New Database Provides Resource for Mine-action Community

Launched in July 2011, the World Bank's Landmine Contamination, Casualties and Clearance database is a valuable resource for those working in mine action. The database allows users to create spreadsheets, reports and graphics based on a wealth of landmine-contamination data from around the world.

Screen shot of World databank homepage. The Landmine Contamination Casualties and Clearance (LC3D) database is only one of 27 databases published by the World Bank.
All graphics courtesy of http://data.worldbank.org.

The World dataBank, http://data.worldbank.org, is an informational database launched 20 April 2010 by the World Bank as a part of its Open Data Initiative.[1] Within the databank are 27 separate databases containing information on topics ranging from finances and debt to the conditions of African railways. These databases are free and open to the public as a part of the World Bank's mission to disseminate facts for journalists, academicians and other concerned parties. Most of the datasets are updated annually, although some economic and social datasets are available on a monthly or quarterly basis.[2] According to its website, the World Bank hopes that this sharing and publicizing of information will lead to greater transparency and accountability because the World Bank acknowledges these attributes as "essential to the development process and central to achieving the Bank's mission to alleviate poverty."[3]

The Database

Recently, the World dataBank has expanded to include a new dataset: Landmine Contamination, Casualties and Clearance. Added in July 2011, this database draws from two data sources, the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor* and the United Nations Mine Action Team, to provide accurate information regarding landmine and unexploded-ordnance contamination in192 countries.[4]

Users can create their own reports on the website by selecting the countries for which they want data; the source from which they would like the data; the specific variable measures or the specific data figures they would like to see; and the time frame for which they would like the data. Thus, the data, which cover most aspects of mine action, are divided into certain groupings that are broken down further according to more specific variables. The four main groupings of data are:

1. Country
2. Data source
3. Series
4. Time

Under the **Country** heading, information is organized into sections titled Income, Lending and Region. Under the **Income** heading, countries are divided into five sets, organized according to levels of income. Under the **Lending** section, countries are split into two groups: low-income countries receiving interest-free loans and higher-income countries receiving humanitarian loans for specific projects.[5] Finally, under the **Region** heading, data is divided into seven different regions: East Asia and Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, North America, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa. These groupings provide users with a variety of criteria for country-data selection.

Once users have selected a country, or a group of countries, they must then select the data source. Sometimes the information found in both the *Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor*

After entering the World dataBank, users can select any of the 209 countries in the database.

On the Format Report page, users can export their data into Excel, view their data, or proceed to a customizable report page, which allows users to view data, create graphics and build charts.

the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention or APMBC). Series variables include casualty statistics, clearance and landmine destruction statistics and information on national and international mine-action funding.

Many individual statistical measures cover a vast body of information in the database, but the World dataBank system is easy to navigate. Breaking down each group of data into specific subgroups dramatically reduces the difficulty of sifting through large reports for a specific statistic. However, the most beneficial aspect of the dataBank is its **Format Report** feature, which allows users to create single-variable spreadsheets on its website.

The reports can be downloaded to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, but the online report generator gives the spreadsheets an interactive quality. For instance, the online report format allows the user to easily switch between different variables and different sources using the pull-down tab at the top of the screen. This feature enables users to create customized reports and compare data across many variables.

The database also allows users to create graphics and charts from selected data. This feature facilitates easy visual comparison, allowing users to compile helpful graphic data representations. **Map view** displays data on a world map, an innovative addition to an already quite comprehensive graphics feature.

One aspect of the database, however, is less helpful. In some cases, the two sources provide very different data for the same variable. For example, UNMAT data for **Civilians killed, total** shows much lower numbers for Afghanistan than the *Landmine Monitor* data displays. This discrepancy does not reflect a failure on the part of the World dataBank, but instead highlights the issues of using varied, non-standardized data-gathering and reporting techniques.

Conclusion

The World dataBank's Landmine Contamination, Casualties and Clearance database is a useful and innovative resource for anyone interested in mine action or cluster munitions. The site's navigation is intuitive and easy to learn. As the site develops and information becomes more comprehensive, the database will become an important resource for the mine-action community. ◈

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and the UNMAT is the same; however, often, one source provides information for a variable that the other does not. For example, for the variable **Total area cleared (square kilometers)**, no data from the *Landmine Monitor* is displayed, whereas data from UNMAT is shown.

Next, the user must choose the **Series** variables. Series variables are the individual statistical measures, such as whether the country is a signatory to the *Convention on Cluster Munitions* and/or a States Party to the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction* (also known as