCW Sponsorship Program

In 2007, the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons⁵ decided to establish a sponsorship program that would enable delegates from developing countries and ERW-affected states to attend regular meetings in Geneva. They then requested the GICHD to administer the program. The first 23 sponsored participants attended the CCW meetings in November 2007.

Information Management Update

The Information Management System for Mine Action update installation project, begun in 2006, continues to make good progress with more than 80 percent of all IMSMA installations now working with the new software. Preparations for the transition to the new software are well underway at the remaining sites with most planning to complete the transition to the updated software before the end of 2008.

In the meantime, the IMSMA development team has been working hard to complete its next update to the system. Based on requests received from the field, the update is focused on the system's search, reporting and data export

functions. Distribution of the update is currently scheduled to begin in mid-September 2008. Installation of the software and user training will be scheduled through the IMSMA Regional Support Coordinators in each region. Detailed planning, information regarding the specific content of the update and questions should be addressed to the RSCs.

Mechanical Catalogue 2008

*The Mechanical Demining Equipment Catalogue*⁶ was released in early 2008. The catalog describes three categories of machines: mine-clearance machines, ground-preparation machines and mine-protected vehicles. The introduction of the book also contains a checklist of guidelines for purchasing a mechanical demining machine. Almost 50 different machines are listed in the catalog, and when available, test and evaluation reports are cited.

Change of GICHD Director

On 13 June 2008, Ambassador Stephan Nellen completed his four-year assignment as Director of the GICHD and returned to the Swiss Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Council of Foundation appointed his successor, Ambassador Stephan Husy. Ambassador Husy has a background with the Swiss Development Corporation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His last assignment was as the Secretary General of the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent. 🇨🇭

Biography



Ian Mansfield is the Deputy Director and Head of Operations at the GICHD and is responsible for all operational, technical and research activities of the Centre. He is also responsible for analyzing existing and potential areas of activity for the Centre, as well as all evaluation, assessment and consultancy activities. Mansfield holds a Master of Business Administration and a bachelor's degree in civil engineering.

Endnotes

1. *Land Release: A Guide for Mine- and ERW-Affected Countries*. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, 2007. <http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/publications/Land-Release-2007.pdf>. Accessed 21 October 2008.
2. *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction*, Oslo, Norway. 18 September 1997. <http://www.icbl.org/treaty/text/english>. Accessed 25 June 2008. The document was opened for signature in Ottawa, Canada, 3 December 1997, commonly known as the Ottawa Convention.
3. Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention requires that signatories identify all mined or mine-suspected areas; ensure these areas are marked, monitored and protected to protect civilians; and destroy or ensure destruction of all mines in these areas as soon as possible and no later than 10 years after the Convention's entry into force. Ottawa Convention text available at <http://www.icbl.org/treaty/text/english>. Accessed 25 June 2008.
4. United Nations Mine Action Service (2003). *International Mine Action Standards*. New York: UNMAS. The IMAS can be found online at <http://www.mineactionstandards.org/imas.htm>. Accessed 21 March 2008.
5. Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, Geneva, Switzerland, 10 October 1980. This Convention is also referred to as the CCW or CCCW. <http://www.ccw-treaty.com/KeyDocs/ccw-treaty-text.htm>. Accessed 21 March 2008.
6. *Mechanical Demining Equipment Catalogue 2008*. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. <http://www.gichd.org/en/gichd-publications/index-mde-catalogue-2008/>. Accessed 21 October 2008.

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