

MASG

Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

Chairman: Amb. Jenö C.A. Staehelin

Secretary: Natalie Kohli

Tel: 212-286-1540 / Fax: 212-286-1555

MASG@nyc.rep.admin.ch

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1. Unofficial Minutes

MASG-Meeting 15 July 2004

1. After welcoming the different speakers, the chairman introduced the subject of the meeting: mine action and humanitarian assistance. The humanitarian segment of ECOSOC had been concluded the day before. Although the report to ECOSOC mentions mine action only on one occasion, the coordination of humanitarian assistance does concern the mine action community and, vice versa, mines do concern the humanitarian community. The agenda for the meeting as well as the revised calendar for the second half of the year were adopted (*see the updated version of the Calendar in this Newsletter*). Agnes Mercailou from DDA pointed out that two important regional partners (Nato Partnership for Peace Trust Fund for the destruction of Mines and Small Arms; European Commission) should be invited to one of the upcoming MASG-meetings.
2. Manuel Bessler, Chief of the Promotion of Humanitarian Agenda Unit in OCHA gave an overview on the humanitarian segment of ECOSOC, the report to the ECOSOC, as well as general remarks on the protection of civilians. The humanitarian segment of ECOSOC is the once in a year opportunity, where the humanitarian community is being brought together and where the pace for the following year is set. For OCHA it is the occasion to report back and to ask Member States for guidance. In the report to ECOSOC, mine action is only mentioned in relation to access, but it is implied/understood that mines affect all components of humanitarian assistance. Access is the key precondition for humanitarian assistance even after the hot phase of a conflict is over (example South Sudan). The perception of humanitarian action and actors is of major concern to the humanitarian community. In the mid-1990s the UN developed the concept of "integrated missions", where unlike in earlier UN peacekeeping missions, the coordination of the humanitarian agencies and military peacekeepers are placed under the command of a single leader (a SRSG) within DPKO. The humanitarian community has been worried about the potential negative impact on their programmes and identities of such integrated missions. When humanitarian assistance is provided by military personnel or persons linked to a military or political agenda, key humanitarian principles such as impartiality and independence might be jeopardized. In the context of the Protection of Civilians, OCHA has prepared an Aide Memoire that assists the Security Council in ensuring that the protection needs and rights of civilians are reflected in relevant resolutions and the mandates of peacekeeping operations. It can also be used in the field as a tool that provides a systematic basis for analysis and reporting during humanitarian crises. Mine action is contained on page 10 of the Aide Memoire. This year's treaty event at the UN is focussed on treaties on the Protection of Civilians. The Ottawa Treaty is however not included in the list of 24 multilateral treaties that Member States are encouraged to sign.
3. Pierre Bertrand, the Deputy Director of UNHCR in New York welcomed the invitation by the MASG and considered it being very timely. UNHCR's involvement in mine action is traditionally linked to repatriations (for example Cambodia and Afghanistan), where mine awareness campaigns are held for refugees before they return home. UNHCR's Agenda for Protection of 2001 contains one item on refugee security (but no reference to mines). Mr. Bertrand stated that in the future such a reference should be made. UNHCR participates in the inter-agency group on protection of civilians and in the inter-agency coordination group on mine action. There was a UNHCR-UNMAS cooperation workshop held in May this year in Geneva. UNHCR's role is to advert UNMAS of situations related to the security of returnees. Examples include repatriations to Burundi and Sudan. The workshop has identified best practices of mine awareness activities in context such as Sri Lanka, Angola and Afghanistan.

4. Martin Barber pointed out that the two previous presentations showed to which extent key humanitarian partners integrate mine action into their thinking. He then highlighted a few examples of practical cooperation: a) where UNMAS has a program (e.g. Afghanistan, Sudan, Burundi) the humanitarian coordinator has the oversight (ownership is established through a formal exchange of letters); b) The program manager has to be part of the UN country team, when they consider security issues; c) Landmine Safety Project is part of the security training in concerned countries; d) Mine action centers provide information that enables the security coordinator to take better decisions; e) Questions of access. Examples include Iraq, where the WFP has integrated mine clearance assets into its program or South-Sudan, where for the clearing of a major road mine clearance assets are needed; f) Perception of humanitarian assistance: military involvement in mine action is a longstanding tradition, since clearance is often a military task. In Afghanistan the role of the military in humanitarian mine action is very limited, but this policy is being reviewed. In this review the perception of humanitarian assistance has to be taken into account; g) Good humanitarian donorship.

