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Mine Problem in the Region of Southeastern Europe: The ITF and SEEMACC

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Mine Problem in the Region of Southeastern Europe: International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) and the Southeastern Europe Mine Action Coordination Council (SEEMACC)

SE Europe is one of the most mine-affected regions in the world. This article examines the extent of the mine and UXO problem in each of the mine-affected countries in SE Europe, as well as discusses the steps being taken by various organizations in order to solve the mine-related problems in the region.

by Damir Gorseta, SEEMACC and Eva Veble and Sabina Beber, IFT

Mine Problem of the Countries in SE Europe

Unlike other multilateral organizations, the former Yugoslavia has fallen apart as a result of war conflicts, which have left large mined areas all over SE Europe. Mine contamination has impacted all countries of the former Yugoslavia and also Albania. Consequently, SE Europe has become one of the most mine-contaminated regions in the world. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Croatia, Macedonia and Yugoslavia face considerable mine and UXO problems, with BiH and Croatia being the most affected.

The table to the left shows the extent of mine contamination in each of the respective countries.

Most of the landmines in SE Europe are of Yugoslav origin (i.e., they are the mines that were stockpiled by the Yugoslav army before the dismemberment of former Yugoslavia). The following mines were most frequently used in the territory of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia:

- ATMs: TMM 1, TMA 3, TMA 4, TMA 5
- APLs: PMA-1, PMA-2, PROM-1A, PROM-3A, PMR

Albania

Conflict in Kosovo contributed to destabilizing this part of the region. During the Kosovo crisis in 1998-1999, a large number of mines were laid along the Kosovo-Albania border and into Albanian territory. In addition, there were unexploded shells, rockets and mortars left in the area. The mine-contaminated strip contains 85 high-risk areas and a 120 km long stretch, stretching from Shkodra to the south to Tropoje in the north. Thirty-nine villages in Albania are directly affected by mines—27 people have been killed and 216 have been injured by mine-related incidents. In 1999, the government of Albania established the pillar of the Albanian Mine Action Program. The program policy and strategy were developed by the Albanian Mine Action Committee and implemented by the Albanian Mine Action Executive (AMAE). The presence of mines and UXO on the Albania-Kosovo border in the northeast not only poses a physical threat to the population, but also prevents the use of the land. In addition, refugees returning in 1999, led to safety concerns in the unnecessarily contaminated border area. Removal of the landmine threat combined with the stability of the campaign, "Weapons in Exchange for Development," as well as stockpiling destruction, will help the development of these areas.

With donor support, AMAE has demined an area of 0.5 sq km in Albania. Albania set up a mine action strategy that foresees Albania free of mines and UXO by 2010. Albania wishes to eliminate the impact of mines and UXO in the northeastern part of Albania by 2005. Stockpile destruction in Albania, destroying 6,883,860 mines, was completed on April 4, 2002. In 2003, Albanian plans to conduct a general survey of a 1.9 sq km area and a technical survey of a 1.5 sq km area and demine a 350,000 sq km area.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Besides Croatia, BiH is the most mine and UXO contaminated country in the SE Europe. Mine-suspected area covers approximately 2130.6 sq km in BiH, which represents 4.17 percent of its territory. After the analysis was conducted, it was estimated that there are approximately 670,000 mines and 550,000 tons of UXO in approximately 10,000 locations. Mine-suspected areas are defined as unused areas because of the possible risk of mines and UXO. The mine-suspected area is divided into three categories according to demining priority:

1. The first category consists of locations for everyday use, areas planned for housing, reconstruction and rebuilding, areas of infrastructure and economic resources. Such areas cover 2,438 sq km of BiH territory, representing 11.26 percent of total mine-suspected area.
2. The second category consists of locations for occasional use, zones of contact with the first category, agricultural land and forests. Such areas cover 590.1 sq km of BiH territory, representing 27.5 percent of total mine-suspected area.
3. The third category consists of the remaining suspected land. Such areas cover 13,118 sq km of BiH territory, representing 61.14 percent of total mine-suspected area.

The Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center (BHAMC) was founded in 1996 by the United Nations Mine Action Center (UNMAC). In 1998, the responsibility for demining activities was handed over to the government of BiH with significant financial support from the international community. The legal framework for the implementation of demining problems in BiH was created at the beginning of 2002, when the Demining Law in BiH was passed. The Demining Law defines demining and the organizational structure of demining, and determines the implementing organizations and their tasks. The law also regulates demining methodology and defines the content of the demining plan.

