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Mine-action Program in Southern Sudan

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made significant progress toward transitioning by strengthening and consolidating their institutional and management capacities. As part of its long-term planning process, North Sudan’s National Mine Action Authority, together with the UNMAO, UNDP and other stakeholders, has developed a three-year operations plan, covering 2009–11 to implement the Cartagena Action Plan. North Sudan aims to clear 80 percent of all known high- and medium-priority affected areas by the end of 2011 at an estimated cost of US$129 million.

**Conclusion**

North Sudan is committed to fully implementing the Cartagena Action Plan. As it reaches the Article 5 mine-clearance deadline, North Sudan will put all necessary measures in place to achieve all the goals and objectives set forth in the action plan. To fulfill its Article 5 obligations, North Sudan’s national demining teams, which are the nation’s most cost-effective and sustainable assets, need continued and generous support from the donor community. This will enable North Sudan to realize the goal of being mine-free by 2014. See endnotes page 81.

**Future of Mine Action in North Sudan**

From August 2010 until April 2014, the key challenge for North Sudan will be to clear known-mined or suspected-mined areas under its Article 5 obligations. In the future, North Sudan envisions producing an experienced mine-clearance staff capable of fulfilling its local role of mine clearance while offering support to other countries through sharing experiences and lessons and deploying trained staff.

With the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, a mine-action transition plan was concluded in November 2008. In 2009, based on the provisions of this plan, the national authorities

**Mine-action Program in Southern Sudan**

Following more than two decades of civil war between Northern and Southern Sudan, much of Southern Sudan has been left contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war. As a result, the Southern Sudan Demining Authority, along with the United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Mine Action Office and other organizations, have been diligently working toward clearing 80 percent of the mines in Southern Sudan by 2011.

by Margaret Mathiang [Southern Sudan Demining Authority]

The 21-year north-south civil war in Sudan that killed an estimated two million people, uprooted four million and caused 600,000 to take refuge outside of Sudan has left Southern Sudan littered with landmines and explosive remnants of war. The contamination poses a serious challenge to the Government of Southern Sudan’s development plans and is considered a serious threat to the successful implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 and ending in 2011. In 2011, in accordance with the CPA, a referendum will determine whether Southern Sudan will remain a part of a united Sudan or become its own separate state. Based on the CPA, in 2005, Southern Sudan gained the right to self determination in Bahri El Gazel, Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, the Lakes, Northern Bahri El-Ghazal, Warab, Western Bahri El Gazel, Western Equatoria, Unity and Upper Nile. All of its 10 states are reported to have varying degrees of landmine/ERW contamination.

As with the rest of the country, the civil war has left Southern Sudan with a large-scale landmine/ERW contamination problem. Despite several years of intensive mine-action operations, landmine/ERW contamination continues to threaten civilians and impede economic recovery and development. Contaminated land reduces productivity and thereby the sustainable livelihoods of affected communities. Landmine/ERW contamination on key logistical supply routes continues to hamper safe and free movement, trade and provision of humanitarian assistance. Contamination also endangers the lives of local communities, internally displaced persons, refugees, staff of humanitarian missions and the personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. The presence and perceived threat of landmines/ERW prevents and delays IDPs and refugee populations from returning to their hometowns, and as a result, constrains recovery, reconstruction and development efforts in mine/ERW- and war-affected areas.

**Mine-action Assistance**

The Southern Sudan Demining Authority is the mandated government body established in 2006 through presidential decree number 45/2006 to plan, coordinate and oversee all mine-action operations in Southern Sudan with assistance from and in coordination and collaboration with the National Mine Action Centre based in Khartoum and the southern regional sub-office of the United Nations Mine Action Office in Sudan.

Other partners in UNMIS who assisted SSDA include the United Nations Development Programme in the area of capacity building, UNICEF in support of mine-risk education initiatives, international nongovernmental organizations (Norwegian People’s Aid, Mines Advisory Group, Danish Demining Group) and national organizations (Operations Save Innocent Lives, Sudan Landmine Response, Sudan Integrated Mine Action Service), as well as off-
Mine Action and Development

Sudan has been very successful in linking mine action to recovery and development activities. Northern Sudan’s Government of National Unity and the GOSS have secured funds from the state budget, the Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the World Bank for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of 446 kilometers (277 miles) of railway lines and approximately 200 kilometers (124 miles) of main roads have been cleared of landmines/ERW in the central and southern parts of Sudan. The clearance of railway lines has been extremely important in restoring safe passage between Northern and Southern Sudan as the Babanusa-Wau railway line is the only all-season land link between the northern and southern parts of the country. In addition, the clearance and reconstruction of railway lines and roads has enabled the safe return and resettlement of IDPs and refugees.

Socioeconomic rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims of landmines/ERW continues to be a priority on the national agenda. Sudan has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Over the past three years, 22 community-based projects have been implemented for the socioeconomic rehabilitation and reintegration of the victims of landmines and ERW in various parts of the country with generous contributions from Canada, Japan and the state budget.

Challenges

Southern Sudan is working toward becoming “impact free” as soon as possible, as achieving the status of “landmine free” is very much debatable. One of the key challenges for Southern Sudan is the clearance of known mined/suspected mined areas to provide a safe environment for returning IDPs and refugees. In addition, the SSDA in Southern Sudan faces challenges from the long rainy seasons, logistical complications and lack of enough data to determine the level, type and locations of contamination.

As UNMAO is operating under UNMIS’s mandate, a reduction in international support is also expected during the forthcoming referendum period. This loss of funding calls for more financial support to national mine-action capacities, which remains a challenge for the GOSS, as it must confront conflicting development priorities in the post-war rehabilitation period.

As part of SSDA’s long-term planning process and in its implementation of the Cartage Action Plan, UNMAO, UNDP and all other stakeholders have developed a three-year operations plan covering 2009–11. With the implementation of the plan, Sudan aims to clear 80 percent of all known high- and medium-priority affected areas by the end of 2011 at an estimated cost of US$120 million.

Southern Sudan Demining Authority has developed a three-year strategic plan that aims to strengthen national capacities in mine-action activities and to meet the vision of freeing the country from the effects and threat of landmines and ERW. Southern Sudan also envisions itself to one day be active regionally and globally supporting other countries with an exchange of lessons learned and deployment of trained and experienced staff. In the meantime, Southern Sudan continues to address its landmine/ERW contamination. It is in need of ongoing generous support from the donor community to all mine-action operators working in the region.

see endnotes page 81