

# **INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRANSPORT UNION SUPPORTS THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST LANDMINES**

## **Innovative partnership will aid mine action in Afghanistan**

*NEW YORK, New York, January 28, 2011*—A new partnership benefiting Afghanistan’s mine action efforts was announced at United Nations Headquarters today. The International Road Transport Union contributed US\$1.9 million to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action. The International Road Transport Union is the global voice of the road transport industry throughout the world, represented by 180 national member-associations from 74 countries on 5 continents.

“Our work contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in affected countries such as Afghanistan by opening up roads and thereby reinvigorating local economies,” says Max Kerley the Director of the United Nations Mine Action Service. “We are grateful for this innovative partnership with the International Road Transport Union and believe it exemplifies how we are natural allies” he adds.

The funds contributed by the International Road Transport Union will be used by the United Nations to clear 15 square kilometers of landmines and explosive remnants of war from the 700 kilometre ring road that connects Kabul to Afghanistan's Northern Provinces and Central Asian neighbors. This will yield humanitarian benefits by preventing death and injury to those living in proximity to the route and reinvigorate socio-economic opportunities between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and beyond.

“It is hoped that the opportunities arising from the facilitation of trade and economic development will enhance the lives and livelihoods of those communities living alongside the road and of Afghanistan's population as a whole,” noted Dmitry Titov, UN Assistant Secretary-General of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions. “This is a great start and we look forward to continued partnership with the International Road Transport Union in the years to come.”

Afghanistan remains one of the most landmine and explosive remnant of war affected countries in the world. Victims are now predominantly Afghan civilians. Over 2,000 Afghan communities continue to be impacted by landmines and explosive remnants of war which contaminate 650 square kilometres of land across the country.

The International Road Transport Union chose to donate to the United Nations mine action work in Afghanistan to demonstrate its continuing commitment to its twin goals of sustainable development and facilitation of road transport worldwide.

The United Nations Mine Action Service is the United Nations focal point for mine action. It is located in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.