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## CONTACT GROUP ON LINKING MINE ACTION AND DEVELOPMENT

### Purpose and focus of the Contact Group

#### Introduction

1. As a follow-up to three dialogues on linking mine action and development held in the margins of the Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, an open-ended Contact Group on Linking Mine Action and Development was established in May 2006. In the summer months following this decision, a questionnaire was distributed and informal consultations were conducted in order to solicit views on the specific subjects and activities on which the Contact Group should focus. The Contact Group met for the first time in the margins of the Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the APMBC, in September 2006. The purpose of this document is to provide the background for this initiative and the purpose and focus of the Contact Group.

#### Why a Contact Group?

2. For a number of years, there have been discussions on the need to integrate mine action concerns into development programmes, plans and budgets. More recently, Canada and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) organized three dialogues to understand these linkages. UNDP presented at these meetings certain research initiatives that explored the advantages of linking mine action and development and highlighted the on-going work conducted through the network of UNDP technical advisors to national mine action programmes.
3. Participants in the dialogues as well as in other on-going discussions confirmed that mine action should be seen in a broader context of development, as an integral element of the development continuum in mine-affected countries. Indeed, a closer integration of development cooperation and mine action can reduce the threat and impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war while, at the same time, creating conditions for sustainable social and economic development. From an operational perspective, therefore, this approach enhances the impact of mine action activities. From a policy perspective, it is also in line with the new development paradigm, which is geared

towards national development budget support—i.e. mine-affected countries should integrate mine action into their overall development plans and associated budgets and make clear where the priority of mine action stands in their development agenda. This is vital for mine-affected countries seeking assistance from development financing (ODA).

4. Since these discussions on the linkages between mine action and development have started, the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention have recognized the importance of this issue. At their first Review Conference in 2004, they adopted the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009, which includes a number of action points encouraging the linking of mine action with development programmes, plans and budgets.
5. In addition, the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD-DAC) agreed in March 2005 that mine action and small arms control activities were eligible for ODA (overseas development assistance). As a follow-up to this decision, the members of the OECD-DAC Conflict, Peace and Development Cooperation Network (CPDC) expressed support in February 2006 for a UK-UNDP proposal to include the development of guidance on armed violence and poverty reduction in its work stream on Security Sector Reform (SSR) in its 2007-2008 programme of work. In addition it was agreed that UNDP, the UK and Canada would explore the possibility of adding mine action to other issues, including small arms control, to be covered under the overall chapeau of work on armed violence and poverty reduction. A concept note on the specific workplan and associated costs for the CPDC was approved at the recent CPDC meeting in October 2006. The main output of the proposed workplan will be the production of a set of guidelines for donors on how to address armed violence issues (including mine action) through development programming; the development of these guidelines will be done in close collaboration with all stakeholders, including donors and affected countries, the United Nations, and international and non-governmental organizations (a number of regional consultations are planned to validate the draft guidelines).
6. Therefore, the purpose of the Contact Group on Linking Mine Action and Development should be two-fold: 1) to support the States Parties to the APMBC and facilitate the achievement of several of the action points of the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009; 2) to support the OECD-DAC process on the development of guidelines on integrating armed violence issues (including mine action) into development programming.

What has been done to date on linking mine action and development?

7. Several mine action stakeholders including affected states, donors and practitioners have already taken steps towards linking mine action and development. More specifically, some **mine-affected countries** have successfully integrated mine action language into their Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers or national development plans. Others have linked mine action activities to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), or created specific MDGs on this issue. However, and regardless of clearly stating the priority given to mine action in the context of development by inclusion into broader development frameworks, affected countries have yet to experience an increase in donors' attention to comprehensively deal with security and development issues in an integrated fashion..
8. The discussion has also been taken up in many **donor countries**. Some countries already provide mine action assistance through their development funds and agencies. In the face of competing priorities, however, it has sometimes proven difficult within development agencies to articulate the business case for such an approach (i.e.

advantages of integrating mine action in development programmes and the opportunity cost of not doing so).

9. Increasingly, **mine action operators** are developing competencies and methodologies in this field. They link their clearance projects to local development initiatives. They conduct socio-economic impact assessments that influence priority setting and tasking, and post-clearance land use assessments that provide lessons learned.
10. Finally, the **United Nations** has endeavoured to provide an enabling environment for this approach, in light of its dual mandate to help countries achieve the MDGs and to provide specific mine action assistance. The United Nations is present in all of the mine-affected countries through its country offices, provides assistance to national authorities in the formulation (and implementation) of their national development plans, and provides direct mine action support to more than 30 countries. The United Nations also provides specific mine action capacity development assistance to national authorities, both at global- and country-level through several means including: the organization of the Annual Meeting of National Mine Action Directors and their UN Advisors (which includes half-day sessions on mine action and development), the organization of senior and mid-level mine action trainings, mine action exchanges between programmes, direct support for the development of national mine action strategies, country-specific support for linking mine action into development planning processes, etc.

What can the Contact Group do to encourage the link?

11. The Contact Group is an open-ended forum of participants with the common interest of promoting the link between mine action and development in the broad sense of the term. Its aim is to support the States Parties in the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan and the OECD-DAC process. The Contact Group includes States Parties and Observer States, the United Nations, and international, regional and non-governmental organizations. It meets in the margins of the Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings, Meetings of States Parties and as required.
12. The Contact Group is a platform to **informally discuss** ways and means to enhance mine action as a tool in reducing poverty and fostering development. From this perspective, it can play a useful role in building a more sustainable link between affected states, development agencies and practitioners. To mark progress toward facilitating new development programming which includes mine action, members should increasingly involve their national development agencies in the work of the Contact Group.
13. The Contact Group can **raise awareness and political will** among key development players (UN, donors etc) on the role of mine action in development and **advocate** the consideration of mine action from a development perspective.
14. The Contact Group can **provide a space** for States Parties to speak frankly about what they are willing to do to enhance the linkages between mine action and development, the constraints they face in so doing, and the extent to which they are able to exert influence within their national structures.
15. The Contact Group can provide a forum/mechanism to **exchange information** on best practice, lessons learned, existing tools and guidelines, and the practical impact of mine action on sustainable development.

16. The Contact Group can serve as an informal **consultative body to the OECD-DAC** process on the development of guidelines on the integration of armed violence issues (including mine action) into development programming.
17. The Contact Group can **promote policy dialogue** between States Parties, the United Nations, international, regional and non-governmental organizations, donors and development practitioners on the issue of integrating mine action in development programming.