Multicriterial Analysis Application in Mine Action

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Mine Problem in the Region of Southeastern Europe: International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) and the Southeastern Europe Mine Action Coordination Council (SEEMACC)

SE Europe is one of the most mine-affected regions in the world. This article examines the extent of the mine and UXO problem in each of the mine-affected countries in SE Europe, as well as discusses the steps being taken by various organizations in order to solve the mine-related problems in the region.

By Damir Gorseta, SEEMACC and Eva Veble and Sabina Beber, ITF

Mine Problem in the Countries in SE Europe

Unlike other multiethnic regions, the former Yugoslavia has fallen apart as a result of war conflicts, which have left large mined areas all over SE Europe. Mine contamination has impacted all countries of the former Yugoslavia and also Albania. Consequently, SE Europe has become one of the most mine-contaminated regions in the world. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Macedonia and Yugoslavia face considerable mine and UXO problems, with BiH and Croatia being the most affected.

The table to the left shows the extent of mine contamination in each of the respective countries.

Most of the landmines in SE Europe are of Yugoslav origin (i.e., they are the mines that were stockpiled by the Yugoslav army before the disintegration of former Yugoslavia). The following mines were most frequently used in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia:

- ATMs: TMM 1, TMA 5, TMA 4, TMA 6
- APs: PMA-1, PMA-2, PROM-1A, PROM-3A, PROM-7A, PROM-8A
- RML 6
- CD-Mines

Albania

Conflict in Kosovo contributed to destabilizing this part of the region. During the Kosovo crisis in 1998-1999, a large number of mines were laid along the Kosovo-Albania border and into Albanian territory. In addition, there were unexploded shells, rockets and mortars left in the area. The mine-contaminated strip contains 85 high-risk areas and 120 km long, stretching from Shkodërca in the north to Tropojë in the north. Thirty-nine villages in Albania are directly affected by mines—27 people have been killed and 216 have been injured by mine-related incidents. In 1999, the government of Albania established the pillar of the Albanian Mine Action Program. The program policy and strategy were developed by the Albanian Mine Action Committee and implemented by the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE). The presence of mines and UXO on the Albania-Kosovo border in the northeast not only poses a physical threat to the population, but also prevents the use of the land. In addition, refugees returning in 1999, led to safety concerns due to the uncleared border area. Removal of the landmine threat combined with the stability of the campaign, "Weapons in Exchange for Development," as well as stockpile destruction, will help the development of these areas.

With donors’ support, AMAE has determined an area of around 15,000 ha where Albania set up a mine action strategy that foresees Albania free of mines and UXO by 2010. Albania wishes to eliminate the impact of mines and UXO in the northeastern part of Albania by 2005. Stockpile destruction in Albania, destroying 3,683,860 mines, was completed on April 4, 2002. In 2003, Albanian plans to conduct a general survey of a 1.9 sq km area and a technical survey of a 1.5 sq km area and demine a 350,000 sq area.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Besides Croatia, BiH is the most mine and UXO contaminated country in the SE Europe. Mine-suspected area covers approximately 2,139.6 sq km in BiH, which represents 4.17 percent of its total territory. After the analysis was conducted, it was estimated that there are approximately 670,000 mines and 550,000 tons of UXO in approximately 10,000 locations. Mine-suspected areas are defined as unavoidable areas because of the possible risk of mines and UXOs. The mine-suspected area is divided into three categories according to demining priority:

- The first category consists of locations for everyday use, areas planned for housing, reconstruction and rebuilding, areas of infrastructure and economic resources. Such areas cover 2,438 sq km of BiH territory, representing 11.26 percent of total mine-suspected area.
- The second category consists of locations for occasional use, zones of contact with the first category, agricultural land and forests. Such areas cover 590.1 sq km of BiH territory, representing 27.5 percent of total mine-suspected area.
- The third category consists of the remaining suspected land. Such areas cover 13,518 sq km of BiH territory, representing 61.14 percent of total mine-suspected area.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center (BHMAC) was founded in 1996 by the United Nations Mine Action Center (UNMAC). In 1998, the responsibility for demining activities was handed over to the government of BiH, with significant financial support from the international community. The legal framework for the implementation of demining problems was created and the Demining Law in BiH was passed. The Demining Law defines demining and the organizational structure of demining, and determines the implementing organizations and their tasks. The law also regulates demining methodology and defines the content of the demining plan. The focus is on ratification of deminers' rights and relations, demining methods and quality control of the demining operations.