The focus is put on regulation of deminers' rights and relations, demining methods and quality control of the demining operations.

The mine action strategy for BiH encompasses the mine action vision and mission, strategic and operational goals, precise strategic plan and strategic projects. The mission is considered to be the creation of prerequisites for the effective demobilization of the population and the development of economic and natural resources in BiH until 2010. Strategic goals are creating the conditions for constant and efficient implementation of demining; extensive mine risk education (MRE) and marking and fencing; capacity building development of new technology and international cooperation; revival of donors' interest; and monitoring the implementation of the Ottawa Convention commitments. The following five strategic projects are presented in the strategy:

- Establishment of the regional center for Mine Detection Dog (MDD) Training
- Creation of a network of journalists involved in mine action
- Systematic mine impact survey
- Permanent retraining of mine risk areas
- Handover of the agricultural land to the owners

The organizational structure of demining consists of the mine action authorities on a national level within BiH, entity level and international level, They are:

- The Demining Coordination in BiH
- BHMAC
- Civil Defense

- Arms of Entities
- The Board of Directors
- The Demining Commission is a central demining authority that was founded by a Decree of the Council of Ministers of BiH and is directly responsible to the Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications. The committee's task is to present mine information (both problems and solutions) to the national and international public, to approve demining standards, to nominate candidates for BHMAC's Director and Assistants' positions, to authorize internal rules and regulations, to prepare and submit reports to the Council of Ministers and donors and to route funds needed for mine action. BHMAC is an operational service of the committee tasked with the following:

- Maintenance and management of the central minefields and mine-suspected area database
- Preparation of mine action proposals for technical safety standards and standards for the quality control of demining works
- Accreditation of demining companies
- Creation of a training program and monitoring of the training and reporting
- Preparation of demining project proposals
- Activity-planning including budget estimates
- Completion of written reports and financial reports

During the past year, significant progress in mine action activities has been noted in BiH. It is manifested in the following: emergence of legislation, creation of a demining strategy for BiH, execution of systematic surveys, establishment and enlargement of the new organizational structure of BHMAC, development of demining capacities (41 demining organizations) and engagement of the army and Civil Defense in mine action. The biggest concern in BiH is the slow pace of demining and the large number of mine incidents (80-100 casualties per year).

Croatia

The war in Croatia lasted from 1991 to 1995. The Croatian government disposed of only 500,000 mines and 400,000 UXO.
Landmines in Europe & the Caucasus

December 1997, Croatia was the 12th country among the signatory states that ratified the Convention. Croatia finished destroying its stockpiled mines by the end of 2002.

Analyzing the mine action situation and the impact of mines on safety, humanitarian, environmental, economic, and developmental problems of SE Europe, it can be concluded that Croatia imparts significant resources in mine action and that it achieves good results. The results can especially be seen through:

- Unity of all political, social, and state factors involved in mine action activities and observance of the obligations of the Ottawa Treaty.
- Good results in mine-suspected area reduction, in demining and mine-suspected area marking, mine awareness education, and mine victims assistance.
- Clearly defined mine action strategy proclaimed by the Croatian Parliament.

First, determination of Croatia to finance mine action programs, which enable its stability.

Second, the academic community in systemically solving certain problems, assistance in decision-making and monitoring of the development of new demining technologies and their testing and introduction into operative use.

Development of demining capacities that will provide professional assistance to the countries in SE Europe and beyond.

Macedonia

In Macedonia, mine-suspected area covers 21 sq km with 2,000 mines and 70,000 UXO, and spreads along the border with the province of Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro). There is no existing mine action system and mine action activities are carried out by Civil Defense Forces.

Demining activities started in October 2001 and 30 villages and roads in the area of Tetovo and Kumanovo were cleared. During 2002, the ITF trained a part of the personnel to conduct mine action activities. During the same year, ITF contracted a non-governmental organization (NGO) from BiH that cleared 3.5 million sq m and surveyed 3,000 houses and yards. The fact that the Albanian People's Army demined their minefields is quite unique for Macedonia.

