

# Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining provides operational assistance to mine-action programmes and operators, creates and disseminates knowledge, works to improve quality management and standards and provides support to instruments of international law.

by Ian Mansfield [ Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining ]

## Land Release Workshop

On 20 and 21 June 2007, a workshop focusing on the topic of "Land Release" was held at the GICHD and attended by experts from all sectors of the mine-action community—national, United Nations, nongovernmental organisations and commercial.<sup>1</sup>

The workshop drew on the diverse experience of the attendees to develop a clearer perspective of the issues related to land release policies. This relates to land that had previously been thought to be suspect, but upon further investigation, can be released without full clearance. Government officials and practitioners who have already developed and implemented clear methodologies for use in their countries, as well as those with political, operational and implementation experience, shared their knowledge with the workshop participants. The subject was discussed in the context of risk management and its applicability to these processes.

The consensus was clear that more efforts need to be made to speed up and legitimize methodologies and principles for land release. These may assist mine-affected countries to improve their processes and provide a more effective environment in which to undertake clearance. A handbook documenting best practices was released in late 2007, and the GICHD will continue to work in these areas to provide further guidelines.

## New "Guides" Published

In April 2007 the GICHD published its revised and updated *Guide to Mine Action and ERW*. Building on previous editions, this latest version includes references to explosive remnants of war and also includes new chapters on development approaches to mine-action planning, as well as evaluation. The *Guide*

was released in Arabic at the Eighth Meeting of States Parties in Jordan in November 2007, and the French and Spanish editions will be available in early 2008.

The GICHD also released the *Guide to Cluster Munitions* in November 2007. This new booklet explains in plain language the types and characteristics of cluster munitions, their implication for clearance programmes and the needs of victims. It also addresses the current, ongoing efforts in international law to ban or restrict the use of cluster weapons.

## Linking Mine Action to Development

In June 2007, the GICHD co-organised a two-day workshop in Cambodia, in cooperation with Austcare and the United Nations Development Programme, bringing together around 40 mine-action and development practitioners from the region. A similar workshop was held in Yemen in November. The aims of the meetings were to:

- Deepen understanding of the rationale for and benefits of linking mine action with development cooperation
- Share experiences and lessons learnt from relevant programmes and projects in the region
- Discuss what is needed to strengthen those linkages further and to examine the feasibility of and opportunities for replication and expanding the projects
- Identify the main obstacles for successful cooperation and linkages in the past
- Identify what needs to be changed, improved or done differently in the future, and how

The discussions and presentations at the workshops emphasised the need for basing decisions on evidence and the importance of demonstrating and advocating for greater

linkages between mine action and development to key target audiences. A couple of specific regional issues were also identified. Full details of the Linking Mine Action and Development project can be found on the GICHD Web site at [www.gichd.org](http://www.gichd.org). ♦

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