



Regional Mine Action Seminar in the Americas
“En Camino hacia un Hemisferio Libre de Minas Antipersonal”

**Objective of the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian
Demining**

Simon Berger
Regional Coordinator GICHD
Lima, 14 August 2003

Esteemed participants of the seminar “En Camino hacia un Hemisferio libre de Minas Antipersonal”:

It is a pleasure to greet the Governments of Peru and Canada who, in cooperation with the Organization of American States, have organized this event.

The affected states and their population are the ones who have the central responsibility of anti-personnel mine action and the deactivation of unexploded ordnance.

At the same time the international community, through bilateral agreements, NGOs or international organizations, have the obligation to support the efforts of the affected population in diminishing the humanitarian impact of anti-personnel mines.

The Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining is a neutral and impartial organization, committed to humanitarian principals, working towards a world free of anti-personnel mines and the reduction of the humanitarian impact of remnants of war, focusing on every aspect of mine action, including:

- Mine risk education;
- Humanitarian demining;
- Victim assistance;
- Stockpile destruction;
- Facilitating the stigmatization of the use of mines and the total prohibition of anti-personnel mines.

The Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, works in three principal items:

- Operational assistance;
- Research and studies;
- Support to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention (Ottawa Convention) and other international rights instruments.

Operational Assistance

The GICHD develops tools and offers services for the antipersonnel mine affected populations. The operations assistance includes the development of IMAS (the International Mine Action Standards), IMSMA (the Information Management System for Mine Action), the assistance by specialist to demining programs that are programmed to be established as well as programs that are established. Also, the GICHD offers training courses, workshops and specific evaluation relative to the request.

Research and Studies

The GICHD maintains a research center with the objective of offering the most secure and efficient humanitarian demining function, with the end of providing tools such as application software, standards and manuals.

Ottawa Convention Support

The GICHD supports the "Ottawa Convention" according to the mandate acquired by the state parties (September 2001), which includes:

- Preparation and support of the meeting of State Parties and intersessionals;
- Providing advice, independent assistance, and an information center, as well as offering documentation.

Regional Support Center, Managua—Nicaragua

In January 2002 the GICHD established, in cooperation with the Organization of American States, a regional support center for Latin America, located in Managua, Nicaragua.

Representing the GICHD in Latin America, the regional center offers direct support in the management of information including IMSMA (Support), coordinates other type of support with headquarters in Geneva, and serves as a communication base for Latin America.

The regional support center is working in the majority of anti-personnel mine-affected countries, including Guatemala, Nicaragua, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile.

Thank You Very Much