

Executive summary

Toward a landscape of hope

Two years ago, I had the honour of hosting representatives of 121 nations who came to Canada to join us in signing an historic treaty banning the use, production and export of anti-personnel landmines. It was, I believe, a proud moment for our nation, the crowning achievement of a long and challenging diplomatic effort by Canada and its partners.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention brought the first ray of hope to millions around the world that we would one day rid ourselves of these inhumane weapons. Recognizing that a treaty alone would not clear contaminated land or ease the plight of victims, our nation backed its signature with a financial commitment to support the painstaking work needed to end this global epidemic. On December 3, 1997, Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced the creation of a five-year, \$100 million Canadian Landmine Fund.

This 1998-99 annual report documents the combined efforts of four government departments during the first year of the Canadian Landmine Fund. It reports on our first steps toward an integrated mine action agenda and portrays the range of programming undertaken to meet our goals of clearing land, ending casualties and assisting victims.

In addition to the field projects supported by the Canadian Landmine Fund, Canada has maintained diplomatic leadership on this issue. We have been at the forefront of efforts to increase support for the Convention, and to ensure that action on landmines remains a priority. The leadership shown by Canada and our partners has resulted in dramatic growth of support for this convention, which has now been signed or acceded to by 136 countries and ratified by 89 ratifications.

This year also saw the establishment of the Canadian Landmine Foundation, a private sector organization committed to raising money for international mine action. It will ensure that Canadians have an opportunity to participate in a meaningful way on this important issue.

Our efforts in the first year of the Canadian Landmine Fund have established a solid base for sustained action to fulfill the terms of the Convention. I look forward to reporting continued progress on this issue in coming years, so that people everywhere may walk the earth safely and with hope for the future.

Lloyd Axworthy

Minister of Foreign Affairs



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