

Dear colleagues,

Let me start by thanking you for your interest in the issue of linking mine action and development and for joining the breakfast meeting on Wednesday May 10, on the margins of the May 2006 meeting of the Standing Committees. We consider that the presence of 45 participants on this subject at an early hour is a promising indication of growing interest and will to follow-up.

We had, among the participants, a good mix of representatives from donor and mine affected countries, demining NGOs, UN organizations and research institutions. We heard participants indicate support for the initiative and provided useful suggestions for future work. The approaches taken to integrate mine action in development vary from donor to donor and from one mine affected country to another; we can learn from these different approaches and synergies.

Ambassador Nellen and Mr. Earl Turcotte, co-chairs of the meeting, mentioned that linking mine action to development is a concrete way of ensuring the achievement of several goals of the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009. Earlier dialogues sponsored by the GICHD and Canada have established this link and have helped identify existing programmes that are contributing to integrate mine action and development cooperation.

We have now come to a point where more concrete and practical tools should be developed to accelerate and facilitate the interface between development cooperation and mine action. This is viewed by many as an important step to complement existing support and as a means to assist the future transformation of mine action from a purely stand-alone activity to a more comprehensive approach covering post-conflict transition, recovery and development.

It is possible to create some common ground upon which practical guidelines can be developed.

High on the list are themes such as:

- capacity building and the long term sustainability of mine action at the national level;
- cross-cutting mine action into planning in other sectors such as urban development and infrastructure, health services (for disabled), education (for mine risk reduction), peace and security issues; and
- a whole-of-government approach.

Another important area includes integrating war disabled persons (specifically mine survivors) into the work force.

Including mine action in a country's development plan eases the access to funding from multilateral as well as bilateral channels. A backdrop already exists to facilitate and guide a developmental orientation in the mine action community: the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and further work performed in the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD. These are important for Article 5 Convention obligations (clearance deadlines) - if mine action is not included in national budgets and priorities (e.g. PRSPs) it may not attract donor interest.

We briefly explored methods of engendering practical guidance. Suggestions were made on possible ways to address specific topics such as: research projects, expert panels or sub-groups on particular themes, events focusing on regional issues, and piloting test projects or programmes. Other suggestions included:

- examining national development plans to see how development linkages could be included or enhanced;

- developing training packages for national directors and officials on creating linkages with planning and finance ministries to insure the integration of mine action into plans and budgets in an effective way;
- country-specific research might be needed to strengthen the link between mines and development.

The group discussed how a contact group might be organized. Due to lack of time we only briefly touched on some suggestions dealing with timing of meetings, reporting, chairing. We suggested that we would consult further to draw out the views of participants over the course of the summer.

The co-chairs summed up the meeting by reflecting the positive nature of the discussion and concluding that there was sufficient interest to move ahead with the formation of a contact group on mine action and development. This group would be informal and open-ended but would address concrete issues and be results oriented.

A questionnaire will be circulated to you to seek additional views and assist in developing a programme of work which will then be proposed at our next meeting during the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties in September 2006.

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