

CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO MINE ACTION

The Prime Minister's announcement of a \$100 million fund to support the implementation of the Ottawa Convention last December was the latest event in an ongoing tradition of Canadian involvement in mine action that includes peace support operations and development assistance..

Canada, through the Canadian International Development Agency, has supported mine clearance since 1993, when over \$2 million was disbursed through multilateral channels to Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Laos and El Salvador. Contributions of this magnitude continued annually with a peak in 1996 when \$5.6 million was disbursed, over \$1 million of which was dedicated to Bosnia.

The Department of National Defence has a similar tradition of mine action. In 1989-90, Canadian Forces (CF) provided mine awareness training for Afghan refugees, and in 1992 engineers cleared unexploded ordnance to create a demilitarized zone between Iraq and Kuwait. The Canadian Forces helped to clear mines in Rwanda in 1994 and have been conducting mine awareness training for Canadian troops and refugees as part of many peace support operations, including those in Croatia, Bosnia, and Somalia. Canadian military engineers have also been instrumental in setting up Mine Action Centres in Cambodia and Bosnia. That commitment continues today with contingents of seven Canadian technical advisers in the Cambodia Mine Action Centre, and five technical advisers with the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre.

Canada's involvement in mine action originated in a commitment to humanitarianism which shaped our determination to achieve a global ban on anti-personnel mines. Today, tradition has given way to innovation as we look to the Ottawa Convention as a framework for action to address the humanitarian crisis of mines worldwide. Our success in this effort will hinge on partnership. Canada may have committed \$100 million, but if we work together with other donors, and if we plan our projects with sufficient consultation, we can mobilize many times more resources.

The majority of the projects so far established under the \$100 million have been undertaken or developed in partnerships of some kind. Canada is co-operating with Norway, Jordan and Israel on a mine clearance program in the Jordan Valley. In Mozambique, the Canadian Auto Workers have initiated a partnership with the Government of Canada which, through matching funds, has doubled Canada's contribution there to mine clearance. In Guatemala, Canada is partnering with Israel in rehabilitating mine victims. In Bosnia, we have partnered with Norway to finance insurance for military deminers, a project neither country could have undertaken alone and which has effectively doubled the number of deminers working in the field. In Central America, Canada, together with Mexico, is working with the Pan American Health Organization to develop community-based rehabilitation programs. These partnerships at the donor level are complemented by partnerships on the ground where the majority of our projects are implemented in co-operation with the UN and NGOs. The most important challenge for Canada is sustainability. The Canadian Landmine Action Fund, a joint venture between Mines Action Canada and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is stimulating awareness, raising funds, and giving the public the opportunity to support worthy mine action projects. What follows are highlights of project commitments under the Canadian Landmine Fund.