

Regional Initiatives: Mine Clearance

QUESTION

What is the status of de-mining efforts in Central America?

SUGGESTED REPLY

- In March 1997, CIDA contributed \$400,000 to the OAS for its demining activities.
- The UPD believes that it is possible to render Central America mine-free within a decade, e.g. by 2005. This would make the Americas AP landmine-free.
- Guatemala recently announced that its landmines have virtually all been cleared. El Salvador was declared virtually landmine-free in 1994.
- Last year, Canada promoted an OAS General Assembly resolution on the eventual creation of a Western Hemisphere Anti-Personnel Land mines-Free Zone, in support of broader efforts towards a global ban (Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction). Thirty-three OAS member states signed the Treaty (all except the U.S. and Cuba).
- However, there is still much to be done. Nicaragua, Honduras and Costa Rica, have requested OAS assistance in landmine clearance. The OAS estimates that up to 135,000 uncleared anti-personnel landmines remain in these countries: Nicaragua (approx. 100,000 mines), Honduras (30,000) and Costa Rica (5,000). The mines constitute a small percentage of the world's total, but nevertheless have an important impact on regional economic development. We are working with the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy to support this effort.