November 2006

Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

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The use of v4 will allow Argentina and the tool for improved quality management and being directly transferred from the EOD participants returned to the conference room questions about the exhibition answered, five cases, the expanded language options management/early-recovery planning. In all ni mi v4 provided the necessary decentralization of information management by allowing the program and forms to be specialized and changed for each region’s needs; it was also safe to be able to electronically transmit data between regional centers and organizations rather than traveling through conflict zones. Jordan discussed using v4 as a tool for improved quality management and organizational coordination activities.

In the case of the Falkland Islands, the use of v4 will allow Argentina and the United Kingdom to coordinate and share national data for clearance efforts. Uganda’s future goals for v4 highlight the potential for IMMSA to not only operate within its national mine-action center but to also extend beyond mine action, with plans for the integration of health, refugee, and development data to collect and manage disaster-management/early-recovery planning. In all five cases, the expanded language options were noted as important and useful.

Conclusion
Some of the changes in v4 offer potential improvements in mine-action information management by allowing flexibility, creativity and linkage of different systems in IMMSA. The integration of a fully functional GIS into the system allows users to navigate the database using the map rather than working directly in the database itself. Combined with the direct transfer of field data to IMMSA from the EOD IS-SURVEY v3.1 tool, users will find that IMMSA v4 can help reduce data-collection errors, speeds up the integration of new data from the field and makes it easier to visualize the threat situation in a country or region. The updated v4 allows for new languages, the freedom to create and modify forms and reports, and the ability to combine and link data in ad-

F ollowing the theme of quality for the Feature section in this edition of the JMA, the GICHID continues to work in all areas of the quality-management cycle. The more obvious is the development of the International Mine Action Standards, which are produced on behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service. The process involves writing new standards, reviewing existing standards, conducting training, and hosting the IMAS Review Board. In addition, the GICHID is able to help countries adapt the IMAS to their own national standards by providing expert staff to guide national authorities through the process. This capability has recently been enhanced by the creation of a staff post, the National Mine Action Standards Officer, within the Centre for National Mine Action Standards.

New Guidebooks
In collaboration with UNICEF, the GICHID has recently completed a series of IMAS mine-risk education best-practice guides. These guidebooks address a wide range of issues, including coordinating MRE, disseminating public information, implementing projects, establishing community mine-action lanes, and conducting MRE in emergencies. The primary aim of the books is to provide advice, tools and guidelines, and case studies to support mine-risk education. They are also intended to provide a framework for a more predictable, systematic and integrated approach to mine-risk education. They will be useful to anyone engaged in planning, managing, funding or evaluating MRE programmes and projects.

New Studies
The GICHID is undertaking a major study, "Land Release and Risk Management Approaches," which aims to examine the various processes used to release land (other than by full clearance) and advise on ways in which a risk-management approach can be applied to speed up this process. Several countries are being used as case studies to review current best practices and demonstrate methodologies applicable to the wider mine-action community. These studies include work with Cambodia on its recently introduced “Ava Radiation Policy,” a risk-management model for unexploded ordnance in Laos and the development of a risk-matrix-based system for the opening of suspected mined roads in Sudan. The overall aim is to develop a system allowing national authorities and operators to effect new, medically, reduce mine-suspected areas, leaving an audit trail that allows decisions that can be justified.

In collaboration with the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre, the GICHID is undertaking a “Trilevel” study of conflict and mining-affected areas that have been cleared. The survey will use a carefully balanced set of qualitative and quantitative survey tools (e.g., village profiles, focus-group discussions, timelines, wealth ranking, participatory mapping, cause-and-effect diagramming, livelihood kits, household-level interviews, etc.) to build a picture of the economic, social, infrastructural, natural and human impacts of demining within the specific and dynamic local setting of the community in question. While it will be possible to quantify the costs and benefits of some impacts (e.g., improved access to grazing land), others—such as improved cohesion within the village, or greater confidence in future prospects—are subjective and complex judgments that are difficult to quantify.

by Ian Mansfield [Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining]