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# Foreword

**M**ost humanitarian mine clearance undertaken today is still carried out by manual deminers and specially trained mine detection dog (MDD) teams. Machines make a contribution to the work of these two systems, creating safer conditions and greatly speeding-up the overall clearance process. In various forms, machines have been employed for mine clearance since the 1914-1918 War. Yet for many years, demining machines were the preserve of the military and until the advent of humanitarian demining in the late 1980s, the development of specialist vehicles for mine clearance had been relatively limited.

As humanitarian demining gained momentum, it was assumed that machines would inject a much-needed increase in clearance rates accompanied by a higher level of safety. Thus far, this has occurred to a lesser extent than was expected. Today, mechanical mine clearance systems are being employed on an ever-increasing scale and the choice of machines on the international market continues to expand slowly. However, it is widely believed that machines have not been applied to clear mines to their fullest potential.

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) has carried out an in-depth study of the use of machines in demining. The *Study of Mechanical Application to Demining* is released in the spring of 2004 and it is believed that the conclusions and recommendations, if pursued by both donors and field users, could lead to a significant acceleration of the demining process.

A variety of new machines have been incorporated into the 2004 issue of the *Mechanical Demining Equipment Catalogue*. However, some of the machines available on the market, in particular those of a heavier class, have been in service only sporadically or not at all during the last year. This may be an indication of a new and enhanced understanding of operational needs and cost effectiveness.

Whenever available, test and evaluation reports are cited but the equipment listed in this catalogue has not been tested or evaluated by the GICHD. Accordingly, the GICHD does not assume responsibility for the accuracy of information provided by the respective manufacturers and such information does not necessarily represent the opinions of the GICHD.

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