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The Survey Action Center

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The Survey Action Center

The Survey Action Center (SAC) is an international organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C. It is registered in the United States as a non-profit organization. SAC serves as the executing agency for Landmine Impact Surveys (LIS). These surveys will allow greater prioritization of demining efforts and further integration of the various mine action sectors. On the SAC board of directors are four of the world's top landmine-related non-governmental organizations (NGOs): Handicap International (France), Mine Clearance Planning Agency (Afghanistan), the Danish Demining Group (Denmark) and Norwegian People's Aid (Norway). Jean Baptiste Richardier is SAC's President; Bob Eaton is the Executive Director and Sue Eitel is the Secretary/Treasurer.

by David Hartley, MAIC

Background

The Survey Working Group (SWG), which consists of the lead international NGOs and UN agencies in mine action and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, created the Survey Action Center in 1998. The SWG asked one of its members, the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA), to serve as fiduciary and management body for the SAC. At the end of 2001, the SWG authorized the creation of an independent SAC with its own legal framework and Board of Directors. The SWG remains as the advisory body for SAC. The SWG is responsible for the protocols that have been established through the SAC that define and maintain the high international standards of the Landmine Impact Survey. The goal of an LIS is to provide information in order to improve priority setting by donors and mine action agencies. Ultimately, the Landmine Impact Surveys will play a major role in the international effort to eliminate or control the threat of mines by the year 2010.

Operations

The LIS consists of five phases or objectives: establishing operational capacity, training survey groups and collecting data, analyzing the data and producing a strategic plan and, finally, reporting the results. SAC is in the process of planning or conducting LISs in four countries in Africa. Bob Eaton, the

Executive Director of SAC and Mike Kendellen, the SAC Director for Survey, recently completed an advanced survey mission in Angola. They met with various mine action leaders, including representatives from the U.S. Department of State Office for Humanitarian Demining and the National Inter-Sectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian (CNIDAH), the newly formed government coordinating body for mine action. The LIS will begin in early 2003, and will take two years to complete. The SAC senior staff training will begin in March and the data collection in 18 provinces will begin in July. The data collection will take ten months to complete.

In Somaliland and Ethiopia, SAC is working with the Danish Demining Group (DDG) and the Norwegian People's Aid and Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO), respectively, to implement the LIS. In Eritrea, SAC will provide technical and training support to the UN-sponsored LIS that will be implemented through the Eritrean Solidarity and Cooperation Association. Landmine Impact Surveys have been completed in Chad, Mozambique, Thailand, Yemen and Cambodia.

A survey began in Azerbaijan in September with a SAC Coordination Center, the International Eurasia Press Fund (IEPF) and the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA). Senior Staff training was completed in early October; data collection is scheduled to begin in late November. The LIS began in Bosnia-Herzegovina in October. SAC Senior Staff training is scheduled to begin in February 2003.

In Afghanistan, the European Commission has approved a proposal to conduct the survey beginning in January 2003. The survey will be implemented through the Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA). The Afghanistan survey is scheduled for completion in June 2004.

The SWG recently held its tenth meeting since its inception in 1998. This conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland; the purpose was to approve and take part in the creation of a Steering Committee to evaluate the global landmine crisis. The terms of reference and composition were approved. The committee members are Charles Downs (United Nations Office for Project Services), Alastair McAslan (Cranfield Mine Action) and Mike Kendellen (SAC). UNMAS and SAC have been tasked with raising funds for the evaluation. ■

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■ Danger area verification during a survey in Somaliland. c/o Aldo Benini

