

## **UNDP UPDATE – YEMEN**

### **Mr STEPHEN BRYANT, CTA**

#### **Context**

- Food and fuel prices have skyrocketed following a sharp depreciation of the Yemeni Rial against the US dollar. Crippling fuel queues are reported in Sana'a and all major cities.
- Food security has further deteriorated, which could add another 3.5 million people to the 8.4 million people who currently need emergency food assistance in Yemen.
- The main Al Hudaydah-Sana'a road remains inaccessible due to fighting; access to the city is only from the north, on the Al Hudaydah-Hajjah road.
- Over 2.3 million people have been displaced by conflict since 2015. An additional 58,000 households were displaced between June and August 2018.
- Efforts are underway to expedite the release of humanitarian cargo currently held at Yemen's main entry points awaiting import approval.
- Considerable pressure from IRG and Houthi regime to do more (no national resources forthcoming). UNDP maintains an equitable response based on needs which coincidentally works out to be approximately 50/50, north and south.

#### **MA Situation Update**

##### **Operations Jan-Aug 2018 (rounded figures)**

- 144k pieces of explosive ordnance removed, 46,500 destroyed (lack of explosives and thermite)
- 13 operational governorates in 45 districts
- 5.7m m<sup>2</sup> cleared
- 1.2m direct beneficiaries
- 7k MRE beneficiaries (YEMAC, does not include UNICEF's project figures)
- 500 victims screened for injuries and potential follow-up
- 900 deminers (down to 750 as deminers shifted to Minetech Dynasafe, training ongoing to make up the numbers – experience will take longer)

We should not extrapolate too much from the figures but as an indicator to issues/priorities of work –

- 5,960 AT mines
- 514 AP mines
- 850 IEDs
- 29 Cluster munitions
- 1,600 classified as rockets
- 90 classified as missiles
- 131k mixed UXO/AXO

Delivery \$4.4m – to date, \$7m year end (plus \$5m for procurement)

Seasonal and expected disruption to operations due to Ramadan and the second rainy season peaking in August.

**APMBC extension request of the deadline for completing the destruction of A-P mines in accordance with Article Five of the Convention.**

Execution

As a Member State to the Convention, a previous extension request was reviewed by the MSPs Conference in June 2014. Paraphrased: after assessment granted the request and extended to 1 March 2020.

In granting the request, the Conference noted that, while Yemen had not complied with the previous principle commitment made, to complete implementation by the end of 2014, it is positive that Yemen is planning to increase its capacity and reinvigorate efforts to garner an understanding of the extent of the remaining challenge and carry out clearance to fulfil its obligations during the extension period.

Unfortunately, the most recent conflict has destroyed any hope of compliance. There are approximately 1,000 YEMAC staff mobilised and while the figures may be quite impressive, the organisation is overwhelmed by the task ahead. The geographic spread of contamination is multiplied by the new technical threats that YEMAC was neither trained nor equipped to deal.

We should consider Yemen to be in an emergency phase and as best as resources allow, conducting spot-tasks (removal of high-threat and high-impact contamination) rather than the more systematic and deliberate survey and clearance operations

At a recent meeting held in Djibouti, chaired by UNDP with the nationwide senior representation of YEMAC it was decided to request a three-year extension to Yemen's Article Five obligations.

It was agreed during the recent Djibouti meeting:

- The three years should be seen as an emergency interim period
- Spot-task operations should continue and AXO removed when discovered
- Accept A-P mines, particularly legacy contamination where local coping mechanisms have been in place – sometimes for decades - may be a lower-priority
- Anticipate during the three-year period a stabilisation of the conflict
- Conduct a national contamination survey to scope the problem and make a realistic plan for a further extension
- Ensure YEMAC is trained, equipped and organised to deal with the evolving threats striving to fully develop and implement NTSGs and IMAS. A large-scale procurement plan is currently underway. (Some vehicles 20 years old, for example.)
- Explore possibilities for national resources to be applied plus other avenues of international resources
- Accept YEMAC is not the right body to deal with the Counter-IED spectrum but to address where possible the IED Destruction elements particularly 'cold' or redundant IEDs which may be considered ERW in the absence of other operators. 'Hot' IEDs should be considered under a wider Security Sector Reform and the C-IED spectrum
- Note the continued use of mines and their various improvised derivatives – which is claimed to be outside of any centralised command and control
- The extension renewal is to be submitted by the Permanent Mission in Geneva to the MSPs by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019 one year ahead of the current extension period
- Explore options to deal with crisis situations, especially where the frontline has moved, returnees are apparent and there is immediate assistance required. Hodeida case in point
- Organise NGOs/YEMAC/Operators under a fully-fledged co-ordination body, separate to implementers e.g. Military, National operator, INGOs and potentially commercial.

### **Hudaydah Intervention Concept Notes**

**Background:** Contamination assumptions based on experience in similar theatres in country:

Continuing background

- The exact limits of contamination will not be known for a period after access is given.
- Expect defensive belts of mines, including improvised mines.
- Booby-traps in key locations and nuisance booby-traps.
- UXO all types, planning failure figure of 10-15% depending on the weapon system. There is a strong correlation between how long the localised conflict continues and the density of contamination.
- AXO in various states, often unmanaged and disbursed rather than concentrated.
- While key points and MSRs, etc. may be cleared relatively quickly, it is realistic the impact will last for years.

**Situation: Current assets, beyond those of YEMAC are:**

- Minetech Dynasafe, British based commercial company funded by KSA. Using YEMAC personnel. This does not fall in within the UNDP portfolio.
- Danish Demining Group, the mine action wing of DRC. Currently has a small MRA capacity in country. Have just appointed a Project Manager to be based in Aden. Through UNDP will conduct EOD level II course for YEMAC personnel. Potential survey capacity to be agreed with YEMAC on what intervention model could be used.
- HALO Trust will conduct training in Jordan on the use of thermite and survey methodologies. Potential to expand the co-operation with YEMAC.
- NPA, two-year project to re-establish the Mine Detection Dog component of YEMAC.
- ICRC, plans on hold due to a major security incident, medical training and equipment for the field teams.
- UNICEF supporting MRA component of YEMAC. Focus on children but includes the family unit.
- UNDP, providing resource mobilisation (and budget control) and technical support to YEMAC across the spectrum of activities.

- In addition, the sheer scale of contamination and priorities throughout the country means YEMAC is overwhelmed. If/when the conflict stabilises in Hudaydah there will be a need for a quick intervention.

### **Concept and Aim of the Proposed Emergency Intervention in Hudaydah**

UNDP's suggested line of intervention would be the **import** of (possibly commercial) NGO experience, capability, know-how and resources to deal with the immediate threats and **concurrently** adopt mine action orientated INGOs to develop YEMAC's capacity, each NGO bringing their relative strengths to the operational mix. This model could be **rolled-out** in other hotspots in the country when appropriate.

Additionally, UNDP will support and develop the internal structures of YEMAC to enhance YEMAC's capability as a co-ordinating body in a more complex operational environment with multiple operators.

### **Implementation:**

- Priorities of work assumed to be, but not limited to -
  - Port facilities, related infrastructure and access
  - Main Supply Routes
  - Civil-infrastructure (e.g. medical facilities, schools, water-treatment, power supply, etc.)
  - Life-saving activities, (e.g. MRA, contamination marking, ....)
  - Support to spontaneous returnees and population (both residential, commercial and subsistence)
  - Underwater clearance of shipping-routes and waterways.
- In context, hot IEDD should be managed outside of this project. The C-IED spectrum needs further discussion.

Thanks to the continued support of:

Germany

KSA

Netherlands

UAE

UK

USA