5. In the ensuing discussion Ambassador Stahelin raised the question whether it would not be better to spell out the problem of mines in the ECOSOC report instead of assuming that it is implied. Martin Barber did agree that it would be important to spell it out, but one has to consider that reports have limited pages and everybody wants to be mentioned (Manuel Bessler agreed with this drafters' dilemma).

Concerning the issue of perception of humanitarian assistance, Mr. Callenbach from the Netherlands highlighted that the military can very well play a positive role in humanitarian action. Ambassador Ross Hynes from Canada agreed that one should not generalize, that the military can in certain fields and regions be very appropriate, as in the Americas, where the OAS is carrying out demining with military personnel. Mr. Bertrand from UNHCR agreed that there was a dilemma concerning mine action and that the debate inside the humanitarian community on integrated missions is ongoing. UNHCR advocates that the military plays a role for the security of returnees. Mr. Bellomo from the European commission wanted to know how mine action fits into integrated missions. Martin Barber explained that mine action is part of the integrated missions. Many of the recently appointed SRSG to head integrated missions were humanitarians. He thinks it to be unfortunate that some quarters think that integrated missions are a vehicle for DPKO to tell humanitarians what to do. A study conducted by IRC in Liberia clearly showed that what the Liberian people needed most was security, i.e. peacekeepers. According to Mr. Barber it is essential that in multidimensional missions the UN has to speak with one voice. Manuel Bessler specified that there are OCHA guidelines that address the topic of the role of the military in humanitarian assistance. He pointed out that "winning hearts and minds" could play a role when military personnel hands out assistance. In integrated missions OCHA often encounters the problem that certain actors do not want to be under the UN umbrella. According to Stefano Toscano from Switzerland the role of military as such is not questioned but humanitarian action must essentially be of civilian nature. The provision of security has to be separate from the provision of humanitarian assistance and accordingly, the peacekeepers are not the right actors to provide assistance.

Mr. Toscano also drew the attention to the fact that in the Security Council resolution on Protection of Civilians mines are always mentioned, whereas in the ECOSOC and in the GA Resolutions on Strengthening of humanitarian coordination mines are never mentioned.

Patrick Fruchet from the UN Mine Action Center for Afghanistan emphasized that the biggest share for mine action funding in Afghanistan comes out of the humanitarian pocket (emergency funds), but that fundraising is also done through mainstreaming of mine action into reconstruction and peacebuilding. In reconstruction, UNMAS works closely with donors to include a mine action component in the funding of the rehabilitation of the road system. Through funding for stockpile destruction and DDR, resources can be mobilized for mine action out of the peacebuilding pocket. In Kunduz combatants from different factions now integrate the same demining teams, which implies that they have to trust each other. As far as the role of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRT) in Afghanistan is concerned, the perception varies according to the country that runs the PRT.

Mr. Lars Backström from Finland wanted to know from Martin Barber how far we have gotten in the strengthening of the coordination of mine action. According to Mr. Barber the coordination is being strengthened at HQ level through the interagency coordination group, and in the field through the country teams. However, Martin Barber suggested that this complex question deserved more time and hoped to come back to it at a later MASG-meeting.

6. UNMAS then made a presentation on the comparative analysis of program funding priorities and Portfolio shortfalls as well as on the Investment Database. The Investment Database has been transferred from DFAIT Canada to UNMAS and can now be accessed through E-Mine (www.mineactioninvestments.org). The aim of the database is to track contributions from donors. UNMAS will send out an information circular to the donors (capitals) encouraging them to enter data on the site or forward data to UNMAS.
7. China handed out copies of the report on the humanitarian mine/UXO clearance technology and cooperation workshop that was held in Kunming in April 2004. Megan Burke from Adopt-a-Minefield (UNA-USA) informed the MASG that the fourth annual *Night of a Thousand Dinners*, a worldwide event to promote demining efforts in six countries, will be held on 4 November 2004. A dinner host registers on-line through the web site www.1000dinners.com, invites friends to the dinner, and asks them for a fixed contribution to help eradicate landmines around the world.
8. In conclusion, the Chair informed the MASG on the visit of the Resource Mobilization Task Force to the World Bank. The meeting organized by the Thai embassy in Washington and the Thai mission in Geneva was taking place on 22 July. A delegation composed of donor states, mine-affected countries and representatives from the UN (Martin Barber, Julia Taft, UNICEF and others) was going to meet with Ian Johnson, Vice-President for environment and sustainable development of the World Bank.

The meeting was closed at 12:45 p.m.

