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UNDP Management Training Programme for National Mine Action Managers

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NGOs and international institutions may also devise ways and means through which they can fulfill humanitarian goals. They could find a way to advance such goals and help states create a more secure environment at the same time. They could also ensure that the humanitarian purpose of their respective institutions. Furthermore, they could prevent third party abuse of the humanitarian cause for the purpose of intervening or undermining the sovereign rights of the state. In short, establishing an environment of mutual trust between actors is essential to overcoming legal and political impediments. Exploring the criteria and conditions for engaging armed non-state actors to secure their respect for international humanitarian law and human rights standards may, indeed, yield some positive results. However, this exercise cannot be done in a vacuum, turning a blind eye to other relevant factors and developments that shape and at times threaten international security. Otherwise, they will lead to more harm than good in the long run.

See Endnotes, page 112

Swiss Exploring Gender in Mine Action

The initiative to understand the topic of gender in mine action has recently generated significant discussion throughout the global community. Specialists exploring this area are shedding new light on the dissimilar practices, behaviors and communications of males and females in order to improve international mine-action activities in the field and office. As part of the Gender and Mine Action Programme, the Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines is currently researching and producing a gender-integrated manual that synthesizes practical recommendations with actual case studies.

Not only will the manual answer the question of why mine-action practitioners should be more cognizant of gender issues, it will also answer the question of how gender-sensitive procedures may be implemented. For the latter purpose, the SCBL hopes to integrate legal theory and accessible resources to make progress easily attainable. Practicality is imperative, since the manual is intended for a broad audience of mine-action organizations, governments, donors, civil-society actors, gender-focused organizations and community-based organizations.

The first section of the manual will elaborate on gender as it relates to each of the five pillars of mine action. This section will include an overview of the current state of affairs, real-world illustrations, best practices and unsuccessful enterprises. The manual will highlight recommendations to promote realistic application of the information presented. The second section of the manual will feature five in-depth case studies of Lebanon, Mozambique, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Colombia. Reports for each country will include details about the current mine problem for that country, insight about the regional gender situation, best practices and successful gender initiatives. Recommended topics for further research and piloting will also be incorporated.

The SCBL would appreciate participation in providing diverse personal perspectives for the manual. Though the formal submission deadline of 15 February 2008 has passed, e-mail Marie Nilsson at m.nilsson@scbl-gender for more information or to send comments. SCBL is interested in receiving a broad range of pertinent content: project examples, initiatives, tips, ideas, measures of achievement, successful integration stories, unsuccessful initiatives, and relevant photos.

Additionally, the Journal of Mine Action’s upcoming Issue 12.2 will focus upon gender in mine action, and related articles are now being accepted. Please see the “Call for Papers” on the back cover of this magazine for more information.

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From 2000 to 2006, 10 Senior Managers and 40 Middle Managers Training Courses were conducted for national staff of mine-action programmes from 42 countries. More than 800 managers (including nearly 200 senior managers and over 600 middle managers) completed these courses initiated by the United Nations Development Programmes. The courses were designed on the basis of a 1999 UNDP—United Nations Mine Action Service’s Training Needs Assessment1 conducted in response to a 1997 United Nations Department of Humanitarian Affairs study on the “Development of Indigenous Mine Action Capacity,” which concluded that the absence of management skills was a major obstacle to national ownership of mine-action programmes. At the end of 2006, the UNDP’s Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery sought to assess the impact of this training on national mine-action programmes in order to provide a solid basis for further decisions regarding future management training.

In December 2006, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining agreed to conduct a review of the courses and their impact, with the final report to be completed by the end of January 2007. Within this short timeframe, GICHD collected and analyzed extensive information about the course providers, course participants, their supervisors and others. It was, however, not possible to conduct country visits to assess the impact of the effectiveness of the national programme from the perspective of key external stakeholders.2

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A total of 184 graduates provided questionnaire responses, represented into Arabic, Dari, Khmer, Portuguese and Serbo-Croatian and sub-specific subjects. The report did not review the detailed content of individual class sessions, although it did pay close attention to graduate comments on qualifications of time to subjects, use of guest lecturers and participant evaluation. Managers Courses, as well as the reports from over a dozen Middle Technical Advisors; follow-up interviews with selected graduates; and to past course graduates, National Programme Directors and Chief Managers Course, the Global TNA study proposed an eight-week programme of management skills organized in five substantive areas plus a sixth element encompassing professional skills: 1. Forecasting and planning: Planning, budgeting, risk analysis 2. Coordination: Negotiation and liaison with other stakeholders 3. Organisational Management: Organisation theory, work organization, employment, and management 4. Leading: Recruiting, training, motivating and assessing staff 5. Controlling: Quality management and financial controls 6. Professional skills: Presentation, time management and computer skills