In Macedonia, there are eight minefields from World War I and II along the Greek border near Darjanosko-jetero, where 1,000 mines are located each year. The mine action activities in Macedonia serve as a positive example of a possible regional cooperation with a NGO from BiH conducting a significant part of basic area clearance activities in Macedonia, in a quite short period of time. ITF's involvement through a "Train and Equip" training program to swiftly build a mine action capacity in Macedonia, also represents a positive step forward. Due to the small amount of mine-suspected area, well-coordinated activities by the UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) and ITF, training of locals in all aspects of mine action, and arrival of trained teams from BH, it is likely that the mine impact in Macedonia will be eliminated by the end of 2003.

Serbia and Montenegro

Mines and UXO originate from the war in Croatia, from the Kosovo conflict and from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Forces engagement in Yugoslavia. There are many discarded cluster bombs as a direct result of that engagement. Mine contamination covers approximately 39 sq km area. Twenty-nine sq km are contaminated with cluster bombs in several locations: Nis (total of three sub locations covering the area of two sq km); Kraljevo (total of three sub locations covering the area of one sq km); Sjenica (total of two sub locations covering the area of 16 sq km); Mendase (total of two sub locations covering the area of three sq km); Kopaonik (total of two sub locations covering the area of six sq km); and Vladimirci (one location covering the area of 0.7 sq km); Belchat (two locations covering the area of 0.2 sq km). The mine-contaminated area consists of 10 sq km and is divided into and along the borderline with the Republic of Croatia with 103 minefields covering 41.5 sq km area that includes approximately 11,000 mines. There were no military actions in this area of the minefields were laid as a means of precaution and spread along the so-called "tank advancement lines," as well as to prevent the possible advancement of ground infantry. According to the available mine records of the former Yugoslav army, a number of minefields were "reinforced" by placing APILs (PM-1A) under some mines in the minefields. Serbia and Montenegro signed the Ottawa Convention as the last state in SE Europe and ratified the agreement in June 2003. The province of Kosovo is also mine-contaminated. Six hundred minefields covering the area of 30.5 sq km have been demined with 18,000 APLs, 5,000 ATMs, and around 13,500 pieces of UXO cleared. There are still dangerous areas around former stockpiles that were bombed during NATO attacks. The United Nations Office of Project Service (UNOPS) has played an important role in supporting the Kosovo mine action activities. It was UNOPS's judgment that allowed the mine and UXO problems in Kosovo to be minimized by the end of 2001. Experts say that the level of impact is similar, if not lower than the level of impact in other European countries still disposing UXO from World War I. For example, Slovenia still disposes of approximately 3,000 located items of UXO per year, mostly from World War I and II. UNMAC has trained several members of the Kosovo Protection Corps (7 teams), thus enabling them to tackle and solve the remaining mine and UXO-related problems.

Worldwide, however, there is still a need to continue with mine action activities due to the fact that mine-contaminated areas are still recorded, as well as mine incidents, even though the UN operations have been completed.

Montenegro also has a problem with mine and UXO contamination. The Croatia and BH borderline areas are contaminavirated and still not fully surveyed. Cooperation with Croatia started in that particular area with joint survey teams assessing the level of mine and UXO contamination of the Debeli-Brijeg borderline area. That was a first and important step to ested and still not fully surveyed. Cooperation with Croatia started in that particular area with joint survey teams assessing the level of mine and UXO contamination of the Debeli-Brijeg borderline area. That was a first and important step in the joint effort of the multi-state survey teams. UXO disposed into the Adriatic Sea also presents a problem for Montenegro.

The ITF's Role in SE Europe

ITF is a humanitarian, non-profit organization dedicated to clearing landmines in SE Europe and the world. When first established by the Slovenian government in March 2003, ITF was designed to assist BIH in solving its landmine problem and help the surviving landmine victims in terms of their physical and socio-economic rehabilitation.
Landmines in Europe & the Caucasus

Because BIH was not the only country in the region suffering from the mine problem, it was natural that ITF should spread its activities to other mine-affected countries in the region. Thus, ITF’s area of activity present within Bosnia-Herzegovina, Albania, BiH, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro.

ITF seeks to attract public and private donors to fund its operations in SE Europe including mine clearance, landmine survivor assistance, MRE and training. While ITF has adopted a holistic approach to the landmine and UXO problem, we are also striving to meet the needs of mine-affected communities on the ground level. ITF is working closely with national governments and mine action centers (MACs) in the mine-affected countries to ensure that donated funds are spent on providing useful help to the local populations. To this end ITF also initiated the establishment of SEEMACC.

