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Mine Action Support Group Update

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The following targets were included:

- PMN-2 and PMN mines with neutralised fuses
- Type 72 and Gara AP, usually locally used and produced
- RMZ fuze mounted in 60-mm diameter clear plastic holders
- ITOP fuze inserts Mo, Ko, Io
- CGT mines
- S2R mines (7.5, 10, 12, and 15-mm diameter, placed in wooden containers).

Conclusions and recommendations of the report include:

- The sensitivity loss from L1 to L7 for the detectors without ground compensation was so large that some targets that could be comfortably detected in the required depth of 130 mm in L1 could not be detected even much nearer to the surface in the higher numbered lanes.
- For detectors with very substantial sensitivity loss from L1 to L7, it is important that users are aware of the ground conditions and check the reliability of the detector’s ability to sense the exposed mines in the working area.
- In general, air maximum detection heights, measured with the detectors set up for a particular type of ground, are not equal to the in-soil maximum detection depth in the same ground.
- Minimum-metal mines are still the main detection problem. Even the detectors with good soil compensation could not detect some targets to the required depth in all lanes.
- Ground magnetic properties (magnetic susceptibility, ground reference height) should be measured and recorded as a survey task because they have to be known for planning and proper use of the detector field.

For the execution of the trial, we received excellent support from the Mozambican National Demining Institute, the Accelerated Demining Programs, and other national organizations. Note: These are a very limited number of hard copies of the report available for people that have limited access to the Internet. If you do not have access to the Internet, please contact Adam Lewis to obtain a printed copy.

Mineral Action Support Group Update

The following article highlights the recent activities of the Mineral Action Support Group from the first quarterly U.N. newsletter of 2006, including updates on the Mineral Action National Mission Service, the United Nations Development Programme and UNICEF.

Mineral Action Support Group Update

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The new Strategy reaffirms the United Nations’ express commitment to continuous, transparent monitoring of progress and periodic reporting on implementation to the General Assembly.

Eritrea. Demining operations as part of the United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia have gone through extensive changes in the first part of 2006. Due to governmental limitations on the use of helicopters for medical evacuations in Eritrian areas, most of the demining operations have moved closer to the Ethiopian border. Clearance operations are still ongoing in the Temporary Security Zone, including road clearance and UXO clearance. The UNMEE Mine Action Coordination Center is now focusing on planning mine-action support to the demarcation of the Eritrean/Ethiopian border. This support will use mechanical, manual, and mine-dog capacities to ensure effective clearance of the border.

UNDP. Chad. Although funding for demining is low in Chad, several mine-action groups in the country are active. Key achievements include:

- Mines Advisory Group resumed operations from mid-January until the end of February 2006.
- Following a visit, the U.S. Department of State decided on a new evaluation of the MAG project (March 2006), increasing the explosive ordnance disposal teams from one to three and allocating a budget of US$2 million for 2006.
- The government of Switzerland is providing a Technical Advisor to the Information Management System for Mine Action database for six months beginning 1 May 2006.
- The National Demining Office participated in a meeting with a representative of the World Bank in order to study the possibility for the Bank to finance the national mine-action program with oil revenues.

Key challenges included:

- On 22 March 2006, following an incident at the High Committee for National Demining compound, the HCND staff was arrested and an interim coordinator was designated.
- All efforts aimed at strengthening the capacities of the HCND have suffered from this situation.

Key objectives were:

- In 2006, a technical assistance project that was about to be supported through funds of the MAG project (May 2006) from the Chadian government and an additional US$100,000 from UNDP Chad. This amount of money is not sufficient to resume mine-clearance activities, which stopped in mid-December 2005. At least US$1 million is needed to cover the cost of operations for six months. Engaging the government and other external donors for the implementation of the National Mine Action Plan for 2006 remains the first key objective for the short term.

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The same effort should be used for the mine-risk education program, which stopped in December 2005 due to lack of funding. The project was implemented by the Technical Advisor, updating the database, the HCND Web site and preparing the team for the Mine Action Information Management System for Mine Action will be possible.

