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Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

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I n January 2007, the GICHD unveiled a new look for its Web site and publications. The GICHD implemented these changes to give the organization a modern, fresh appearance, and to increase the utility of the Web site as well as reduce the cost of publications. The redesigned Web site can be seen at www.gichd.org and includes a number of new features such as shortcut buttons, an improved search function, an evaluation repository and a training calendar.

One of the first publications to be issued in the new style was the Metal Detectors and PPE [Personal Protective Equipment] Catalogue,1 published in March 2007. This catalogue features handheld, large-loop and vehicle-mounted detectors, as well as the relatively new multi-sensor systems. In April, the third edition of the Guide to Mine Action and Explosive Remnants of War was published. This edition provides updated information, such as the text of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons2 Protocol V on explosive remnants of war; it also includes new chapters on mine action and development, as well as capacity building and evaluation.

Tenth Annual Meeting of Programme Directors and U.N. Advisers. In March 2007, the GICHD hosted the “Tenth International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and U.N. Advisers.” On behalf of the United Nations Mine Action Service, the meeting brought together over 200 people from 35 mine-affected countries, along with representatives from the various U.N. agencies, nongovernmental organizations and donor countries involved with mine action.

Since the first annual meeting was held, attendance has increased tremendously; in March 1998 only 40 people from seven countries attended. The idea for the meeting came about as there was a growing need for better standardization, coordination and sharing of experiences among the emerging mine-action programmes. The initial meeting focused only on U.N.-conducted or -supported programmes, but since then, the meeting has expanded to include nationally run programmes.

Over the years, the topics discussed at the meeting have included U.N. policy updates, capacity building, national ownership, information management, standards, resource mobilization and technology. Since the beginning, all meetings have been funded by Switzerland and hosted by the GICHD.

Evaluations. The GICHD continues to provide training and advice on the conduct of mine-action evaluations, as well as to undertake selected evaluations itself. Early in 2007 the GICHD undertook an evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme’s capacity-building project in Albania and also completed an independent assessment of the residual threat in Kosovo on behalf of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo. Later in the year, the GICHD will undertake a thematic evaluation in the Caucasus as part of a rolling series of evaluations for the European Commission.

by Ian Mansfield [Geneva Centre for Humanitarian Demining]

Geneva Diary: Report from the GICHD

The GICHD provides operational assistance to mine-action programmes and operators, creates and disseminates knowledge, works to improve quality management and standards, and provides support to instruments of international law. The author discusses changes that have occurred at the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, including a redesigned Web site and new publications.

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Quality Management in Demining Organisations

In this article, the International Standards Organization 9001/2000 Quality Management System is compared to what leading actors in quality management and business management deem to be current best practice. The aim of this paper is to show the universal application of the ISO 9001:2000 system as a quality-management system and that it complies with best practises in business and quality management around the world. This article will highlight a few of the most important ISO clauses and show how they are supported by best practises.

by Charles Loizou [United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan]

How often is it found that non-conformities in the minefield are directly attributable to management? Too often!

Philip B. Crosby, in Quality Without Tears: The Art of Hassle-Free Management,3 states that the credibility of management commitment is the biggest problem that management faces and that just talking about quality is not enough; managers have to continually reinforce the message of their commitment through actions. Crosby further states that the key to success in making quality improvement lies with the top management team but that management is also the biggest cause of the problem.

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Other masters of quality agree with Crosby on this matter. As noted in Oakland on Quality Management, Deming argues that senior management is responsible for 94 percent of quality problems, while Joseph M. Juran is a bit more forgiving and says that workers are responsible for less than 20 percent of quality problems.4 The author, John S. Oakland, is of the opinion that the CEO of an organization must really believe in the quality policy as well as accept responsibility for it.5 This responsibility for quality should then cascade down through all levels of the organization until an attitude of pride in the job and teamwork has permeated all levels and all departments of the organization.

The Standard has also identified management commitment and responsibility crucial to quality management; hence the detail on this particular topic. I believe