

CARTAGENA SUMMIT ON A MINE FREE WORLD

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE NETHERLANDS

UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9 a. and b. Victim Assistance and Cooperation & Assistance

Madam President,

As this is the first time I am taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you on your election as President of this important conference. Your commitment to the objectives of the Mine Ban Treaty and the leadership you have shown already during the preparatory process are guarantees for a successful outcome of our proceedings. Equally I should like to thank the Government of Colombia for its unparalleled hospitality.

Madam President,

[indien van toepassing:
My delegation aligns itself with the general statement delivered by Sweden on behalf of the European Union.]

I take the floor under Agenda Items 9 a and b, and would like to address the subject of Cooperation and Assistance, as well as the issue of Victim Assistance.

Delegations have been requested to give their views on the accomplishments since the First Review Conference and to indicate how they will contribute to the Action Plan for the next five years, to be adopted later this week, and I am happy to do so.

Over the last five years, the Netherlands has contributed more than 85 million Euro, which is equivalent to more than 125 million US dollar, at present rates, to mine action bilaterally. This does not include our share in EU-funded programmes.

The Netherlands' activities in mine action are governed by the Policy Framework for Humanitarian Demining, which covers the period 2008 – 2011.

- The Netherlands only supports mine action in countries that have signed and ratified the Ottawa treaty;
 - Priority is given to activities where the direct risks of mines for the local population are highest or where the socio-economic impact of clearance or other forms of land release is highest ;
 - the framework establishes a geographical focus on the Horn of Africa, the Great Lakes region, the Western Balkan and Afghanistan. This focus fits in with Dutch support for post-conflict rehabilitation and development for these regions in other policy fields.
- The Netherlands recognises the need to integrate Mine Action in mainstream development efforts and reconstruction.

The emphasis is placed on mine clearance but other forms of Mine Action such as survey, capacity building, Mine Risk Education and Victim Assistance may also qualify for support.

When developing the policy, a conscious choice was made to spend the funds using in principle only two channels: the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and specialised NGO's. In the past five years, NGO's such as Danish Demining Group (DDG), HALO Trust, Mine Action Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and Handicap International have received an amount of 10 million Euros (or 15 million dollars) annually in project funding. Support for UNMAS in the same period amounts to 5 million Euros per year on average.

Contributions for the next two years will be in the same order of magnitude.

Madam President,

I will spare you an exposé on all the criteria applied in the selection of activities. However I do feel it is important to emphasise that it is crucial that Mine Action should be a package of measures: successful mine action does not only comprise clearance, but also includes for example survey and mapping, mine risk education, victim assistance and capacity building.

In this context, I think it is important to point out that many of the elements that may be considered as part of victim assistance, such as medical care and socio-economic integration are also addressed in other development cooperation programmes of The Netherlands, which seek to improve the situation of underprivileged groups and persons. These programmes are obviously non-discriminatory in nature. Mine survivors benefit from them on the same basis as any other person in the same or similar circumstances.

We refer to this concept as Integrated Socio-economic Planning.

Not all these aspects need to form part of the same activity, which makes coordination an additional essential element of integrated Mine Action.

In our view, coordination should ideally be the responsibility of the authorities in the recipient country. If required, building capacity at the local and at the national level should be, and as far as the Netherlands is concerned will be part of mine action programmes.

In all mine action programmes, the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) should be guiding. We applaud the efforts of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the United Nations Mine Action Service in developing and updating the IMAS.

Madam President,

As mentioned, the current Policy Framework covers the period until 2011. A policy covering the period 2012 and beyond will have to be developed in the coming years.

Therefore I am not in a position to give any specific details regarding my country's Mine Action Programme beyond that year.

What I can and will do, however, is to take this opportunity to re-affirm the strong commitment of The Netherlands to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention, to its ultimate objective of a mine free world, and to our obligation to assist other States Parties and survivors. They can count on our continued support.

Thank you