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Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

by Ian Mansfield, *Operations Director, GICHD*

Role of the Military

As the theme of this edition of the *Journal of Mine Action* is about the use of the military in mine action, I would like to remind readers of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) publication titled "The Role of the Military in Mine Action." This study was originally requested by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and completed in mid-2003. The study found that over the past 15 years, military forces—both local and visiting—have made a significant contribution to mine action. A more detailed article outlining the findings of the study can be found in this edition. (<http://maic.jmu.edu/journal/8.1/focus/mansfield/mansfield.htm>)

Training

The GICHD is not a training institution in the sense of a university or college. However, our current strategy for 2003–2005 states "the GICHD prepares training packages in response to the needs of mine action programmes in the field." Over the past few years, the Centre has developed and delivered a range of thematic training packages, mainly in support of the implementation of the findings of GICHD studies. These training courses are usually of short duration (one to four days) and are conducted by GICHD staff with some external assistance. A brochure outlining the range of training packages was recently published, and all courses are modular in design so that organizations can receive material shaped to their particular needs.

One general course available is called "An Introduction to Mine Action," which is designed for newcomers to the field of mine action. It is based on the GICHD publication titled "A Guide to Mine Action." To date we have conducted this training for a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace (PfP) course and for newly arrived diplomats in Geneva who assumed responsibility for their mine action portfolio.

Training related to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) is one of our most established training areas. Courses include IMSMA Management Training, which focuses on how information management tools can be used to monitor, manage and maximize the output of operations. A similar course is available for Operations Officers of mine action centres. On the more technical side, courses are held on IMSMA System Administration, and also on Data Entry and Product Production. The most recent course in the IMSMA series examines the integration of IMSMA into Peace Support operations.

The next area focuses on the outreach of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). This training is done in conjunction with UNMAS, and a range of courses has been developed. A one-day "Introduction to IMAS" module is available, while a three-day package studies the "Application of IMAS." Most importantly, a package was developed and tested to assist in the review, development and drafting of National Mine Action Standards. This course is designed to assist senior national staff of a National Mine Action Authority or a Mine Action Center (MAC), along with their advisers.

Finally, a range of thematic courses has been developed covering areas such as "Developing National Mine Action Legislation" and "Landmines and International Humanitarian Law." In conjunction with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Centre recently held a regional workshop in Amman on the subject of "Socio-Economic Aspects of Mine Action." This workshop will also be given in southeast Europe and Asia later this year. The Centre has taken action in Colombia, Ethiopia and Iraq by conducting in-service training for mine risk education (MRE) field staff and by building on our study "Improving Communications in Mine Awareness Programmes." Further training sessions have been requested and will be held later in the year.

Full details of all the thematic training courses available by the Centre are outlined in the brochure or available on our website at www.gichd.ch.

Recent Publications

"A Guide to the International Mine Action Standards" is a simple, concise handbook that explains the purpose of the IMAS and contains a brief description of each different standard.

The "Mechanical Demining Equipment Catalogue 2004" has recently been published and is available through normal channels.

French and Spanish language versions of "A Guide to Mine Action" are now available, and Arabic and Russian versions are due out shortly.

The "Guide to Developing Mine Action Legislation" is now available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Contact Information

Ian Mansfield
Operations Director, GICHD
Avenue de la Paix 7bis
CH-1211 Geneva
Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 906 1674
Fax: +41 22 906 1690
E-mail: i.mansfield@gichd.ch
Website: www.gichd.ch