



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Alain Girma,  
Ambassador, Special Assistant to the Director of Strategic Affairs, Security and  
Disarmament, Secretary General of the French National Commission for the  
Elimination of Anti-Personnel Mines**

**Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention**

**Session on cooperation and assistance  
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Madam President,

I would like to set out to the States Parties to the Convention one of the landmark initiatives which France has helped to implement as part of its bilateral policy of cooperation to combat mines.

France has established extremely close cooperation with French-speaking African States through the Post-Conflict Mine Clearance and Decontamination Training Centre (CPADD), based in Ouidah, Benin.

For several years, the CPADD has been developing training programmes on humanitarian mine clearance, in which NGOs such as Handicap International and HAMAP Mine Clearance participate by sending trainees and instructors. Due to its widely-recognized skills in this area, the CPADD has today formed numerous international partnerships, which we fully welcome.

France would like to take this opportunity to commend Japan's recent contribution to the CPADD of two million dollars over three years, which will allow the centre to double its capacity for trainees and instructors. It also commends Brazil's provision of two instructors which will permit the centre to set up training in Portuguese in order to increase cooperation with Portuguese-speaking countries in the region, in particular Angola and Mozambique.

In the years to come, France intends to support the creation of a similar centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In 2008, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated a combined total of 1.11 million euros to such training programmes.

In addition, by providing a General Officer and financial contributions of over 100,000 euros in 2009, France helped develop the French-speaking section of the activities of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

France actively supports the work of the GICHD, whose role is to provide African actors working to eliminate mines with the necessary tools and materials in French to draw up and implement national action plans, through four types of actions:

- translate all international mine action standards (IMAS) and documentation into French, and update when necessary;
- provide access to all French-language documentation, mainly through an online library (Bibliomines);
- organize seminars for all French-speaking actors in the fight against mines;
- create a database of French-speaking experts for use by multilateral organizations.

A second project aims to arrange an annual meeting in Africa of officials from French-speaking countries who deal with the fight against mines. To this end, 15 countries from the region convened in a seminar in Dakar from 2 to 4 November 2009 to discuss the issue and promote mutual cooperation.

These two projects and the other work undertaken show France's strong commitment to increasing the French-speaking African actors' ability to draw up and implement effective mine clearance programmes, to help this growing local expertise to gain recognition within international mine clearance organizations, and to promote dialogue and cooperation between actors in French-speaking countries which are similarly affected by mines.

These, Madam President, were the points which France wanted to share with the States Parties to the Convention with regard to its policy of cooperation to eliminate mines.

Madam President, thank you very much.