

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**MESSAGE ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR MINE AWARENESS
AND ASSISTANCE IN MINE ACTION**

4 April 2009

I have visited many countries that face the scourge of landmines. I have seen the devastation caused by these indiscriminate weapons, which hamper reconstruction, damage the environment and cause grievous injuries and death for decades after conflicts end. Conditions may vary from Iraq to Sudan, from Lebanon to Zimbabwe, from Afghanistan to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. What doesn't change is the threat to life and limb.

Facing these dangerous conditions, mine action workers risk their lives to rid land and roads of mines. Over the past two decades, United Nations assistance in mine action has reached more than 50 countries and territories. Recently, United Nations mine action specialists were among the first international workers to resume humanitarian activities in Gaza, where explosive remnants of war pose significant threats

Beyond removing weapons, mine action means ensuring a safe environment for civilians, developing local capacity and restoring dignity to survivors through job opportunities and other reintegration programmes.

Mine action also means adherence to the relevant legal instruments, including the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention, Protocol V on explosive remnants of war and the recently adopted Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Second Review Conference of the Mine Ban Convention, to be held later this year in Cartagena, Colombia, offers an opportunity to renew commitment to the treaty and to mine action efforts around the globe.

My fervent hope is that the world will one day be free from the threats caused by landmines and explosive remnants of war. But it will take concerted collective efforts on all fronts to realize this goal. On this International Day, let us renew our commitment to carrying out this life-saving work.