The need to contract an operator to resume operations as soon as possible has been recognized.

Funding shortfalls.

The implementation of the Humanitarian Mine National Action Program was supported by the Technical Advisor, updating the database of returnees of internally displaced persons per province.

The Ugandan Mine Action Unit was officially sponsored by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees.

A Victim Assistance Technical Advisor has commenced work.

Key objectives included:

- Complete Technical Survey/clearance/EOD operations in six provinces.
- Perform targeted needs assessments in two landmine and ERW-affected areas in northern Uganda.
- Develop a national disaster-management database utilizing IMSMA version 4.0.
- Develop a surveillance network in the Ministry of Health.

The funding situation in Uganda is as follows:

- Currently available for 2006: US$1.4 million for capacity development, Technical Survey/clearance/EOD, targeted needs assessments, technical assistance, and monitoring and evaluation from the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Norway, the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the UNDP.
- A joint needs assessment in the north and south.
- The UNICEF–Ethiopia has been working with in MRE programs to implement the recommendations of the MRE program evaluation. The survey was conducted in 2006. The findings indicated strengthening program-coordination and project-management skills and developing a sustainable surveillance system and an emergency-preparedness plan. UNICEF facilitated a meeting with the Ethiopian Mine Action Office, the Office for Rehabilitation and Social Affairs, and the Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (RaDo) to discuss roles and responsibilities.

There is a need to continue program implementation and strengthening of MRE activities as a necessary life-saving initiative benefiting affected and vulnerable populations.

UNICEF, through its implementing partner, and with the federal and regional government’s involvement, has commenced the IED Clearance Profile Project. The project’s mine-action challenges in a development context, and to collect data on victims and assistance required for the victims and risk-takers. Using a participatory approach, mine-affected communities are invited to share with RaDo the development challenges their villages face on a daily basis, such as limited ERW education, and service stakeholders to identify future challenges for the MRE project in Ethiopia. RaDo will encourage the community to take responsibility for the problems it faces and inform them of available services to deal with their challenges in the governmental and nongovernmental sectors.

In South Kivu province, 19,201 persons, especially returnees from Tanzania, were reached directly in Fizi Territory with MRE programs. The first project is ongoing in Ikela. Due to a current funding shortage, it is not possible to take current MRE initiatives in the DRC to which the country, the ongoing situation in some areas, insecurity, and communication problems, denoting and destruction of mines are being implemented at a slow pace. There was a need to continue program strengthening of MRE activities as a necessary life-saving initiative benefiting affected and vulnerable populations.
Toward SMART Victim Assistance

The Co-chairs’ approach to gathering and ensuring progress involved the distribution of a comprehensive questionnaire to the 24 relevant States Parties, to help frame an understanding of concrete victim assistance objectives by 2009, plans to achieve these objectives, and means to implement these plans. The main aim of this questionnaire was to encourage the 24 States Parties in question to establish so-called SMART objectives:

• Specific objectives that should specify what these States Parties want to achieve.
• Measurable objectives that would enable all to know whether objectives have been achieved.
• Achievable objectives that are truly attainable.
• Realistic objectives that could indeed be achieved with resources at the disposal of the State Party in question or with resources that could hypothetically be acquired externally.
• Time-bound objectives that would be achieved by the time of the Second Review Conference.

Initial responses to the questionnaire were presented at the June 2005 meeting of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration with all responses summarized in a lengthy annex to the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties’ Zagreb Progress Report. It provides the beginnings of a clearer roadmap regarding what needs to be done between 2005 and the Second Review Conference and how success pertaining to victim assistance will be measured in 2009.

Overcoming Remaining Challenges

While the effort undertaken in 2005 by relevant States Parties was impressive, its usefulness of the responses is in doubt. Few States Parties actually responded with SMART objectives. Some States Parties detailed at length their status. However, even though this should have provided a sound basis for setting objectives, very little was put forward in terms of what the desired status would be in 2009. Other States Parties failed to spell out what is known or not known about their status. In addition, some States Parties did not engage in the effort at all.

