Mine Action Support Group Update

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The sensitivity loss from L1 to L7 for the detectors without ground compensation was so large that some targets could be comfortably detected to the required depth of 130 m in L1 could not be detected even much nearer to the surface in the higher numbered lanes. For detectors with very substantial sensitivity loss from L1 to L7, it is important that users are aware of the ground conditions and check the reliability of the detector’s ability to sense the exposed mines in the working area.

In general, in air maximum detection heights, measured with the detectors set up for a particular type of ground, are not equal to the in-soil maximum detection depth in the same ground. Minimum-metal mines are still the main detection problem. Even the detectors with good soil compensation could not detect all the small targets to the required depth in all lanes. Ground magnetic properties (magnetic susceptibility, ground reference height) should be measured and recorded as a survey task because they have to be known for planning and proper use of the detector flex.

For the execution of the trial, we received excellent support from the Mozambican National Demining Institute the Accelerated Demining Program and other national organizations. Note: There are a very limited number of hard copies of the report available for people who have limited access to the Internet. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact Adam Lewis to obtain a printed copy.

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The same effort should be used for the mine-risk education pro-
gram, which stopped in December 2005 due to lack of funding.

The technical advisor, updating the database, the HCND Web site and preparing the team for the Regional Mine Action Management System for Mine Action will be possible.

The need to contract an operator to resume operations as soon as possible has been recognized.

Funding shortfalls:

The implementation of the Humanitarian National Mine Action Program is not possible without adequate financial support.

The Red Cross provided the funds for the training, equipment and cost of operations for UNICEF-supported NGOs but also through Handicap International-France and the International Committee of the Red Cross to implement mine action.

A variant assistance Technical Advisor has commenced work.

Key objectives included:

• Complete Technical Survey/ceasefire/EOZ operations in six landmine-affected areas in northern Uganda.
• Perform targeted needs assessments in two more landmine- and EWP-affected areas in southern Uganda.
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called for concrete progress to be made by the time of the Convention’s Second Review Conference. In the light of clarifying the measure of effectiveness, the Co-chairs turned the mandate of States Parties in question. Clearly, what could be expected from, or what should be achieved by, any one of the 24 relevant States Parties would be different from all others given diversities in numbers and characteristics of survivors, bureaucratic and service-delivery capacity, geography, etc.

As the ultimate responsibility for meeting the needs of survivors rests with each state, it was understood themselves must define what can and should be achieved in concrete and measurable terms, as well as how these needs can be met. Others may have the expertise and capacity to assist in understanding problems, in developing plans to deal with these problems and in monitoring the implementation of plans. Real and sustainable progress, though, cannot be made without the affected States Parties themselves “owning” the challenge and the authority for devising solutions to it.

**Toward SMART Victim Assistance**

The Co-chairs’ approach to “ganging up” and ensuring progress involved the distribution of a comprehensive questionnaire to the 24 relevant States Parties to help frame an understanding of concrete victim assistance objectives by 2009, plans to achieve these objectives, and means to implement these plans. The main aim of this questionnaire was to encourage States Parties to question in establishment of so-called SMART objectives: **

- Specific objectives that should specify what these States Parties want to achieve
- Measurable objectives that would enable all to know whether objectives have been met
- Achievable objectives that are truly attainable
- Realistic objectives that could indeed be achieved with resources at the disposal of the State Party in question or with resources that could be theoretically acquired externally
- Time-bound objectives that would be achieved by the time of the Second Review Conference

Initial responses to the questionnaire were presented at the June 2005 meeting of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration with all responses summarized in a lengthy annex to the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties’ Zagreb Progress Report. It provides the beginnings of a clearer road map regarding what needs to be done between 2005 and the Second Review Conference and how success pertaining to victim assistance will be measured in 2009.

**Overcoming Remaining Challenges**

While the effort undertaken in 2005 by relevant States Parties was impressive, the usefulness of the responses is in doubt. Few States Parties actually responded with SMART objectives. Some States Parties delineated at length their status. However, even the idea that “providing adequate assistance to landmine survivors must be seen in a broader context of development held under development.” Many States Parties have prepared poverty-reduction strategy papers, or national development plans to overcome broader development challenges, with such documents containing references to advancing the care, rehabilitation, and reintegration of landmine survivors. However, in many instances, the preparation of victim-assistance objectives has not been considered in these broader national plans.

To overcome these challenges, the States Parties decided the best way to ensure progress is to:

1. **The “process support” procedure involves country visits featuring the following:**
   - One-on-one meetings with officials from relevant ministries to raise awareness of the matter and to stimulate inter-ministerial coordination
   - Outreach to relevant international organizations and others to ensure that their efforts in support of the State Party in question are both incorporated into and incorporate mine-victim-assistance efforts
   - Inter-ministerial workshops to bring together all relevant actors to discuss and consolidate improvements on objectives and the development of plans

It should be noted: It is not considered as stand-alone activities or ends in themselves. Rather, workshops are part of a State Party’s overall process of objective-setting, planning, and implementing efforts to ensure progress by 2009. The ultimate aim is a true equalization of opportunities for landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities in countries’ broader populations.

**Conclusion**

It would be unrealistic to think of some of the world’s poorer countries with some of the greatest challenges regarding the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of landmine survivors would demonstrate performance in the establishment of SMART victim-assistance objectives. Assistance exams to help countries at risk with these tasks, in accordance with the Ottawa Convention, those in a position to do so are obliged to provide it. However, others cannot do it all, nor should they.

With perfection unattainable, it should be acknowledged that any degree of meaningful progress made by relevant States Parties in taking charge of these matters will be a major advance. The Ottawa Convention, after all, was about expanding the traditional understanding of state responsibility, with states accepting they have important human-security responsibilities. Ensuring progress in victim assistance by key milestones, dates, like the 2009 Second Review Conference, will help demonstrate the reality of this sense of responsibility.

The work undertaken to date by States Parties suggests they are on the right track. However, efforts—and processes—will have to continue with vigor in order to make a real and sustainable difference.

For additional references for this article, please visit http://mine.psu.edu/journal/10/3/

*Notes from the field | Journal of mine action | notes from the field*