The following activities are carried out by ITF:

- **Mine Clearance**: ITF is funding mine clearance activities in Albania, BiH, Croatia, Macedonia and the former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), and has also started its operation in the Caucasus.
- **Mine Victims Assistance (MVA)**: ITF is supporting various MVA programs, focusing on rehabilitation (mainly through the Institute for Rehabilitation of the Republic of Slovenia) to socio-economic integration and awareness programs.
- **Training**: ITF has identified training in different aspects of mine action as one of the priorities for successful demining in the region. ITF has been funding management training courses in relation to mine action as well as explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) training, and implementing Training and Equip programs (in FRY and Macedonia) in addition to providing training courses for medical personnel in the field of MVA. ITF firmly believes that capacity building is important because the success of mine clearance is dependent on the professional cooperation of the framework of the common goal of assuring quality, which will be the safety guarantee for demining personnel and the future users of the cleared areas.

In the field of mine victim rehabilitation, the technical assistance is being provided by the Slovenian Institute for Rehabilitation. The Slovenian Institute for Rehabilitation has started its operation in the mine-affected countries in SE Europe, which is crucial for the development of indigenous and sustainable local capacities. Until May 2003, 2854 experts from BiH, Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) and Albania trained or seminars organized by the institute either in Slovenia or BiH. ITF funds the following programs of training:

- Training on electromyography
- Training in Bohab
- Seminar on professional rehabilitation
- Other programs implemented in the field of mine victim rehabilitation (via association programs)

To return to their countries after the successful completion of their studies)

The fact is that this kind of training is needed anywhere in the EUM. Qualified personnel are sorely lacking in the region; therefore, providing training opportunities for the mine personnel is of the utmost importance. The development of local structures and capabilities is crucial for the country to take ownership of the problem and provide its people with long-term solutions. Here are a few examples of the training sessions underway in SE Europe.

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) training in Fojnica on senior management and middle management trainings.

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Matching-Fund Mechanism

One of the main advantages for using the ITF for funding the mine action activities is our experience in the region. In order to face the issues involved because of the great extent of the United States government in the United States, U.S. funds can be spent on the same project as the original donation (if the project has been deemed to qualify for MVI, either the United States or alternatively, the money in the matching fund can be used to finance other mine action projects in SE Europe.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Prior to clearing, demining sites are inspected by ITF staff from the implementation offices to evaluate the demining priority of a given area. Relevant assessment and other reports must be written, taking into account various factors. Subject to donor request ITF also employs a monitoring firm to oversee and monitor the work of the demining company on a daily basis, thus ensuring that the removal of mines is carried out in accordance with the donor’s wishes. ITF has also developed and submitted a proposal for a project to be funded. The project is thus designed in accordance with the preferences of the individual donor (country, activity, etc.). However, it also takes into account wishes and needs of the mine-affected country as well as the local community.

Coordination with National Authorities

ITF is working closely with the authorities responsible for mine action programs in SE Europe in order to ensure that the help and assistance provided are in fact needed and that the EOD course are trained and implemented are coordinated with the national plans.

Transparency

ITF’s right internal financial management control and annual external audits ensure that donated funds are properly accounted for.

Visibility of Donations

The donor is assured of the visibility of its donation in the field as well as via periodic ITF publications and reports.

some have been directed towards capacity building, MRE and other mine action related activities.

Activities: Demining/Battle Area Clearance

The ITF’s demining and battle area clearance operations are taking place in Albania, BiH, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro. The deministion work is usually awarded through an open bid procedure that is conducted by the ITF. The demining work can also be awarded directly if it is in explicit wish of the donor. The work is usually monitored by the ITF staff as well as the professional monitors employed by the ITF that visit the demining sites. ستة ITF, the execution of the demining work, more than 30 different companies and eight NGOs executed demining work and cleared more than 37 million square meters of land with 17,956 mines and 16,867 UXO found.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation of mine victims is an important component of the program implemented by the ITF. When ITF was founded in 1998, it set a goal of earmarking 15 percent of all donations for MVA associated programs. Only 6.3 percent of funds have actually gone towards MVA. For that reason, the Woodstock Foundation (former MVA Survivors and Victims in SE Europe was organized July 1-2, 2002. The goal of the workshop was to identify possible strategies and venues for regional resource, cooperation and coordination in the field of landmine survivors and victim assistance. The goal of the workshop was achieved by presentations that included status reports, perspectives on gaps and services in regional approaches, and NGO and donor discussions. The workshop included extensive discussion among the participants on how to meet MVA needs and coordinate efforts more effectively.

