



## FIRST SEMINAR OF AFRICAN FRANCOPHONE ACTORS OF MINE AND ERW ACTION

The first African Francophone seminar on mine action and explosive remnants of war (ERW) took place from 20 to 22 October 2008 in Cotonou – Republic of Benin.

This meeting, hosted by the Government of Benin, was organised by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in collaboration with the CPADD (West African Training Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Benin) and with the financial support of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and of the government of Switzerland.



The seminar was created for directors and operations staff from mine and ERW action organisations in affected countries; it was also open to officials on an equivalent level from States without specific structures for mine action. The organisers also welcomed representatives from international and regional organisations.

Representatives from 14 Francophone African countries attended: Algeria, Benin, Burundi, Chad, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia.

Several representatives from the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UNDP and ECOWAS, as well as the Secretary General of the French national commission for the clearance of antipersonnel mines (CNEMA) also took part in the work sessions and in all debates.

This first meeting was specifically planned as a forum for exchange of experiences; all participants benefited from this opportunity to share information and to have access to expertise in French in the various components of mine action.

The sessions were: a presentation on national laws and their development; national structures and programmes of mine action; strengthening training capacities in mine and ERW affected countries and seeking bilateral cooperation; improving information management (IMSMA); development of national mine action standards (NMAS); resource mobilisation on the national level and from the donor community.

Participants followed the work of the seminar with great interest, and expressed a wish to have a similar annual event, hosted in a different country every year. As a complement to these meetings, a network for information and exchange between Francophone African actors of mine action should be developed; contacts between Francophone States should be reinforced by international meetings and follow-up work after the seminars.

A CD with the final report can be ordered on this [link](#). All documents produced during the seminar will be soon available on the same webpage.

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