

## **Press Release**

Geneva, 28 September 2001

### **Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining receives mandate to support the implementation of the Mine Ban Convention**

The 120 States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention mandated the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to support the implementation of the Convention during their Third Meeting in Managua, Nicaragua (18 – 21 September). Today, the Council of Foundation of the Centre accepted this mandate, allowing the GICHD to play a new role.

The GICHD has already supported expert meetings and other activities of the so-called „Ottawa Process" in the past. The new mandate reinforces and formalises this role. It will in particular help States Parties with limited resources to assume important functions in the Ottawa Process (such as co-chairs or rapporteurs). As a result, the inclusive character of this Process will be further strengthened.

The new mandate of the GICHD – a Foundation under Swiss law – is a modern version of Good Offices. It is innovative as it supports the implementation of an international treaty without creating a large and expensive implementing agency. Nearly a dozen countries have already indicated their preparedness to contribute to the funding.

The new role will have no negative impacts on the GICHD's other activities: The Centre will continue to provide substantive operational support to on-going demining programmes and to undertake application-oriented research. The landmine problem, which affects the populations of over 80 countries, will remain a major humanitarian problem for the coming decades. And the new role for the GICHD means that Geneva is playing a greater role as focal point in the battle against the plague of landmines.

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