

CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS:

- The conference touched on various themes of mine action: demining, mine awareness and victim assistance with panels led mostly by regional organisations.
- The majority of the Middle Eastern countries had representation from both the military and the government. Armies from Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, Lebanon and Sudan updated conference participants on their mine action efforts.
- Canada, USA, UK, and Norway spoke at the opening session, representing the major donors of the region. Peter Herby of the ICRC also presented a paper explaining all of the major obligations of the treaty.
- Landmine Resource Centre will draft a summary to be circulated to conference participants.

Announcements

On January 18, Thailand announced the establishment of a Mine Action Centre. Canada attended the opening ceremony. The Centre is to aid the implementation of the Ottawa Convention with a focus on mine clearance, training and assistance to victims.

Mine Action Programme Updates

- During the official visit of Prime Minister Chrétien to Ukraine, Jan 28, a memorandum of cooperation between Canada and Ukraine was signed. Canada is working with Ukraine to provide assistance with meeting the obligations of the Ottawa Convention, focussing particularly on stock pile destruction.
- Yemen: \$1.3 million to the UNMAS for a national Level I Survey, victim assistance, and protective gear.
- Cambodia: A contribution of \$500,000 to the UNDP Trust Fund for CMAC.
- Afghanistan: A contribution of \$300,000 through the CIDA Afghan country desk for a mine awareness campaign.
- Laos: A contribution of \$250,000 to UNICEF Canada for a children's landmine awareness campaign.
- El Salvador: A Canadian NGO responsive program contribution of \$200,000 to the Sierra Club of British Columbia (GAIA Project) to support a mine awareness/victim assistance.
- Uganda: A Canadian NGO responsive program contribution of \$125,000 to the Canadian Network for International Surgery to support mine awareness/victim assistance.
- Angola: A contribution of \$250,000 to UNICEF Canada for a community mine awareness education project.