

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 2011

The International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action is a timely reminder that clearing land of explosive remnants of war saves lives and protects livelihoods.

Mine clearance prevents an indiscriminate weapon from causing harm and havoc long after conflicts have ended, while also creating jobs, transforming danger zones into productive land and setting societies on course for lasting security.

Last year, hundreds of thousands of people received United Nations mine risk education that prevented tragedy for individuals, families and communities. In Afghanistan alone, 14,400 people were employed in the mine action sector, helping to destroy more than 1 million explosive remnants of war.

UN development agencies are striving to connect mine action with broader development plans to promote agricultural production, strengthen infrastructure, improve water supply and provide better education and health services. These are all essential to reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite its many well-documented successes, mine action remains underfunded. The 2011 portfolio of projects has secured only about a quarter of the needed resources, leaving a funding gap of \$367 million.

While this is a significant sum, the cost is far outweighed by the benefits of removing explosive hazards, creating awareness, providing mine risk education, assisting survivors and helping communities.

I thank all those who have contributed to international mine action. I also applaud the 156 States which are party to the Mine Ban Treaty, the 55 that have ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and the 99 that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

On this International Day, I call for universal adherence to these important treaties, increased support for mine awareness and mine action, and greater global solidarity in support of this crucial element in our drive to build a safer and more prosperous world for all.