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One Leg Dancing (Um Pé Que Dança) Angola Embraces the Future

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fear that there may possibly be landmines or UXO in those areas?
6) If there are any such areas in your kebele, can you take us to these areas or describe them to us?
7) How many goats are there in your kebele?
8) Are all the answers that you have given us about the presence/absence of landmines/UXO in your community also true of all of the other kebeles in your district? Or would the people in those other kebeles perhaps give different answers to our questions?
9) What is the name of your village?
10) Have there ever been any fighting between the Democrats and the EPRDF from the presence of hand grenades, which have been responsible for the vast majority of the UXO incidents there. The ELIS field staff has urged the adoption of a program of hand grenade awareness and clearance to deal with this problem. The ELIS assessment also produced valuable evidence that information collected at the sword level is of satisfactory reliability and specificity to ensure the ELIS requirements of thoroughness and accuracy. Although administrators at the sword level occasionally erred on the side of pronouncing a kebele in their area of administration to be definitely or possibly landmine/UXO-affected and it

This assessment has had (and will continue to have) profound implications for the ELIS. Had the worst-case estimates of the ASM proven accurate, some 5,000 kebeles, and an estimated 10,000 goats within those kebeles, would have had to be surveyed, a task of such magnitude that it would have exceeded the capacity of the ELIS team to carry out even a survey within existing time, money and manpower constraints by a wide margin. Our hope is that we planned the North Wollo field assessment were the following:
1) Evidence would emerge suggesting that the magnitude of the landmine/UXO problem along the Addis-abdTigray corridor might be far less than worst-case estimates had suggested.
2) The assessments of government officials, at least at the sword level, would be sufficiently accurate and well-informed to obviate the necessity of carrying out RA survey work at the kebele and gaps level. We now feel that significant progress has been made toward achieving these goals.

Conclusion
EOC is a worthwhile, patient and extremely valuable technique, but like any research method, it is valuable only to the extent that it generates accurate, verifiable data. The experience of the ELIS team in North Wollo argues strongly for thorough verification/authorization of expert opinions obtained at the higher administrative sites—in the ELIS case, the sword through sensitive, but rigorous interviewing of ordinary citizens at the kebele/gap level, where people’s lives are at stake.

Results
The results of this mission strongly suggest that the landmine/UXO problem in the Amhara region is not nearly as pronounced as the original worst-case estimates had suggested. The team uncovered no evidence whatsoever of there being a landmine problem in this zone, and no evidence of a UXO problem apart turned out not to be (i.e., this kebele turned out to be a false positive for the sword administration), they never erred on the side of pronouncing a kebele to be free of landmine/UXO contamination and it turned out not to be (i.e., the kebele administrations produced no false negatives). This is an extraordinarily positive sign.
Further assessment work still needs to be done, however, to determine whether the results derived for North Wollo also hold true for Amhara region’s other 10 zones—and also to gauge the landmine/UXO threat in Ethiopia’s four remaining highly suspect regions as well as in the six other regions that are so far not suspect.

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The war destroyed over 5,000 schools in Angola and those who do manage to periodically make it to overcrowded classrooms—sometimes holding as many as 90 in one room—have few resources with which to learn. Even with access to education, children frequently arrive late or leave early to work in family farms or to find a living for their families. About three out of ten rural women over 15 can read or write. Only a third reach fifth grade and none but the children of Angola’s rich governmental elite have the opportunity for higher education. Teachers must overcome landmines to reach the students.

Impact of the War

The horror of landmines only magnifies the crisis in basic health provision in Angola. Health professionals and aid groups cannot travel safely on mined roads to address basic health needs. Nearly every hospital, clinic and health facility in the country has been destroyed. It is not uncommon to find shocking daily deaths due to malaria, malnutrition and other preventable diseases. Immunization rates in Angola are among the lowest in the world. About half of the children under five in Angola are underweight and at critical risk to a variety of diseases. No trained attendant at births directly contributes to the astonishing 172 deaths per 1,000 births in Angola. Angola is one of five countries not to eradicate polio. The educational systems in Angola are in a shambles. Since children are the future of any country, Angola is guaranteed a generational dependency on outside aid.

The UN Role

The UN is not viewed in Angola as an entity that can be trusted, and for good reason. The government of Angola has resisted giving UN aid agencies any definable role in the process and almost no involvement in the administration of the camps. The Angolan government quickly points out that the UN peace agreements brokered in 1991 and 1994 enabled UNITA to remain in power and that further UN involvement could once again fortify UNITA both logically and politically. They are determined that this will happen again.

The recent survey report from the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) (The Mine Action Sector in Angola-Mission Report) is an example of the UN’s desire to expand UN influence and control over the landmine process in Angola. While minimizing and dismissing the role of INAROE, the report does support the new inter-ministerial coordination body (CINDADH) but recommends the injection of UN advisors and the replacement of the Angolan landmine database with the UN’s Information Management System for Mine Action (IMMSA) system that was designed to give eventual UN oversight over funding and resources going into national programs. While the report acknowledges many of the challenges, it did little to recommend Angolan solutions on Angolan problems.

The United Nations had also been a major obstacle toward peace by continuing travel sanctions on members of UNITA that hampered the free movement of party representatives so crucial to the political reintegration of UNITA as a viable political party in Angola. This ban has since been lifted, but the continued obstacles to a workable peace presented by the United Nations are not unnoticed.