The mine action strategy for BiH encompasses the mine action vision and mission, strategic and operational goals, precise strategic plan and strategic projects. The mission is considered to be the creation of prerequisites for the total destruction of the population and the development of economic and natural resources in BiH until 2010. Strategic goals are creating the conditions for constant and efficient implementation of demining: extensive mine risk education (MRE) and marking and fencing; capacity building development of new technologies and international cooperation; revival of donors' interest; and monitoring the implementation of the Ottawa Convention commitments. The following five strategic projects are presented in the strategy:

- Establishment of the regional center for Mine Detection Dog (MDD) Training
- Creation of a network of journalists involved in mine action
- Systematic mine impact survey
- Permanent training of mine-risk officers
- Handover of the agricultural land to the owners

The organizational structure of demining consists of the following mine authorities on a national level within BiH, entity level and international level, respectively:

- The Demining Coordination in BiH
- BHMAC
- Civil Defense

The Demining Commission is a central demining authority that was founded by a Decree of the Council of Ministers of BiH is in charge responsible for the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications. The committee's task is to present mine information (both problems and legal status) to the national and international public, to prepare demining standards, to nominate candidates for BHMAC director and assistants' positions, to authorize internal rules and regulations, to prepare and submit reports to the Council of Ministers and donors and to route funds needed for mine action. BHMAC is an operational service of the committee tasked with the following:

- Maintenance and management of the central minefields and mine-suspected area database
- Preparation of mine action project proposals for technical safety standards and standards for the quality control of demining works
- Accreditation of demining companies
- Creation of a network of journalists and monitoring of the training and reporting activities
- Preparation of mine action project reports
- Activity-planning including budget estimates
- Completion of written reports and financial reports

During the past year, significant progress in mine action activities has been noted in BiH. It is manifested in the following: a) progress in the area of demining, creation of a demining strategy for BiH, execution of systematic survey, organization and establishment of the new organizational structure of BHMAC, development of demining capacities (41 demining organizations) and engagement of the army and Civil Defense in mine action. The biggest concern in BiH is the slow pace of demining and the large number of mine incidents (80-100 casualties per year).

Croatia

The war in Croatia lasted from 1991-1995. The army had destroyed approximately 500,000 mines and 400,000 UXO

Table 1: Mine Contamination in the Region of SE Europe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mine Contamination Indicators</th>
<th>Albania</th>
<th>Bosnia and Herzegovina</th>
<th>Croatia</th>
<th>Macedonia</th>
<th>Yugoslavia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mine-Contaminated Countries</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine-Contaminated per 100 sq km</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
<td>0.05%</td>
<td>0.03%</td>
<td>0.02%</td>
<td>0.04%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of mines in mine-suspected area</td>
<td>Estimated 450,000 mines 800,000 sq km</td>
<td>Estimated 1,000,000 UXO</td>
<td>70,000 mines 80 sq km</td>
<td>50,000 UXO</td>
<td>70,000 mines 80 sq km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of UXO in mine-suspected area</td>
<td>3,000,000 UXO 80 sq km</td>
<td>2,000,000 UXO 80 sq km</td>
<td>2,000,000 UXO 80 sq km</td>
<td>2,000,000 UXO 80 sq km</td>
<td>2,000,000 UXO 80 sq km</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of UXO per 100 sq km</td>
<td>4.75%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of UXO per 100 sq km of high density mines</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of UXO per 100 sq km of high density UXO</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty in classification</td>
<td>High density UXO</td>
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planned and scattered in Croatia. At the end of 2002, mine-contaminated area was estimated at 1,630 sq km (170 sq km of minefields and around 1,460 sq km containing individual mines—mine-suspected area not used by citizens). In 1996, the United Nations estimated the mine-contaminated area of Croatia to be 13,000 sq km.

