Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

Ian Mansfield
Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

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any new replacements that would come into the crew time, but it also greatly benefited the EOD Military Training Team not only saved earlier than the time allotted to them. and his crew effectively trained all of the Uzbek new equipment we provided.” With this “train properly trained and comfortable with the equipment, including 20 demining expertise of the landmine and underwater detector training (dual-purpose detector; can be utilized on land as well. Underwater detector training (dual-purpose detector; can be utilized on land as well.

Conclusion

Bolos was also impressed by the level of professionalism the Uzbek personnel showed. “They formed a specialized engineer staff/equation battalion for this,” he says. “They had an army. They were familiar with some of the equipment and they [were] very professional. [They learned quickly.] It was very easy working with their army.”

Ultimately, Bolos and his team had a considerable impact on the Uzbek soldiers. Through training military personnel how to perform EOD operations, the U.S. has provided Uzbekistan with a sustainable method of dealing with UXO. Since his last trip to Central Asia, Bolos has accepted a new assignment at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, assuming command of an EOD Battalion, but he still has fond memories of his trips to the area. “They took care of us,” Bolos says. “We were afforded the opportunity to experience their culture and history during our stay.”

Recent Publications

Due to the growing concern caused by accidental explosions at ammunition storage facilities, the GICHD updated a previous study and released 20 Mine Action Storage in November 2008. Over the past eight years, available records show that explosions have killed or injured thousands of people. In 2008 alone, explosions in Albania, Belarus, Iran, Iraq, Ukraine and Uzbekistan reportedly caused hundreds of casualties and scattered munitions over many square kilometers of previously safe land. The publication identifies and promotes good practice in the safe storage of ammunition and contributes to international efforts to address this important issue.

A revised and updated version of the Guide to Cluster Munitions was recently launched at the Conference on the Destruction of Cluster Munitions, presented by the German and Norwegian governments with support from the GICHD in Berlin in late June 2009. Additionally, the GICHD released A Mechanical Demining Handbook in early July, providing practical advice on the management and tasks of machinery to support various demining activities. The concept of “clearing suspect land,” rather than just focusing on “clearance,” has been an important issue for the GICHD for the past couple of years, and we are pleased to have them drive the theme for the summer edition of The Journal of ERW and Mine Action. The booklet Guide to Non-technical Land Release was published in 2007 and drew on case studies from six countries. More recently, three new International Mine Action Standards have been developed by the GICHD, to complement 20 Land release, (8:21) Non-technical survey and (9:22) Technical survey. The GICHD is also continuing research into various new technical survey methods, and this information will be published later in 2009. In conjunction with this, the GICHD has provided practical advice and assistance to mine affected countries in the development of land release policies and procedures. These have included, among others, Angola, Cambodia, Chad, Laos and Mozambique.

Geneva: GICHD’s Engagement in Mine Action

In 2009, the GICHD has provided technical training and advice to a number of mine-affected countries and has assisted national Mine Action Standards have been established for the past four years, and we are pleased to have them drive the theme for the summer edition of The Journal of ERW and Mine Action. The booklet Guide to Non-technical Land Release was published in 2007 and drew on case studies from six countries. More recently, three new International Mine Action Standards have been developed by the GICHD, to complement 20 Land release, (8:21) Non-technical survey and (9:22) Technical survey. The GICHD is also continuing research into various new technical survey methods, and this information will be published later in 2009. In conjunction with this, the GICHD has provided practical advice and assistance to mine affected countries in the development of land release policies and procedures. These have included, among others, Angola, Cambodia, Chad, Laos and Mozambique.

Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

by Ian Mansfield [Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining]

T he Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining has been busy over the last several months. The GICHD recently organized an African Francophone Conference on demining in Benin and provided technical input for the recent Convention on Cluster Munitions. In addition, GICHD published technical guides related to road clearance, safe ammunition storage and cluster munitions.

Francophone Meeting in the Republic of Benin

The first African Francophone seminar on mine action and explosives clearing took place 20–22 October 2008 in Cotonou, Benin. The meeting, hosted by the government of Benin, was organized by the GICHD in collaboration with the Centre de Prévention des Actes Performatifs de L’Ex-Manoeuvres and was financially supported by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie and the government of Switzerland. This first meeting was specifically planned as a forum for the exchange of experiences. Participants benefited from the opportunity to share information and access expertise on many components of mine action in a French-language setting. The meeting was attended by experts from 14 African French-speaking countries actively involved in reducing the impact of mines and ERW in their territories, and representatives from international and regional organizations such as the United Nations and Economic Community of West African States.

Another key component of GICHD’s Francophone program is the promotion of mine-action resources in French. This includes an online library of mine-action documents, the GICHD e-University, the establishment of an experts network and translation of relevant documents.

Information Management and IMSMA

The GICHD recently made a number of significant changes to the IMSMA project. These changes have included reviewing the survey and mapping system, creating a new initiative, conducting technical training programs, developing a new distribution policy, and promoting the IMSMA with communications users of the IMSMA and other relevant organizations. For

The implementing partner program, a training course was held in April 2009 for representatives of four organizations who will now assist with the IMSMA installation and maintenance work of the GICHD. To enhance communication and user feedback, GICHD established an IMSMA user’s network as an open Google group, which can be joined via the GICHD Web site at www.gichd.org.

12th International Meeting

The GICHD hosted the 12th International Meeting of Mine Action Program Directors and U.N. Advisors in Geneva from 23– 27 March 2009. Over 200 experts from 60 countries attended. The United Nations Mine Action Team chaired the meeting, and topics discussed included the transition of programs to national ownership, linking mine action to development, victim surveillance and a number of technical issues. A full report of the meeting is available at the E-Mine Web site: www.mineaction.org.

by Ian Mansfield [Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining]

Ian Mansfield is the Deputy Director and Head of Operations of the GICHD and is responsible for all of the center’s technical activities. He is also responsible for a number of humanitarian demining-related initiatives, including the Development of a User-friendly Mine Action Technical Advisory resource, and the establishment of a Mine Action Technical Advisory resource.

Matthias Weigel was an Editor Assistant for The Journal of ERW and Mine Action from October 2000 until May 2009. He graduated from James Madison University in May 2009 with a Bachelor of Arts in joint journalism and minors in both Spanish and Middle East communities and migrations.

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