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Landmines: The World Takes Action

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Landmines: The World Takes Action

Educational and comprehensive, this CD provides thorough mine action information.

by Sarah Campbell, UNMAS

This CD-ROM is a multi-media presentation, which has been produced by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) to provide public information about the problem of landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), and the work of the United Nations and its partners to address the problem. It is divided into four sections:

What is Mine Action?

Explore the five core areas of activity in mine action: mine clearance, mine risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and advocacy. This section also provides information about the international treaties related to landmines, including the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention.

The United Nations in Mine Action

Discover the role of the UN and its partners in addressing the landmine and UXO problem. See the countries and activities in which they are involved and learn about the roles and responsibilities of each organization. This section also explains the partnerships formed to create a coordinated and efficient response to the landmine and UXO problem worldwide.

Mine Action in the World

Explore the world of mine action in 44 countries. This section provides in-depth information for 11 countries, and general information about mine action in 33 additional countries.

The production is currently available in English. A French version is planned for completion in early 2003.

The Survey Action Center

The Survey Action Center (SAC) is an international organization with headquarters in Washington, D.C. It is registered in the United States as a non-profit organization. SAC serves as the executing agency for Landmine Impact Surveys (LIS). These surveys will allow greater prioritization of demining efforts and further development and the integration of various mine action sectors. On the SAC board of directors are four of the world’s top landmine-related non-governmental organizations (NGOs): Handicap International (France), Mine Clearance Planning Agency (Afghanistan), the Danish Demining Group (Denmark) and Norwegian People’s Aid (Norway). Jean Baptiste Richardt is SAC’s President; Bob Eaton is the Executive Director and Sue Eitel is the Secretary-Treasurer.

by David Hartley, MAIC

Background

The Survey Working Group (SWG), which consists of the lead international NGOs and UN agencies in mine action and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, created the Survey Action Center in 1998. The SWG asked one of its members, the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVA), to serve as fiduciary and management body for the SAC. At the end of 2001, the SWG authorized the creation of an independent SAC with its own legal framework and Board of Directors. The SWG remains as the advisory body for SAC. The SWG is responsible for the protocols that have been established through the SAC that define and maintain the high international standards of the Landmine Impact Survey. The goal of all LIS is to provide information in order to improve priority setting by donors and mine action agencies. Ultimately, the Landmine Impact Surveys will play a major role in the international effort to eliminate or control the threat of mines by the year 2010.

Operations

The LIS consists of five phases or objectives: establishing organizational capacity, training survey groups and collecting data, analyzing the data and producing a strategic plan, and, finally, reporting the results. SAC is in the process of planning or conducting LIS in four countries in Africa. Bob Eaton, the Executive Director of SAC and Mike Kendellen, the SAC Director for Survey, recently completed an advanced survey mission in Angola. They met with various mine action leaders, including representatives from the U.S. Department of State Office for Humanitarian Demining and the National Inter-Sectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian (CIDMHN), the newly formed government coordinating body for mine action. The LIS will begin in early 2003, and will take two years to complete. The SAC senior staff training will begin in March and the data collection in 18 provinces will begin in July. The data collection will take ten months to complete.

The SWG recently held its tenth meeting since its inception in 1998. This conference was held in Geneva, Switzerland; the purpose was to approve and take part in the creation of a Steering Committee to evaluate the global landmine crisis. The terms of reference and composition were approved. The committee members are Charles Downs (United Nations Office for Project Services), Alastair McAdam (Cranfield Mine Action) and Mike Kendellen (SAC). UNMAS and SAC have been tasked with raising funds for the evaluation.

Acknowledgements

Much of the data for this article was provided by SAC’s Director for Survey, Mike Kendellen. I thank him for his patience and assistance.

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In Afghanistan, the European Commission has approved a proposal to conduct the survey beginning in January 2003. The survey will be implemented through the Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA). The Afghanistan survey is scheduled for completion in June 2004.

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