The ITF MVA program is thus implemented on three different levels: For Rehabilitation in the face of SE Europe at the Slovenian Rehabilitation Institute. From the beginning of the installation of the program and the last one in October 2003. The four courses proved to be useful giving the number of deep buried mines, fugas and UXO spread throughout the region—the deminers are trained and the EOD course are trained to deal with these kinds of ordnance. Until now five such courses have been organized, the first session was in October-November 2000, the second in March-April 2001, the third in September-October 2001, the fourth in March 2002 and the last one in October 2002 where 62 experts from SE Europe were trained.

ITF also organized Monitoring and QA/QC training at Buna for the 28 delegates from BiH, Montenegro and Macedonia who were treated at the Slovenian Rehabilitation Institute.

Rehabilitation at the Rehabilitation Centers in BiH. ITF also funded rehabilitation of 127 mine victims in the rehabilitation centers in Fojnica and Mostar in BiH.

Other programs that ITF funded in BiH and Kosovo (Serbia and Montenegro) include programs of Landmine Survivors Network, International Rescue Committee, Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation, Spirit of Soccer and Association for Disabled.

Training

ITF believes that capacity building is crucial for the mine-affected countries of SE Europe to be able to manage training for the regions. Therefore ITF organizes and funds several training courses based on the identified needs that exist in the mine-affected countries in the region. The needs already identified stressed us in the direction of organizing the following trainings:

- In the field of demining, EOD training courses and Monitoring and Quality Assurance (QA/QC) courses are held.

- EOD training is organized for deminers from SE Europe at the Training Centre for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief in Ljubljana (three-year program) in order to return to their countries after the successful completion of their studies)

- Training program for orthopedic technicians at the University College for Health studies in Ljubljana (three-year program) in order to return to their countries after the successful completion of their studies)

- Senior Management training in SE Europe.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) training in Fojnica on senior management and middle management trainings: Management training is important because the success of mine...
Regional Approach: Does It Present a Value-Added?

Regional cooperation in SE Europe has proven invaluable in many areas of mine action, ranging from a technical type of cooperation like identifying common demining problems on the borders of neighboring countries, to efforts of political significance in the process of post-conflict rehabilitation. The cooperation process was formalized in SEEMACC, in which ITF has become a focal point. It is ITF’s firm belief that regional cooperation has contributed, and will continue to contribute even more so in the future, to a more efficient use of resources for mine action in the region, as well as to the sharing of knowledge between the countries in the area of mine action. A regional approach can also be seen as a vehicle for a better utilization of available resources. The work done in the scope of SEEMACC is presented in the next section and the lessons learned in this region could perhaps prove invaluable for the other mine-contaminated regions in the world.

SEEMACC

Several organizations and initiatives are active in SE Europe, which all intend to assist in solving the mine problems in the region. They are: the United Nations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the Ottawa Convention, the Stability Pact for SE Europe, and the ITF. SEEMACC was also created as a regional mine action experts’ initiative. The directors of national MACs in SE Europe have expressed their wish for cooperation in mine action in order to improve the mine action programs. Their intent was shown in the agreement on the establishment of SEEMACC. Directors of the Albanian, Croatian and Bulgarian MACs signed an agreement on November 11, 2000. Later, on November 30th, 2001, the agreement was signed by Montenegrin and Yugoslav directors of MACs. On February 14th, 2002, the process was continued when Azerbaijan became a full member of SEEMACC. The signatures emphasized the need for cooperation and support in the following fields:

- Exchange of experience, expertise and knowledge in the field of mine action in SE Europe and the field of training deminers and managing personnel.
- Promotion of the regional approach in the planning of demining programs and in the fundraising for mine action.
- Exchange of information on testing of the new technologies in demining.
- Promotion of the achievement of common standards in the region.

The Centre for Mine Action Programmes (CMAP) in Belgrade and the Regional Mine Action Programme (RMAP) in Skopje have also contributed.