The Croatian Mine Action Center (CROMAC) has a database on minefields. The data is taken from original minefield records of the warring parties that laid the minefields. In the database, 132,186 APLs and 79,408 ATMs are recorded—totaling 211,594 mines overall. The database on mine-suspected areas is based on collected reports from various military personnel, as well as from civilians. Fourteen counties are considered to be mine-contaminated; the most mine-contaminated counties are: Osijek-Baranja, Sisak-Moslavina, Vukovarsko-Srijemska, Karlovac and Zadarska. There is also a great concentration of mines around the cities that are located on the former confrontation line: Slavonka, Benkovac, Karlovac, Knin, Otočec and Vukovar. Realizing all the problems that mine wars encompass, Croatia proclaimed a Moratorium on usage, production, import, export and stockpiling of landmines in April 1996. In addition, Croatia was one of the first countries to support the Ottawa process; it cooperated in the preparation of the Convention and signed in December 1997. Croatia was the 12th country among the signatory states that ratified the Convention. Croatia finished destroying its stockpiled mines by the end of 2002.

Analyzing the mine action situation and the impact of mines on safety, humanitarian, environmental, economic and development problems of SE Europe, it can be concluded that Croatia inaps significant resources in mine action and that it achieves good results. The results can especially be seen through:

- Unity of all political, social and state factors involved in mine action activities and observance of the obligations of the Ottawa Treaty.
- Good results in mine-suspected area reduction, in demining and mine-suspected area marking, mine awareness education and mine victims assistance.
- Clearly defined mine action strategy proclaimed by the Croatian Parliament.
- First determination of Croatia to finance mine action programs, which enable its stability.

Support of the academic community in systematically solving certain problems, assistance in decision-making and monitoring of the development of new demining technologies and their testing and introduction into operative use.

Development of demining capacities that will provide professional assistance to the countries in SE Europe and beyond.

Macedonia

In Macedonia, mine-suspected area covers 21 sq km with 2,000 mines and 70,000 UXO, and spreads along the border with the province of Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro). There is no existing mine action system and mine action activities are carried out by Civil Defense Forces. Demining activities started in October 2001 and 39 villages and roads in the area of Tetovo and Kumanovo were cleared. During 2002, the ITF trained a part of the personnel to conduct mine action activities. During the same year, ITF contracted a non-governmental organization (NGO) from BHT that cleared 3.5 million sq m and surveyed 3,000 houses and yards. The fact that the Albanian People's Army demined their minefields is quite unique for Macedonia. In Macedonia, there are 3,200 mines from World War I and II along the Greek border near Durjakovo-jetero, where 1,000 mines are located each year. The mine action activities in Macedonia serve as a positive example of a possible regional cooperation with a NGO from BHT conducting a significant part of baseline area clearance activities in Macedonia, in a quite short period of time. ITF’s involvement through a “Train and Equip” training program to swiftly build a mine action capacity in Macedonia, also represents a positive step forward. Due to the small amount of mine-suspected area, well-coordinated activities by the UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) and ITF, training of locals in all aspects of mine action, and arrival of trained teams from BHT, it is likely that the mine impact in Macedonia will be eliminated by the end of 2003.

Serbia and Montenegro

Mines and UXO originate from the war in Croatia, from the Kosovo conflict and from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Forces engagement in Yugoslavia. There are many discarded cluster bombs as a direct result of that engagement. Mine contamination covers approximately a 39 sq km area. Twenty-nine sq km are contaminated with cluster bombs in several locations: Nia (total of three sub locations covering the area of two sq km); Kraljevo (total of three sub locations covering the area of one sq km); Sjenica (total of two sub locations covering the area of 16 sq km); Mendace (total of two sub locations covering the area of three sq km); Kupoviska (total of two sub locations covering the area of six sq km); Cacak (one location covering the area of 0.7 sq km); and Valdromin (one location covering the area of 0.2 sq km). The mine-contaminated area consists of 10 sq km and is divided into and along the borderline with the Republic of Croatia with 103 minefields covering a 45.5 sq km area that includes approximately 11,000 mines. There were no military actions in this area in the minefields were laid in a period largely exceeding the so-called “tank advancement lines,” as well as to prevent the possible advancement of ground infantry.

