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The United Nations Portfolio of Mine Action Projects

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the exception of the United States and the European Commission. Direct contacts with central agencies occur more frequently when countries integrate mine action with development, such as in the case of Australia and Sweden.

5. Funding trends and prospects.

While the total flow of official assistance to developing countries may still be growing despite the current economic climate, there is little evidence that mine-action funding will follow this trend. On the contrary, mine action’s relative importance, combined with mounting donor interest in other global challenges, and the fact that the Ottawa Convention has delivered tangible results, will probably mark a turning point in the next three to five years. Beyond the next five years, the picture becomes difficult to predict. However, it is quite plausible that funding will take a further downward trend.

Donors’ reaction to the recent extension process is prudent. As other countries join the extension process with their list of additional resources needed, the gap between needs and available resources will likely widen considerably.

In terms of change between channels, programming types and modalities, donors do not anticipate any major changes in the way they do business. Donors are open to integrating mine-action programs into broader development programs if mine-affected countries take the lead in raising the issue. Opportunities within donor administrations for initiating new funding avenues for mine action are marginal.4

In terms of commitment to support mine action, 17 donors stated their commitments (which differ from actual expenditures) would hold until the end of the current funding period (usually part of an official strategy, a mine-action plan or a public commitment of some sort). Donor funding for mine action may well have peaked in 2008–09 and has reached a new plateau for the immediate future (2010–11). In the medium-term (2012–15), funding will likely fall to a lower plateau. This situation could change during the 2014–15 period, as some major donors review their multi-year, mine-action assistance.

Many reasons explain this slow but predictable trend toward gradually reduced funding levels including lack of transparency and progress on clearance, lack of value for funds invested, extension requests with unreasonable financing estimates, budget restrictions, and competition for limited funding. Many donors and experts, however, contend that it is not the level of funding that counts as much as the effectiveness of assistance programs, socioeconomic impact, national authorities demonstrating ownership and pace of progress in land release.

The full report will be available for download through the GICHD website (http://gichd.org) by late 2010. For further information, contact Sharmala Naidoo at snaidoo@gichd.org.

Jean Devlin works as an international development consultant. Prior to this, his professional career was with the Canadian International Development Agency. He occupied successive program management positions, among other areas, for humanitarian assistance, academic cooperation, policy, strategic planning and program development. Prior to retiring in 2006, he was Manager of the Peace and Security and Mine Action Programmes to CIDA.

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The United Nations Portfolio of Mine Action Projects

In Xieng Khuang, Laos PDR, an all-female demining team assesses and clears unexploded ordnance-contaminated land. In Bogotá, Colombia, a team of practitioners nationalizes a plan to train local health personnel about the psychosocial needs of explosive-remnants-of-war victims. In Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, primary schoolchildren attend educational puppet shows about small-arms-and-light-weapons risks. At the heart of each initiative is a collaborative resource-mobilization system called the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, and in 2010 it gives life to 277 projects in 27 countries.

by Chad McCoull | Center for International Stabilization and Recovery |
Thirteen Editions and Counting

Originally called the Portfolio of Mine-Related Projects in 1998, the Portfolio first arose from UNMAS’ imperative to appraise and monitor the global mine problem’s funding requirements. The first edition only acknowledged official U.N. programs, eight integrated mine-action programs and 10 countries’ proposed projects. But during the first five years, increasing numbers of NGOs and national authorities began to participate, some even actively replacing U.N. officials as Country Coordinators. Since its inception, the proposa

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instrumental in accommodating ad hoc electronic up- dates and biannual progress reports. According to the Portfolio Team, such efforts promote greater local and national ownership of the Portfolio process and support capacity development in terms of outreach efforts, especially to donors. Following the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, victims rate that donors may decrease fund- ing in future years. To gain donor attention, the Portfolio Team recommends that appealing agencies respond by recognizing the wider funding interests of traditional and non-traditional mine action donors and to partner with wider thematic and geographic funding sources. building upon Assets

Donors praise the Portfolio both for its utility as a reference tool and for its flexibility in expressing the dy- namic needs of a particular community. Japan, one of the major donors, annually references the Portfolio to inform earmarking decisions. Donors also gain greater awareness of the plights of lesser publicized countries, such as Mauritania. The 2011 Portfolio is expected to be delayed for some months as a result of this review. To learn more about the Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, visit http://tinyurl.com/369tg4w.

Note Information presented in this article was provided by the UNDP, UNICEF and UNMAS, members of the UN HPQ Portfolio Team, interviewed in July and August 2010. see endnotes page 81

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Building upon Assets

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These success stories underscore the prospect that the Portfolio will continue to serve the mine-action sector as a permanent fixture. Currently, the Portfolio Team is reviewing inefficiencies and assets, listening to stakeholder feedback and improv- ing objectives for the upcoming years. The 2011 Portfolio is expected to be

"It is unlikely with our best efforts that fund- ing would be attained, but it does not mean that the job won’t get done—it will just take longer and more people will die."