Conclusion

There is significant public and political awareness of the mine problem and the enormous impact that landmines have on societies, as well as on the humanitarian, economic, environmental and social development of SE Europe. The real victims are civilians—mines impede the return of the population to their homes and prevent the production of necessary resources, even in the pure areas. Populations living in mine-contaminated areas need to see the mine threat reduced. Then perhaps, the establishment and maintenance of peace, the reintegration of refugees and returnees, the revitalization and reconstruction of communities and even the economic development of SE Europe, will soon become a reality.

The regional approach of SEEMACC presents an important development in the cooperation of the region and it is hoped that the approach can be an example to be followed in other regions of the world.

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2. Test new demining technologies and machines

MAGS in the Balkans, continued from page 21

MAGS is a project implemented by the Benevento State University, Italy, under the supervision of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union. MAGS is funded by the European Commission through the European Union's 6th Framework Programme. The project aims to develop sustainable, cost-effective and environmentally friendly methods for demining and mine action in the Balkans. The project is led by the Benevento State University and involves partners from across the region, including countries in Southeastern Europe.

Contact Information

For more information on MAGS and its activities, please visit the project's website at www.magsproject.eu. Additionally, the project's contact information is as follows:

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- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/magsproject
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- Promotion of the regional approach in the planning of demining programs and in the fundraising for mine action.
- Exchange of information on testing of the new technologies in demining.
- Promotion of the achievement of common standards, standards and guidelines for mine action activities in the field of demining in SE Europe.

SEEMACC Mission

The mission is to develop sustainable regional programs that will contribute to the mine-contaminated countries developing the capacities to demine and return the land to the local populations and enable economic, agricultural and tourism development. The programs are designed to prevent mine incidents, rehabilitate mine victims, help national programs to raise awareness of the mine problem, develop new technologies for mine detection, reduce mine-affected areas, train and educate experts in the region and raise necessary funds. Assistance to national programs in developing common standards, procedures and techniques of demining through the introduction of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards will be based on the experiences from the region. Also included in SEEMACC’s mission is the development of common standards for training of EOD, mine action planning, equipment, the testing of demining technologies and the training of mine detection dogs (MDDs).

SEEMACC Basic Principles

The principles are setting the framework for the values and policies that the mine action activities will abide by in SE Europe. Mine action is presenting all the aspects of national strategy for solving the mine problems in each country. The main goal of mine action is to re-establish the safe environment that will enable the return of the displaced and the reconstruction of the communities. The basic humanitarian principles of neutrality and humanity have to be respected in solving the mine problem so that the most mine-affected communities are helped first. The principle of partnership includes the regional and national level, and the implementation of the UN Resolution 1185 encouraging the peaceful resolution of the landmine problem. The princi¬ple of partnership is the basis of the ITF’s approach in mine action and it is the key to the successful implementation of the ITF’s programs.

Conclusion

There is significant public and political awareness of the mine problem and the enormous impact that landmines have on society, as well as on the humanitarian, economic and environmental development of SE Europe. The real victims are civilians—mines impede the return of the population to their homes and prevent the production of necessary resources, even in the past areas. Populations living in mine-contaminated areas need to see the mine threat reduced. Then perhaps, the establishment and maintenance of peace, the reintegration of refugees and returnees, the revitalization and reconstruction of communities and even the economic development of SE Europe, will soon become a reality.

The approach of SEEMACC presents an important development in the cooperation of the region and is also beneficial to solving the mine problem in the region at a faster pace through exchange of experience, expertise, lessons-learned and regional pooling of resources. It is also promoting post-conflict political rehabilitation in the region. SEEMACC’s approach can be an example to be followed in other regions of the world.

References

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action to a great extent depends on sound management skills. UNDP in partnership with Cranfield University (UK) has initiated a series of management training courses for national managers of mine action programs. The first senior management course funded by ITF took place from January 21–March 1, 2002, at the Training Center for Civil Protection and Disaster Relief in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Sixteen senior managers of regional programs from Albania, BiH, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro including the province of Kosovo, Azerbaijan and ITF attended the training. The course was of great importance as it was the first regionally based course of the series of UNDP Mine Action Senior Management Training programs. The participants attending the training course expressed their satisfaction with the course, which was implemented by the Centre for Management Development and Training at the Faculty of Economics (CSEEE) at the University of Ljubljana.

A middle management course for SE Europe was executed at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana from December 9–18, 2002. Eighteen participants from SE Europe attended the course that was again implemented by CSEEE. ITF is also continuing to fund the execution of such trainings for the region of Caucasus.

6. Test new demining technologies and machines

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