According to the available mine records of the former Yugoslav army, a number of minefields were “reinforced” by placing APVs (PMA-1) under some mines in the minefields. Serbia and Montenegro signed the Ottawa Convention as the last state in SE Europe and ratified the agreement in June 2003. The province of Kosovo is also mine-contaminated. Fifteen million minefields covering the area of 50 sq km have been demined with 18,000 APLs, 5,500 ATMs and around 13,500 pieces of UXO cleared. There are still dangerous areas around former stockpiles that were bombed during NATO attacks. The United Nations Office of Project Service (UNOPS) has played an important role in supporting the Kosovo mine action activities. It was UNOPS’s judgment that allowed the mine and UXO problems in Kosovo to be minimized by the end of 2001. Experts say that the level of impact is similar, if not lower than the level of impact in other European countries still disposing UXO from World War I. For example, Slovenia still disposes of approximately 3,000 listed items of UXO per year, mostly from World War II and II. UNAMIC has trained several members of the Kosovo Protection Corps (7 teams), thus enabling them to tackle and solve the remaining mine and UXO-related problems.

Kosovo stands out as an example of fast and efficient UN capacity-building activities that led to the first successfully completed mine action campaign in the world. However, there is still a need to continue with mine action activities due to the fact that mine-contaminated areas are still recorded, as well as mine incidents, even though the UN operations have been completed.

Montenegro also has a problem with mine and UXO contamination. The Croatia and BHT borderline areas are contaminavinated and still not fully surveyed. Cooperation with Croatia started in that particular area with joint survey teams assessing the level of mine and UXO contamination of the Debeli-Brijeg borderline area. That was a first and important step in the joint effort of the multi-state survey teams. UXO disposed into the Adriatic Sea also presents a problem for Montenegro.

The ITF’s Role in SE Europe

ITF is a humanitarian, non-profit organization dedicated to clearing landmines in SE Europe and the world. When first established by the Slovenian government in March 2003, ITF was designed to assist BHT in solving its landmine problem and help the surviving landmine victims in terms of their physical and socio-economic rehabilitation.

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Landmines in Europe & the Caucasus

MRE Programs

One of the main advantages for using the ITF for funding the mine action activities is our experience in the region and the issue included in the United States government. The U.S. funds can be spent on the same project as the original donation (if the project has been deemed to qualify for U.S. funds) by the United States government. This makes it easier to coordinate our activities with the relevant national and local authorities. ITF also offers "tailoring" of projects, and provides transparency and visibility in spending donated funds, as well as the matching-fund mechanism. Some of the benefits of the MRE programs are briefly discussed below.

Tailor-Made Projects

The donor decides which of the activities implemented in the field of mine action in the region it wants to support. Consistent with the donor's wishes, the ITF will then develop and submit a proposal for a fund to be funded. The project is thus designed in accordance with the preferences of the individual donor (country, activity, etc.). However, it also takes into account wishes and needs of the mine-affected country as well as the local community.

Coordinating with National Authorities

ITF is working closely with the authorities responsible for mine action programs in SE Europe in order to ensure that the help and assistance provided are in fact needed and that the EOD course are trained and submitted are coordinated with the national plans.

Transparency

ITF's right internal financial management control and annual external audits ensure that donated funds are properly accounted for.

Visibility of Donations

The donor is assured of the visibility of its donation in the field as well as through periodic ITF publications and reports.

Activities: Demining/Battle Area Clearance

The ITF's demining and battle area clearance operations are taking place in Albania, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia. The demining work is usually undertaken through an open bid procedure that is conducted by the ITF. The demining work can also be awarded directly if it is in the explicit wish of the donor. The work is closely monitored by the ITF staff as well as the professionals and NGOs involved. The demining work is underway in more than 30 different countries and eight NGOs executed demining work and cleared more than 37 million square meters of land with 17,956 mines and 16,867 UXO found.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of mine victims is an important component of the programs implemented by the ITF. When ITF was established in 1998, it set a goal of earmarking 15 percent of all donations for MVA associated programs. Only 6.3 percent of funds have actually gone towards MVA. For that reason, the World Organization on National Mine Action (WONAM) and the ITF are working to improve the evaluation and assessment of other mine action projects that are being implemented by ITF.

ITF Results in the SE Europe

The following sections discuss the impact of ITF in fund raising, demining activities and training in SE Europe.

