

The Canadian Centre for Mine Action Technologies



When the federal government launched the Canadian Landmine Fund, it recognized the need for a technology component to address emerging needs in

the field of humanitarian mine action. This resulted in the formation of the Canadian Centre for Mine Action Technologies (CCMAT) at the Canadian Forces Base in Suffield, Alberta, a location chosen for its proximity to the Defence Research Establishment Suffield (DRES) and the Experimental Proving Ground (EPG). Through its association with DRES, the Centre has access to expertise and sophisticated test facilities developed for the military countermine research and development program.

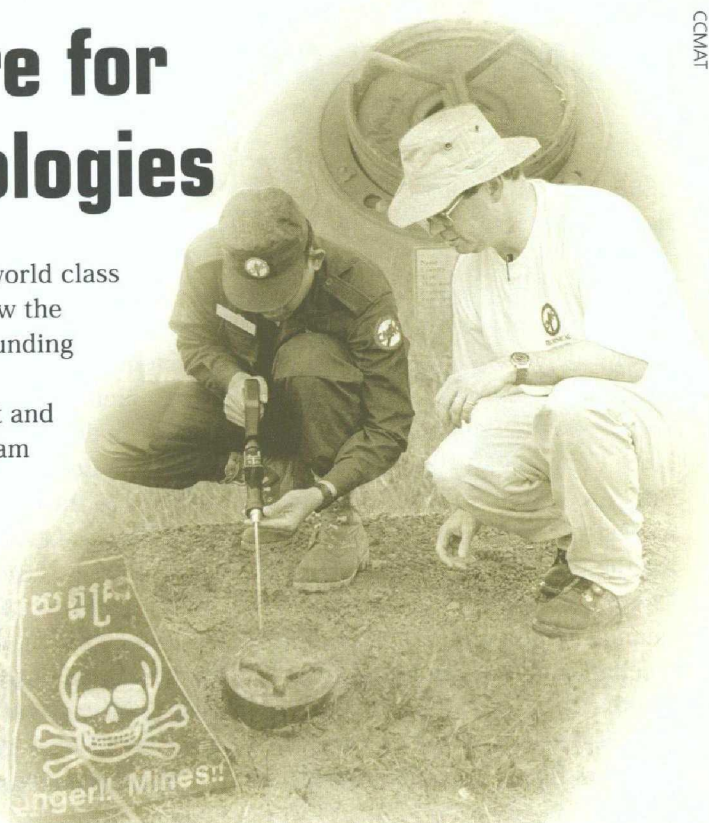
CCMAT is a partnership between the Department of National Defence (DND) and Industry Canada with a mandate to research, develop and commercialize low cost technology for humanitarian mine action. While DND focuses on research and development, Industry Canada, through the Technology Partnerships Canada program, works with Canadian industry to bring promising technologies to market.

Using test facilities on the Suffield EPG, the Centre will act as an assessment agency to ensure new technology meets the requirements of the demining community.

Access to these world class facilities will allow the Centre to be a founding member of the International Test and Evaluation Program (ITEP) and, through ITEP, work towards a global standard for testing new demining technology.

A major part of the Centre's mandate is to acquire and disseminate technical information on mine action. An important initiative in this area is the Information Forum, proposed by Canada and the European Union, which will sponsor workshops and an international journal of mine action technology. While the emphasis will be on technical information, the Information Forum will actively solicit participation from the demining community and will ensure that its product is directly relevant to the needs of deminers.

CCMAT will make a significant contribution to protecting the deminer and investigating alternatives to anti-personnel (AP) mine capabilities. The Centre's main contribution to the former will be a better understanding of the mechanism of blast injury which will improve the design of protective clothing and equipment. Work



CCMAT tests and evaluates new mine action technologies. This prodder underwent testing in Cambodia.

on alternatives has begun with an operational research study on the role of the AP mine in warfare.

In its first full year of operation, the Centre's overall program has been mapped out and many important projects are underway. The test and evaluation facilities essential for the Centre's role as an assessment agency are now in regular use. By active participation in the Information Forum and the ITEP, the Centre has made an auspicious start to information exchange and the standardization of testing methodology. By maintaining close links with the mine action community, the Centre will ensure that the people in the field ultimately benefit from the Centre's activities. For more information, see the Centre's web site (www.ccmata.gc.ca).

CCMAT



ICBL sets goal for 100th ratification

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) has continued its intense pace of global activity since the First Meeting of States Parties (FMSP) in Maputo, Mozambique in May - campaigning for at least 100 ratifications by March 1, 2000.

At its Second General Meeting in Maputo, the ICBL added the United States to its 'most wanted list' and agreed to redouble its universalization efforts on the states of the former Soviet Union and the Middle East/North Africa. It pledged continued, unrelenting pressure on all non-signatories to join the treaty and pressure on all non-state actors to abide by the spirit and intent of the ban.

During its Second General Meeting, the ICBL committed to participate in the intersessional work program established at the FMSP. ICBL working groups are aligned with the five Intersessional Standing Committees of Experts, and a full-time ICBL staff person has been designated to liaise with governments in this and related work.

International Advocacy

In recent months, members of the ICBL have organized and attended conferences in Germany and Croatia. A national workshop in Nigeria helped set in motion steps for the new government to accede to the Treaty.

ICBL members also undertook advocacy missions to Kosovo, Korea, United Arab Emirates and elsewhere. The ICBL sent letters to heads of state and engaged in advocacy activities at the Francophonie summit in New Brunswick in September and the UN General Assembly in New York. It also visited the UN missions of targeted states in New York during September and used the occasion of a Special Summit of the European Council in Finland in October to press for the mine ban.

Over the next few months, regional and thematic seminars are planned in Georgia, Panama, Egypt, the Horn of Africa and the U.S. in the continued campaign for universalization and effective implementation of the treaty.

National Campaigns:

In France, activists constructed shoe pyramids and held events in 20 cities through September. In Italy, the national campaign hosted Peace Week events including a delegation of Afghan mine action experts. A postcard campaign to Brazil's President Fernando Henrique Cardoso was launched on October 1 when the Treaty entered into force in that country.

The ICBL also issued several action alerts originating from country campaigns. One alert related to a state-owned Romanian company, Romtehnica, which solicited buyers of AP mines at an arms fair in the United Kingdom. The UK is a state party to the ban treaty, while Romania has yet to ratify.

Another alert called for lobbying of a U.S. congressional committee considering funding of a military system called RADAM containing both AP and anti-tank mines. The RADAM system runs contrary to the stated goal of the U.S. to join the ban treaty by 2006.

- Liz Bernstein, ICBL



Postcard sent by the Brazilian Campaign to Ban Landmines to President Fernando Henrique Cardoso when the Mine Ban Treaty entered into force for their country, October 1, 1999.