



Press Release

Geneva, 13 November 2003

United Nations Security Council - Briefing by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

Today the United Nations Security Council (UN SC) discussed the importance of mine action in the context of peacekeeping operations. The Director of the GICHD – Ambassador Martin Dahinden – was invited by the President of the Security Council to address the 15 member countries on this issue. The Presidency of the UN SC is currently held by Angola, itself a mine affected country.

At his briefing, following the presentation of the Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Ambassador Dahinden underlined the complexity of peace support operations. The success of such operations depends largely on the capability to manage a smooth transition to the post conflict phase, as the international military presence dismantles. Information management, international mine action standards, and also a better understanding of capabilities and limitations of the military in such situations, can significantly improve the effectiveness of mine action and contribute to a smooth transition.

The GICHD supports UN peacekeeping operations by providing the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) - a computer based tool for the standardised collection, storage, analysis and dissemination of data on the mine and UXO threat – in more than thirty countries and programmes. Moreover, the GICHD has developed the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), under a mandate from the United Nations. The standards have two important purposes : to help improve quality in mine action, and to facilitate cooperation and inter-operability among the different actors.

Finally, Ambassador Dahinden underlined the core aims and activities of the GICHD : operational assistance to mine affected countries, applied research, and support to the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, also known as the ‘Ottawa Treaty’.

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Annexe : Speech of Ambassador Dahinden at the UN Security Council