

PRESS RELEASE

**TOWARDS INTEROPERABILITY IN CRISIS MANAGEMENT
SEPTEMBER 11-14, 2003**

HELSINKI, September 10, 2003 – The Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) are co-hosting a conference on Information and Communications Technology and Crisis Management in Hotel Kämp, Helsinki. The conference will explore practical steps toward improving information sharing, coordination, and cooperation from headquarters to the field, and between and among the various organisations responding to crises. The conference participants will include high-level representatives of international organisations, expert practitioners involved in humanitarian assistance and crisis management, and technologists who understand the nature of field operations.

The conference starts on Thursday with an opening dinner where Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, Foreign Minister of Finland will address the participants. On Friday, in the first session of the conference, representatives of the UN, NATO, the EU and the OSCE will speak under the title “Towards Interoperability in Crisis Management – A Political Agenda”. The session is open to the press.

As the work of the crisis response community becomes more and more complex, it is fundamental that effective, reliable and improved interoperable information and communications systems are developed. The conference aims to affirm the commitment of international organisations to achieving better interoperability amongst the different agencies responding to crises and using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems in a more coherent and effective way.

Parallel to the conference runs the Nordic Peace 2003 NATO PfP Exercise in the Säkylä area in Finland, where the ITCM system will be tested. The Information Technology and Crisis Management system (ITCM) is the first implementation of the standards for crisis management information systems developed in the framework of the Object Management Group, a global non-profit standardisation organisation. The ITCM system is a decision-making support and knowledge management system for crisis response and peace support operations. It is a concrete technical solution for cooperation, sustainable partnerships, information management and field-level coordination. The lessons learned from the testing will be presented at the conference.

The ITCM project is a joint venture of the Crisis Management Initiative, the University of Tampere, the Finnish Defence Forces, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ministry of Defence and industry partners IBM Finland, the Secgo Group, TietoEnator, and Dedicated Networks of Finland.

For more information please contact:

Ms. Kristiina Rinkineva
Crisis Management Initiative
Tel + 358-9- 698 7024
Fax + 358-9- 612 7759
www.itcm.org
www.ahtisaari.fi

or

Ms. Sheryl Brown
United States Institute of Peace
Tel +1-202-457-1700
Fax +1-202-429-6063
www.usip.org