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First Workshop on Regional Approaches to Stockpile Reduction in Southeast Europe

Daniele Ressler  
*Center for International Stabilization and Recovery*

Dave Diaz  
*PM/WRA*

Laurie Freeman  
*PM/WRA*

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insufficient consideration of the presence of landmine/ERW hazards in their area. While projects may begin with limited awareness of the potential problem, part of all of a project may be brought to a halt when landmines are encountered. This realization may also require that the project reconsider individual beneficiaries, since the effects of landmines can be “personal,” and could be avoided with better use of information and appropriate planning.

The threat of landmine contamination may affect the specific plans of many sectors, including transportation (roads, bridges and railways), power (electricity generation and distribution), water, agriculture and social sectors (education, health and social welfare). Sector requirements for mine action are often not clearly reflected in national mine-action plans, and sector development plans often do not reflect sector needs for demining services. With more use of mine-action information, there is a greater chance that the need to resolve potential landmine problems will be incorporated into the national plans.

When landmines and ERW are not considered, the broad mission of a development organization may be compromised. There were several reports of government and NGO programs covering multiple areas in which mine-affected communities were excluded because there were not sufficient funds in the program budget. This occurrence was most common with programs addressing rehabilitation or investment in a specific capacity (e.g., irrigation, schools and health centers) in which a minority of the candidate communities had landmine problems. When no funds had been allocated to address such problems, organizations were more likely to achieve program goals by selecting non-mine-affected communities. Landmine information was considered during program planning, alternative funding might have been found to resolve the landmine problems.

Mine-action planning is made more difficult when development operations have not considered landmine problems during their own project-planning stage. Encounter landmine obstacles that must be removed before proceeding with their project to continue. This discovery often results in an urgent request for demining support.”

Next Steps

Phase 1 of this project confirmed wide agreement among national mine-action programs that it is important to enhance the use of mine-action information by development partners. It also provided a map of potential client organizations and their information needs. In Phase 2, SAC will work with three national mine-action programs and consult with a range of development organizations. This collaboration will help identify the organizations’ specific information needs and prepare targeted information products to increase the overall availability and usefulness of information. It will also propose central-government policies to ensure that landmine information is considered in the planning and financing of development projects.

A history of conflicts and the military build-up of weapons and ammunition in Southeast Europe, the region now faces se major challenges created by the presence and need to reduce excess, unstable and loosely secured conventional weapons and munitions. Illustrating the dangers are explosions in recent years of ammunition stocks in Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia, which have resulted in considerable damage, in addition to killing scores of civilians and displacing hundreds. In an effort to begin addressing these issues, the first South East Europe Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction workshop was held 5–7 May in Zagreb, Croatia.

This SEE RASR workshop was the first of a series of regional workshops developed to initiate discussions regarding national and regional plans for stockpile reduction and management. This regional approach is a concept born from the Adriatic Charter’s September 2008 Chiefs of Defense Conference, when officials recognized that a regional approach might improve efficiency and extend limited resources to address the dual threats of illicit proliferation and accidental explosion.

Participants

The workshop had more than 50 participants, with senior-level Croatian General Staff and Ministry of Defense officials, as well as representatives from international governmental and nongovernmental organizations. The goal was to identify how international development aid could strengthen national and regional efforts to manage and reduce weapon-related stockpiles. Participants addressed threats and responses to stockpiles. Small-arms and light weapons-related to international terrorism and national crime, as well as the humanitarian challenges from the presence of and need to reduce excess, unstable and loosely secured conventional weapons and munitions. Illustrating the dangers are explosions in recent years of ammunition stocks in Albania, Bulgaria and Serbia, which have resulted in considerable damage, in addition to killing scores of civilians and displacing hundreds. In an effort to begin addressing these issues, the first South East Europe Regional Approach to Stockpile Reduction workshop was held 5–7 May in Zagreb, Croatia.

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the need for information exchange, transparency in technical and policy mechanisms, and enhanced regional coordination of practices where appropriate. In the short term, participants recommended a collaborative study on national capabilities and procedures specific to South East Europe. To enhance cooperation, the region could establish informal working groups at various levels in the technical, management and policy arenas to share area-specific practices. In the long term, establishing an informal Group of Governmental Experts could be used to consolidate and coordinate these practices.

**Standardization.** The region recognized the need for shared munitions classifications standards, common munitions surveillance systems and national points of contact. Low levels of trust between governments and a lack of coordination are obstacles to this kind of information sharing. Navigating conflicting domestic laws and regulations will also prove to be difficult. The SEESAC maintains a database of national points of contact with responsibility over small-arms policies and programs. To improve coordination in the short term, governments should work with SEESAC to maintain an up-to-date database. In the medium term, it would be helpful to undertake a comprehensive study of what components of national stockpiles need to be classified under United Nations’ standards. In the long term, the region could establish an informal Group of Governmental Experts to consolidate and coordinate these practices.

**Outcomes**

As the groups reconvened at the end of the workshop and reported on their discussion points, ideas and themes were presented, discussed and summarized by workshop facilitators. In conjunction with the first
F. David Diaz is a Foreign Affairs Officer in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, U.S. Department of State. He coordinates programs and develops policy to reduce the threat from illicit proliferation of conventional weapons and munitions, with a focus on non- portable air defense systems and other small arms/light weapons. Diaz has previously served as the Defense Threat Reduction Officer for the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy. He is a former U.S. Air Force Intelligence Officer and holds a Master of Arts in International relations from Boston University.

Laurie Freeman is a Presidential Management Fellow in the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, U.S. Department of State, Washington, D.C. Tel: +1 202 633 0132 E-mail: fred@fsemails.com Web site: http://www.wstate.gov/pma/laurna

Masha enjoys a walk with her new prosthesis and Dr. Therdchai Jivacate of Thailand’s Prosthetics Foundation.

The CIR Casting System has been used for several years to create high-quality, low-cost prostheses for human landmine survivors and other people with below-knee amputation. Now, Dr. We hope that using the casting system to craft prostheses may be a viable alternative to euthanizing animals like elephants injured by landmines. He also thinks the system might work for echolites of their thin, spindly legs break.

See Endnotes, Page 114

Document: Prostheses for Pachyderm Landmine Survivors

by Kathryn Jackson [Center for International Rehabilitation]