in the country. The Commissioner General of Sudan’s Humanitarian Aid Commission also presented highlights of the govern- ment’s vision and plans for addressing the landmine- and ERW-contamination prob- lems in the country and priority areas for assistance.4

The presentations were followed by an hour of open discussion and comments among various ministries, national and in- ternational organizations, U.N. agencies and individuals. The main discussion points included the following:

• All the parties appreciated and welcomed the establishment of the NMAA and stressed that address- ing the landmine/ERW problem in Sudan must be taken as a “one country approach,” with unified national planning, coordination and imple- mentation across Sudan.
• Sudanese ownership and leadership are vital to solving Sudan’s landmines/ERW-contamination problem in the long term through the development of a pool of qualified, trained and experienced national staff.
• The building of local and national capacities should be given priority in the projects implemented by the United Nations and international- ized organizations.
• The NMAA will review, revise and warm up various documents, including pre- vious memoranda of understanding/agreements, policy frameworks and strategy frameworks related to mine action in Sudan.
• The NMAA will hold broad-based, stakeholder consultations and dis- cussions with all concerned national bodies, the United Nations, other donor communities, and national and intern- tional civil-society organizations to improve and develop the NMAA’s strategic framework.
• The NMAA will work with the United Nations and the donor community to develop a comprehensive, well-coordinated, and integrated approach to landmine and ERW contamination in Sudan.
• The NMAA will conduct a comprehensive assessment of the extent and distribution of landmine and ERW contamination in Sudan and identify the most urgent and viable areas for action.

President of the Republic of Sudan and President of the GOSS.

Mayardit thanked the United Nations, the donor community and all other organi- zations and entities that have assisted and supported the Sudanese authorities and people in addressing the landmine/ERW- contamination problem in Sudan. He wel- come the establishment of the NMAA as a milestone in addressing the landmine/ ERW problem in the country and requested all concerned national bodies, the United Nations, the donor community and all na- tional and international operators to work closely with the NMAA in addressing the landmine- and ERW-contamination prob- lems in Sudan. Mayardit stated that in addi- tion to the efforts of the GOSS, the GOSS will take all necessary measures in support of the NMAA to establish an effective national- coordination mechanism by providing a na- tional platform to all mine-action actors and stakeholders in the country.

Mayardit further stated that the Republic of Sudan and its people will ultimately have to address the landmine/ERW-contamination problem in the long term. Therefore, he made a strong appeal to all the U.N. agencies, the donor community and all other national and international bodies to work closely with the concerned national authorities within the framework of the NMAA. This support will contribute to building national management and operational capacities, thereby enhance- ing national ownership and leadership. In addition, he appealed to the donor commu- nity to allocate special funds to build local and national mine-action capacities.

Conclusion

With the highest level of political com- mitment, establishment of the NMAA and heavy involvement of the United Nations and the international donor community, the processes of capitulation, de-mining in Sudan seem very positive. Of the 1,000 suspected mined areas identified so far, 270 sites have been cleared by the implement- ing partners of the United Nations and national and international organizations. The number of key supplies and access routes to land used for agriculture and third to any

land used for grazing. As a result of EMAO’s humanitarian-demining operations, which began in May 2002, more than 20.28 mil- lion square metres (about 8 square miles) of land infested with mines has been cleared. About 1,291 anti-personnel mines, 209 anti-tank mines and 20,410 pieces of UXO have been found and destroyed, with an immense number of fragments collected and eliminated.

In the coming years, EMAO plans to increase its output considerably. This, of course, can be accomplished through proper utilization of its experience and by employing additional resources and machinery, including machines.

In light of these facts, and if the ELIS data is more or less considered to cover about 2,443 square kilometres (943 square miles), the mine-affected areas in the country would take a number of years to tackle. Therefore, the EMAO would like to employ further assistance prevention meth- ods including using demining robot machines and taking various technical measures, and apply the following criteria:

EMAO plans to acquire more mechanical- demining machines and expand the mine- detection dog program to be deployed in the mine-clearance activities, which will be integrated with its existing integrated mine-clearance forces.

by Zewdu Deribe [Ethiopian Mine Action Office]