INAROE remains a viable entity in Angola though plagued with the same resource constraints as other governmental activities. They have put together a mobile team in Bie Province working with T-55 tanks equipped with GMT-5 rollers. They have also been coordinating with the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) combat engineers who will have a 25 percent representation on their demining teams. The INAROE Demining School at ETAM is operational and the instructors who were trained by South Africa are in camp and preparing for an influx of deminers, surveyors, explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) personnel and team leaders ready for retraining.

NGO

The majority of mine clearance in Angola continues to be done by a small group of NGOs unilaterally funded via governments and private donations. A major priority is clearing the minefields that are currently being conducted in eight of Angola’s 18 provinces. The following demining organizations have operational bases with adequate funding to carry out their operations: Huli, Malanje, Kwanza Norte, Mexico, Mexico, Cuencue, Huimbo, Bie, Benguela (Cubol)

Two other demining organizations, INAROE of Italy and St. Barbara of Germany, have no funding committed for 2002 and are not active in their operational province of Huila. This means that the following provinces have no demining cover at the moment: Luanda, Kwanza Sul, Uige, Zaire, Benguela (except Cubol), Cuando Cubango, Lunda Norte, Lunga Sul, Namibe and Cabinda. This may change as coordinating committees in provincial capitals work with governments and officials to get their mine action needs into the national Critical Needs Assessment and adequate resources are allocated as a result.

The World Food Program (WFP) continues to address the hunger situation in Angola, compares it to the mine threat in former areas of hostilities, and sets priorities. In Malanje, WFP needed to clear and prepare areas outside the city to allow all Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) wood and water. The number of displaced people in Angola is difficult to measure but NGOs indicate it could be over four million with about half being children. In Moncloa alone, there are over 250,000 displaced and they are expecting another 350,000 to emerge from former UNITA areas. As the daily horror of the exposure of war were not enough, as many as half of those are reported to have witnessed a landmine incident. Trying to address the needs has been difficult since less than 30 percent of the $233 million (U.S.) sought in an inter-agency appeal has actually been received.

Demining Priorities

Only thoroughly trained explosive detection dogs are being deployed in the mine sweeping projects of Might, c/o Might, People Against Landmines
Angola Embraces the Future

Landmines in Africa

... who then proceed homewards. This is not thought to be a spontaneous movement, but rather a way to get away from the mines in Luanda, but rather family members returning to their homes to grow crops to return and settle in other parts of Luanda. The rest of the family stays in Luanda to continue as they have for the last few years since they relocated to the capital.

Throughout the country there are IDP camps and people residing in safe cities. These displaced people are the ones who wish to return to their homes; they are also the ones who have risks from the threat of mines. Also, there are people who are in areas formally under the control of UNITA who have been isolated and require immediate aid. In both cases, access is the watchword: safe access to allow people to return to their homes, and access to aid agencies and organizations to support isolated communities most at risk.

This is the type of operation that MgM specializes in, having cut its teeth on the opening up of over 300 kilometers of roads in the jungles of northeast Bengo Province and allowing over 50,000 people to safely return to their homes. Negotiations will take place to try to resolve issues with Provincial Authorities, WP and other bodies to draw up new plans and priorities. It is certain that in Malanje province the priorities will change from opening up land for use by IDPs close to the city to opening roads to allow the IDPs safe access to their homes, and also in turn access to markets.

A Matter of Access

Demining is an important part of the peace process. Particularly, it helps to provide safe access to aid groups, while also allowing them more freedom of movement. Unfortunately, the problem that is the same freedom is afforded to the Angolan population. On a positive note, there are organizations that use the usual military-organized convoys as a thing of the past. As an example, there are large groups of people who gather to the east of Viana, $57 million was set aside by Angola from which demining was to have received around a 30 percent share. The NGO's in Angola all report little optimism that this will ever reach them and none believe it will actually get spent.

MgM Solutions Need Support

When priorities were being prepared for proposals for year 2002, MgM had been asked by the WFP to start demining operations in the provinces of Malanje and Huila. This also fits in with priorities requested by the U.S. Department of State (DOS) for funding purposes for 2002 funding. It also helped for DOS funding available for the reconstruction of these lines, most of which have to be checked and cleared of landmines prior to engineers starting work on them. Initial contacts have been made to introduce MgM to the possible main contractor for the developments of these lines and MgM's extensive experience clearing the Luanda railway line in Mozambique is a valuable reference. The key to the future may be the opening of the rail line to the rich coffee growing area of Nampungos. Both these projects are looked upon as high priority.

Conclusion

The fragile peace in Angola appears to be a reality, and demining is an integral part of sustaining this very delicate process. There have been discussions about large amounts of aid pledged for Angola, but this appears to be a more realistic view in the near future. The problem is that all NGOs in Angola have been under-funded for years relative to the task at hand, and their equipment needs alone may not permit the kind of progress needed. Donor reluctance may be responsible for hundreds of preventable

Angolan deaths. Mines can be cleared now.

Without increased support at this critical juncture, the lack of access by WFP and other aid groups and the lack of simple information will indeed doom thousands of Angolans to starvation as they continue to roam the mine infested roads and fields in search of life itself.

MgM is dedicated to resolving this and has pledged itself to continue in relief in one of Africa's key future economic growth, rich in both resources and culture, MgM remains at the forefront and welcomes additional assistance and support. We also gratefully acknowledge the tremendous financial contributions of the U.S. State Department's Humanitarian Demining Program Office in recognition of the value of our efforts. Please visit our web site or contact us to learn more. The wonderful people of Angola deserve your thoughts, prayers and consideration.

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