Funding

Inception until May 2003, ITF succeeded in raising more than $119 million (U.S.) from more than 24 countries, 30 organizations/companies and 100 individuals. In February 2002 and the last one in October 2002 where 62 experts from SE Europe were trained.

ITF also organized Monitoring and QA/QC training at Buna for the 20 mine action participants from monitoring firms and BHMAC. The emphasis was given to the professional cooperation of the monitoring units with mine problems.

Some have been directed towards capacity building, MRE and other mine action related activities.

The United Nations Development Programme has granted the project under the Field Support Services to ITF. The project will provide technical assistance to the mine-affected countries in SE Europe, which is crucial for the development of indigenous and sustainable local capacities.
Regional Approach: Does It Present a Value-Added?

Regional cooperation in SE Europe has proven invaluable in many areas of mine action, ranging from a technical type of cooperation like identifying common demining problems on the borders of neighboring countries, to efforts of political significance in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation. The cooperation process was formalized in SEEMACC, in which ITF has become a focal point. It is ITF's firm belief that regional cooperation has contributed, and will continue to contribute even more so in the future, to a more efficient use of technical resources. The work done in the scope of SEEMACC is presented in the next section and the lessons learned in this region could perhaps prove invaluable for the other mine-contaminated regions in the world.

SEEMACC

Several organizations and initiatives are active in SE Europe, which all intend to assist in solving the mine problem in the region. They are: the United Nations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the Ottawa Convention, the Stability Pact for SE Europe, and the ITF. SEEMACC was also created as a regional mine action experts' initiative. The directors of national MACs in SE Europe have expressed their wish for cooperation in mine action in order to improve the mine action programs. That intent was shown in the agreement on the establishment of SEEMACC. Directors of the Albanian, Croatian and Bulgarian MACs signed a cooperation agreement on November 10, 2001. Later, on November 30th, 2001, the agreement was signed by Montenegro and Yugoslavia. The document also included in SEEMACC's mission is the development of common standards for training of EOD and demining personnel, including management, the testing of demining technologies and the training of mine detection dogs (MDDs).

SEEMACC Basic Principles

The principles are setting the framework for the values and policies that the mine action activities will abide by in SE Europe. Mine action is presenting all the aspects of national strategy for solving the mine problems in each country. The main goal of mine action is to re-establish the safe environment that will enable the initialization, reconstruction and management of the communities. The basic humanitarian principles of neutrality and humanity have to be respected in solving the mine problem so that the most mine-affected communities are helped first. The principle of partnership includes, among other things, the United Nations, especially the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and UNDP, the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and donors in each phase of mine action activities in order to integrate expertise, experience and recommendations into mine action of the region.

SEEMACC Strategic Goals and Tasks

The strategy involves six strategic goals in 27 tasks reflecting the needs expressed in mine-affected communities. The six goals are listed below to see the complete list of tasks, check out the SEEMACC website at http://www.seem­ demining.org/main.htm and click on the introduction heading and go to “strategy,” where the complete SEEMACC strategy is listed.

1. Retain the donors in SE Europe
2. Develop prioritization methodology
3. Develop and adopt regional operative standards
4. Train personnel in the region
5. Implement a unified mine information system
6. Test new demining technologies and machines

Conclusion

There is significant public and political awareness of the mine problem and the consequent impact that landmines have on society, as well as on the humanitarian, economic and environmental development of SE Europe. The real victims are civilians—mines impede the return of the population to their homes and prevent the production of necessary resources, even in the pure areas. Populations living in mine-contaminated areas need to see the mine threat reduced. Then perhaps, the establishment and maintenance of peace, the reintegration of refugees and returnees, the revitalization and reconstruction of communities and even the economic development of SE Europe, will soon become a reality.

The regional approach of SEEMACC presents an important development in the cooperation of the region and it is hoped that the project, once established, will be expanded to other regions of the world.

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MAGS in the Balkans, continued from page 21

[All graphics courtesy of author.]

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Regional Approach: Does it Present a Value-Added?