When the pilot courses were designed, the proposed set of subjects deviated from the survey results in two main areas. First, although the survey respondents identified donor relations and resource mobilisation as needs, the study did not include them for training and provided no explanation for this decision. This subject has since been recognized as important, particularly in the Senior Managers Course. Second, although survey respondents did not identify procurement and supply chain management as critical needs, they were included in the training area of the study. At the time, these functions were not included because they were primarily handled by international staff and were only added to the study because procurement and supply chain management were expected to become important with the departure of advisors. (This conclusion was later recommended and these subjects were reduced, especially in the Senior Managers Course, as the course participants insisted that what was to be learned not relate to their work.) The Global TNA sought to estimate the number of people who would be appropriate candidates needing each type of management-training course. Based on the existing 16 national mine-action programmes of various sizes, the study estimated there were between 80 and 175 candidates for the Senior Managers Course (which includes up to 5 Executive Managers) and between 120 and 325 candidates for the Middle Managers Course. Furthermore, as the study authors considered mine-action employment to be desirable and stable with low turnover, they decided to hold the courses on a fixed cycle at three-year intervals until the need for further general training once the initial round was completed.

The training needs assessment was based on the 1999 Global Training Needs Assessment. The study was directed to assess the management-training needs of national staff, distinguishing among three levels of managers: Executive (National Director), Senior (heads of national departments) and Middle Managers (heads of service delivery units and their sections), to determine the major subject areas in which training was required; to estimate the number of people requiring such training worldwide; and to recommend appropriate organisational options for delivery of the training.

The TNA identified a “strong need for training to develop planning skills, leadership, performance measurement, and control, particularly in financial and cost-control skills.” The TNA also strongly urged training in supply chain management as critical needs, they were included in the training area of the study. At the time, these functions were not included because they were primarily handled by international staff and were only added to the study because procurement and supply chain management were expected to become important with the departure of advisors. (This conclusion was later recommended and these subjects were reduced, especially in the Senior Managers Course, as the course participants insisted that what was to be learned not relate to their work.) The Global TNA sought to estimate the number of people who would be appropriate candidates needing each type of management-training course. Based on the existing 16 national mine-action programmes of various sizes, the study estimated there were between 80 and 175 candidates for the Senior Managers Course (which includes up to 5 Executive Managers) and between 120 and 325 candidates for the Middle Managers Course. Furthermore, as the study authors considered mine-action employment to be desirable and stable with low turnover, they decided to hold the courses on a fixed cycle at three-year intervals until the need for further general training once the initial round was completed.

The management-training effort would benefit from “guidance” and “pedagogic review” mechanisms for the courses. A guidance committee would involve key stakeholders (UNDP, UNMAS, DoS, Department for International Development, donors and representatives from key national programmes) to guide the overall direction of training. A pedagogic committee would involve key stakeholders and individuals willing to review the substance of the training courses.

The TNA defined the mine-action management training courses as being the “Sixth Element encompassing professional skills.” The TNA also strongly urged training in supply chain management as critical needs, they were included in the training area of the study. At the time, these functions were not included because they were primarily handled by international staff and were only added to the study because procurement and supply chain management were expected to become important with the departure of advisors. (This conclusion was later recommended and these subjects were reduced, especially in the Senior Managers Course, as the course participants insisted that what was to be learned not relate to their work.) The Global TNA sought to estimate the number of people who would be appropriate candidates needing each type of management-training course. Based on the existing 16 national mine-action programmes of various sizes, the study estimated there were between 80 and 175 candidates for the Senior Managers Course (which includes up to 5 Executive Managers) and between 120 and 325 candidates for the Middle Managers Course. Furthermore, as the study authors considered mine-action employment to be desirable and stable with low turnover, they decided to hold the courses on a fixed cycle at three-year intervals until the need for further general training once the initial round was completed.

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Oslo Process Meeting Makes Progress in Banning Cluster Munitions

Representatives from 138 nations and 140 civil societies concluded the third major international conference on cluster munitions in early December 2007, noting that a cluster ban treaty will likely be signed in 2008. The conference, meeting in Vienna, Austria, reported that important progress was made on issues like victim assistance, clearance, stockpile destruction and international cooperation and assistance.

Members of the civil societies came from more than 50 countries and praised the progress made at the conference. The need for standardized and monitored victim assistance was particularly important to these organizations, which sought consensus on assistance strategy and their families and communities, as well as on obligations to clear contaminated areas and stockpiles. Survivors of cluster munitions accidents also participated in the conference.

The most contentious part of the conference concerned the prohibition and definition of a cluster munition. While some representatives wanted to take a total ban on all cluster munitions, some countries called for exceptions to certain weapons with self-destruct capabilities and failure rates of a certain percentage. Other countries called for a transition period in which banned weapons still could be used. Despite disagreements over certain parts of a possible treaty, the conference ended optimistically.

The Vienna meeting was preceded by a similar meeting at the end of May 2007, with more than 60 countries meeting in Lima, Peru. The Oslo Process continued in February 2008, and will conclude in Dublin, Ireland, in May. African countries met in March in Uganda to consolidate their position as a region. A treaty signing ceremony in Oslo, Norway, is expected for later in 2008.

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