Another challenge identified in 2005 relates to the effort to develop victim-assistance objectives in conjunction with disarmament officials who have little interaction with the health and social services sectors. In some instances, the actual provision of assistance to landmine survivors appears to be the responsibility of mine-action networks, not health care or social-service structures. A further challenge related to fostering an understanding of victim assistance is the idea that “providing adequate assistance to landmine survivors must be seen in a broader context of development held under development.” Many States Parties have prepared poverty-reduction strategy papers, or national development plans to overcome broader development challenges, with such disasters existing alongside assistance to advancing the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of landmine survivors. However, in many instances, the preparation of victim-assistance objectives has not been considered in these broader national plans.

To overcome these challenges, the States Parties decided the best way to ensure progress is the “process support” procedure involving country visits featuring the following:

• One-on-one meetings with officials from relevant ministries to raise awareness of the matter and to stimu-

late inter-ministerial coordination.

• Outreach to relevant international organizations and others to ensure that their efforts in support of the State Party in question are both incorporated into and incorporate mine-victim-assistance efforts.

• Inter-ministerial workshops to bring together all relevant actors to discuss and consolidate improvements on objectives and the development of plans. It should be noted workshops are not considered as stand-alone activities or ends in themselves. Rather, workshops are part of a State Party’s overall process of objective-setting, planning and implementing efforts to ensure progress by 2009.

The ultimate aim is a true equalization of opportunities for landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities worldwide’s countries’ broader populations.

Conclusion

It would be unrealistic to think of some of the world’s poorest countries with some of the greatest challenges regarding the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of landmine survivors would demonstrate perfection in the establishment of SMART victim-assistance objectives. Assistance exists to help countries at risk with these tasks, in accordance with the Ottawa Convention, those in a position to do so are obliged to provide it. However, others cannot do it all, nor should they.

With perfection unattainable, it should be acknowledged that any degree of meaningful progress made by relevant States Parties in taking charge of these matters will be a major advance. The Ottawa Convention, after all, was about expanding the traditional understanding of state responsibility, with states accepting they have important human-security responsibilities. Ensuring progress in victim assistance by key milestones dates, like the 2009 Second Review Conference, will help demonstrate the reality of this sense of responsibility.

The work undertaken to date by States Parties suggests they are on the right track. However, efforts—and processes—will have to continue with vigil in order to make a real and sustainable difference.

For additional references for this article, please visit http://www.state.gov/j/t/pm/wra/c17719.htm.

Kerry Brinkert has served as the Manager of the GACID’s anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention/Implementation Support Unit, Brinkert’s background is in policy analysis, having received a Master of Arts in International Relations from Ottawa’s Norman Paterson School of International Affairs and a Bachelor of Arts in political science from the University of Calgary.

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The U.S. Mine Action Support Group works with beneficiaries through data analysis, thereby reducing subjective approaches to program implementation. This project also will help move the surveillance system forward. Results of this pilot project will be available in May 2006 when UNICEF, with the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, facilitates data analysis and effective programming for the government partner.

See Endnotes, page 113

Notes from the Field

The Ottawa’s Norman Paterson School of International Affairs and the University of California, Davis: Mine Action Support Group Update

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MAGS Establishes Online Information Clearinghouse

An effort to make information more readily available to the mine-action community, announcements and resources from the Mine Action Support Group are now available online. The Web site is an electronic clearinghouse for MAGS newsletters and events, as well as quarterly reports prepared for MAGS by the United Nations Mine Action Service, United Nations Development Programme, UNICEF and other organizations.

The United States currently heads the MAGS, a group of 26 major donor countries providing resources for mine action around the globe. The U.S. Department of State has given the task of chairing the MAGS to its Office of Mine Action.

To learn more about MAGS and view the new Web site, visit www.state.gov/g/fwa/c17719.htm.

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