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Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

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Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining provides operational assistance to mine-action programmes and operators, creates and disseminates knowledge, works to improve quality management and standards, and provides support to instruments of international law like the Ottawa Convention¹ and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons.²

by Ian Mansfield [Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining]

Over the past 15 years, mine action has evolved into an established component of the relief and development sectors. During this period, programmes and projects for demining, mine-risk education, victim assistance, advocacy and stockpile destruction have been discussed, refined and improved by operators, programmers, diplomats and activists. As part of its ongoing role to reinforce the effectiveness and efficiency of mine action, the GICHD commissioned contributions

from development and mine-action experts on the many lessons that have been learned over the past 15 years and the challenges that remain to be met. These have been brought together in a book titled *Mine Action: Lessons and Challenges*.

Following an executive summary of its main conclusions and findings, the work is laid out in two parts. Part I looks at the core activities—the “pillars”—of mine action: advocacy, victim assistance, mine-risk education, demining and stockpile destruction. Part II looks at key management issues, specifically programme coordination and management, information management and capacity development. This work concludes with a thought-provoking assessment of what mine action has actually achieved. The book was published in November 2005 and can be ordered via the GICHD Web site.

IMAS Mine-risk Education: ‘Best Practice’ Handbooks

The seven mine-risk education components of the International Mine Action Standards outline minimum standards for the planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation of MRE programmes and projects. The IMAS are largely prescriptive, advising national authorities, operators and donors on what is necessary for the development and implementation of effective MRE programmes. However, they do not guide stakeholders on how they might adapt their programmes to be more compliant with the standards.

To facilitate the implementation of the MRE standards in the field, UNICEF requested the GICHD develop a series of “best practice” guidebooks to provide more

practical advice on how to implement the MRE standards. A total of 12 guidebooks have been developed using a variety of people, countries and contexts. The guidebooks address a wide range of areas covered by the MRE IMAS, including:

- How to support the coordination and the dissemination of public information
- How to implement risk education and training projects
- How to undertake community mine-action liaison
- What elements should be considered to implement effective MRE projects in emergencies

Copies of the guidebooks are available by contacting GICHD or UNICEF, or online at www.mineactionstandards.org.

Ongoing Work at the GICHD

The GICHD is undertaking a major study, *Land Release and Risk-Management Approaches*, which aims to examine the various processes used to release land (other than by full clearance) and to advise on ways in which a risk-management approach can be applied to speed up this process. The study will be completed by the end of 2006.

The development of the International Mine Action Standards has been undertaken by the GICHD on behalf of United Nations Mine Action Service.

There are currently 38 existing IMAS and another 10 are in the final approval stage of the process. The latest IMAS are always posted on the Standards’ Web site (www.mineactionstandards.org) and the GICHD produces an updated CD each year. A revised, simple *Guide to IMAS* was published in early 2006. ♦

See Endnotes, page 112



Ian Mansfield is the Operations Director at the GICHD and is responsible for all operational, technical and research activities of the Centre. He is also responsible for analysing existing and potential areas of activity for the Centre, as well as all evaluation, assessment and consultancy activities. Mansfield holds a Master of Business Administration and a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering.

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