Regional cooperation in SE Europe has proven invaluable in many areas of mine action, ranging from a technical type of cooperation like identifying common demining projects on the borders of neighboring countries, to efforts of political significance in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation. The cooperation process was formalized in SEEMACC, in which ITF has become a focal point. It is ITF’s firm belief that regional cooperation has contributed, and will continue to contribute even more so in the future, to a more efficient use of resources for mine action in the region, as well as to the sharing of knowledge between the countries in the area of mine action. A regional approach can also be seen as a vehicle for a better utilisation of available resources. The work done in the scope of SEEMACC is presented in the next section and the lessons learned in this region could perhaps prove invaluable for the other mine-contaminated regions in the world.

SEEMACC

Several organizations and initiatives are active in SE Europe, which all intend to improve the maimine action programs in the region. They are: the United Nations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the Ottawa Convention, the Stability Pact for SE Europe, and the ITF. SEEMACC was also created as a regional mine action expert initiative. The directors of national MAC’s in SE Europe have expressed their wish for cooperation in mine action in order to improve the mine action programs. This intent was shown in the agreement on the establishment of SEEMACC. Director of the Albanian, Croatian and Bulgarian MAC’s signed an agreement on November 11, 2000. Later, on November 30th, 2001, the agreement was signed by Montenegro and Yugoslavia MAC. On February 16th, 2002, the process was continued when Azerbaijan became a full member of SEEMACC. The signatures emphasized the need for cooperation and support in the following fields:

- Exchange of experience, expertise and knowledge in the field of mine action in SE Europe and the field of training deminers and managing personnel
- Promotion of the regional approach in the planning of demining programs and in the fundraising for mine action
- Exchange of information on testing of the new technologies in demining
- Promotion of the achievement of common standards and coordination of procedures in the field of demining in SE Europe.

SEEMACC Mission

The mission is to develop sustainable regional programs that will contribute to the mine-contaminated countries developing the capacities to demine and return the land to the local populations and enable economic, agricultural and tourism development. The programs are designed to prevent mine incidents, rehabilitate mine victims, help national programs to raise awareness of the mine problem, develop new technologies for mine detection, reduce mine-affected areas, train and educate experts in the region and raise necessary funds. Assistance to national programs in developing common standards, procedures and techniques of demining through the introduction of the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) standards will be based on the experiences from the region. Also included in SEEMACC’s mission is the development of common resources for training of EOD personnel, guiding management, the testing of demining technologies and the training of mine detection dogs (MDDs).

SEEMACC Basic Principles

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SEEMACC Strategic Goals and Tasks

The strategy involves six strategic goals in 27 tasks reflecting the needs expressed in mine-affected communities. The six goals are listed below (to see the complete list of tasks, check out the SEEMACC website at http://www.seem­ demining.org/macs.htm and click on the introduction heading and go to "Strategy", where the complete SEEMACC strategy is listed). 1. Retain the donors in SE Europe. 2. Develop prioritization methodology. 3. Develop and adopt regional operational standards. 4. Train personnel in the region. 5. Develop a regional mine action information system. 6. Test new demining technologies and machines.

Conclusion

There is significant public and political awareness of the mine problem and the enormous impact that landmines have on safety, as well as on the humanitarian, economic and environmental development of SE Europe. The real victims are civilians—mines impede the return of the populations to their homes and prevent the production of necessary resources, even in the purest areas. Populations living in mine-contaminated areas need to see the mine threat reduced. Then perhaps, the establishment and maintenance of peace, the reintegration of refugees and returnees, the revitalization of communities and even the economic development of SE Europe, will soon become a reality.

The regional approach of SEEMACC presents an important development in the cooperation of the regions and it is also beneficial to solving the mine problem in the region at a faster pace through exchange of knowledge, expertise, lessons-learned and regional pooling of resources. It is also promoting post-conflict political rehabilitation in the region. SEEMACC’s approach can be an example to be followed in other regions of the world.

References

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MASG in the Balkans, continued from page 21

trained deminers are available. Even the Bosnian and Herzegovina Armed Forces perform demining tasks. Together, they are capable of demining an area of some 30 km² each year. This is quite an effort, keeping in account the overall 2,090 km² of mine contaminated area. This will take another 70 years to demine all of it. Therefore, Technical Surveys (i.e., use of one of the MASG methods) is planned to be a reality. MDDs. If nothing is found, the area will be released to the local community.

Nevertheless, it will not be possible for Bosnian and Herzegovina to meet the