

## Ceremony Marking Mine Detection Dog Partnership

Lincoln P. Bloomfield, Jr., Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Mine Action

Remarks at the Residence of the Ambassador of the Royal Thai Government

Washington, DC

March 13, 2003

Ambassador Sakthip, Professor Lake, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very happy to be here this morning to acknowledge the most generous contribution of \$100,000 from the Royal Dutch Shell Group of Companies to provide six mine detection dogs to Thailand. This contribution will improve the mine detection dog capacity of the Thai Mine Action Center and assist the Government of Thailand achieve its goal of a mine safe country.

The donation also supports the Marshall Legacy Institute's Mine Detection Dog Partnership Program, which the Department of State's Office of Humanitarian demining Programs established some time ago. This office, located in the Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, matches private contributions to acquire dogs, provide them with basic training and then train local dog handlers to work with the dogs to ensure the successful integration of mine detection dog teams into the humanitarian mine clearance process.

The humanitarian demining community considers mine detection dogs a valuable and reliable demining resource. In many situations, then dogs, when combined with manual and/or mechanical demining techniques, contribute greatly in expediting the return of mine-affected land, infrastructure and other facilities to a safe and useful condition in a cost effective manner.

Ambassador Sakthip, as Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for Mine Action, I am pleased to join with the Royal Dutch Shell Group of Companies and the Marshall Legacy Institute to provide your country with this most effective demining resource.

Thank you.

[End]