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Mine-action Program in Southern Sudan

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Socioeconomic rehabilitation and reintegra-
tion of landmine and ERW victims remains a high national priority. Furthermore, North Sudan has signed and ratified the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Since 2007, 22 community-based projects have been implemented for the socioeconomic rehabilita-
tion and reintegration of the landmine and ERW victims in various parts of the country with generous contributions from Canada, Japan and the state budget.

The North Sudanese authorities, UNDP and the UNMAO have embarked on a broader and more practical partnership in various areas of mine action in support of the implementation of the mine-action transition plan, and look forward to further expanding this cooperation and partnership in the future.

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 un-
der its Article 5 obligations. In the future, North Sudan envisions producing an expe-
rrienced mine-clearance staff capable of ful-
filling its local role of mine clearance while offering support to other countries through sharing experiences and lessons and deploy-
ing trained staff.

With the engagement of all relevant stake-
holders, a mine-action transition plan was con-
cluded in November 2008. In 2009, based on the provisions of this plan, the national authorities made significant progress toward transitioning by strengthening and consolidating their insti-
tutional 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, cov-
ering 2009–11 to implement the Cartagena Ac-
tion Plan. North Sudan aims to clear 80 percent of all known high- and medium-priority affect-
ed areas by the end of 2011 at an estimated cost of US$812.9 million.

Conclusion

North Sudan is committed to fully imple-
menting the Cartagena Action Plan. As it reach-
es 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 obliga-
tions, North Sudan’s national demining teams, which are the nation’s most cost-effective and sustainable assets, need continued and gener-
sous support from the donor community. This will enable North Sudan to realize the goal of being mine-free by 2014.  
see endnotes page 81

T

he 21-year north-south civil war in Su-

dan that killed an estimated two mil-

lion 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 contamin-
a tion poses a serious challenge to the Govern-
ment of Southern Sudan’s development plans and is considered a serious threat to the suc-
cessful 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 South-
ern Sudan will remain a part of a united Sudan or become its own separate entity. Based on the 
CPA, in 2005, Southern Sudan gained the right to self determination in Bahr El Gazel, Eastern Equatoria, Jonglei, the Lakes, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal, Warab, Western Bahr El Ghazal, Western Equatoria, Unity and Upper Nile. All of its 10 states are reported to have varying degrees of landmine/ERW contamina-
tion.

As with the rest of the country, the civil war has left Southern Sudan with a large-scale land-
mine/ERW contamination problem. Despite several years of intensive mine-action opera-
tions, landmine/ERW contamination contin-
u es to threaten civilians and impede economic recovery and development. Contaminated land reduces productivity and thereby the sustain-
able livelihoods of affected communities.

Landmine/ERW contamination on key lo-

gistical supply routes continues to hamper safe and free movement, trade and provision of humanitarian assistance. Contamination also endangers the lives of local communities, inter-

nally displaced persons, refugees, staff of hu-

manitarian missions and the personnel of the United Nations Mission in Sudan. The presence and perceived threat of landmines/ERW pre-

vents 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 collabor-

ation 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 Develop-

ment Programme in the area of capacity build-

ing, UNICEF in support of mine-risk education initiatives, international nongovernmental or-

ganizations (Norwegian People’s Aid, Mines Advisory Group, Danish Demining Group) and national organizations (Operations Save Inno-
cent Lives, Sudan Landmine Response, Sudan Integrated Mine Action Service), as well as of-

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United Nations and others, 5 million Sudanese pounds (US$2.11 million) has been allocated by the GOSS to mine action since mid-2006. This has encouraged other donors to continue to support mine-action operators in Southern Sudan to address its landmine/ERW contamination.

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 210 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 Cartagena 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$8120 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.

**Transition Plan and End State**

Southern Sudan faces major challenges in pursuit of clearing all known landmines by 2014; however, this might not be realistic due to the aforementioned geographical and logistical challenges. With the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, a mine-action transition plan was concluded in November 2008. Based on the provisions of the transition plan, the national authorities made significant progress in 2009 by strengthening and consolidating their institutional and management capacities.

The aim of the process is to transition the management and coordination of the Sudan Mine Action Programme to national authorities in a systematic and gradual manner as soon as possible but no later than early 2011. The desired end state therefore is that the national authorities in Sudan manage all aspects of mine action with minimal technical assistance from the United Nations. The national authorities, UNDP and UNMAO have embarked on a broader and more practical partnership in mine refugees. In action to support the implementation of the mine action transition plan and would like to further expand this cooperation and partnership in the years to come.