2. MASG Calendar for 2004

20 July 2004

MONTH	OBJECTIVE	TOPIC	SPEAKERS	OBJECTIVES & (ANNOTATIONS)
January 22	General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda-setting for 2004 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chair, Amb. Staehelin UNMAS, Martin Barber UNDP, Sayed Aqa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirm agendas for Feb and March MASG review proposed calendar of meetings seek sponsor for evaluation in Angola discuss MASG newsletter – format, content, timing MASG endorses Chair contacts RMCG
February 18	Evaluations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lessons learned on evaluations & proposals for future evaluations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UK (DFID) on Afghanistan evaluation UNMAS on Kosovo evaluation UNDP on generic terms of reference GICHHD on plans for evaluation service UNDP on evaluation in Angola 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASG decides on scope of Angola evaluation Task Force will define ToR MASG endorses revised calendar <p><i>(9 – 12 Feb: Standing Committee Intersessionals in Geneva)</i> <i>(10 Feb: Meeting of Resource Mobilisation Contact Group in Geneva)</i></p>
March 19- Geneva	Peace Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating mine action into peace processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mine Action on the peace and security agenda (UNMAS) National & UN program coordinators Sudan and Sri Lanka Case Studies (PRIO) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASG members commit to pushing for MA funding at Oslo donors' conference on Sudan which follows March JAM <p><i>(7th Program Directors meeting Geneva 15-18 Mar)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venue of MASG Meeting: GICHHD (WMO building), Room C1
April 27	Development Funding needs and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating mine action into Bretton Woods institutions Mine Action Portfolio shortfalls Update on Nairobi Review Conference 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP, UNICEF, WFP UNMAS UNMAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage MASG members to include mine action in ECOSOC interventions <p><i>(Meeting of ECOSOC with Bretton Woods institutions)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASG takes note of Portfolio shortfalls
May 17-24		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASG visit to Angola 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approx. 12 MASG participants visit Angola (on the basis of an evaluation carried out beforehand)
June 10	Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP study on mine action and development Mainstreaming Strategy NGO perspective GICHHD presentation Report on Angola Fieldtrip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNDP Canada VVAF Martin Dahinden Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MASG reviews UNDP study recommendations <p><i>(14-25 June: UNDP Board meeting)</i> <i>(21–25 June: Standing Committee Intersessionals in Geneva)</i> <i>(28-29 June: Review Conf. Prep Comm in Geneva)</i></p>

July 15	Humanitarian Emergency Funding needs and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination of humanitarian emergency • Comparative analysis of program funding priorities and Portfolio shortfalls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - OCHA, UNHCR - UNMAS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MASG takes note of Portfolio shortfalls, and makes appropriate funding commitments <p><i>(12-14 Jul: Humanitarian segment of ECOSOC substantive session)</i></p>
August				Summer holidays/ no meeting
September 14	Peace Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings by DPA, DPKO and UNDG working group on transition • Fafo AIS/Landmine Action research project on the peacebuilding impact of mine action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - [TBC] - [TBC] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MASG discusses integration of mine action into peacemaking and peace-building processes and into mission planning.
October 14	Special Meeting in view of Nairobi Review Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefings by President/Friends of the President • Briefing by M. Barber (UN focal point) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ambassador Petritsch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MASG takes note of preparations for Nairobi review conference and issues at stake
October 27	RMASG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 Country Presentations • Panel Discussion: Building an inclusive national mine action program • Administrative Issues (Newsletter, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Angola, Sudan [TBC] - [Speakers TBC] - Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reinforced MASG (4th committee consideration of MA Res. tentatively scheduled for 28 and 29 october) <p><i>(29 Nov – 3 Dec: Nairobi 5-year review of APMBC)</i></p>
December 14	Funding needs and priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio launch • Review 2004/Preview 2005 • Calendar, MASG Field Trip 2005 [?] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNMAS - Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MASG looks back on 2004, members give feedback on priorities, fieldtrip, newsletter etc. - MASG discusses calendar 2005

3. Agenda for the MASG Meeting on 14 September 2004 in New York

1. Welcome address by the Chair
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. The role of Mine Action in Peace Processes
 - Presentation by David Harland (DPKO)
 - Presentation by DPA
 - Presentation by Christian Ruge (Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies)
 - Presentation by Afshan Khan (UNICEF)
4. Discussion
5. AOB

4. Updates

4.1. Update from UNMAS

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POLICY, TREATY IMPLEMENTATION, INFORMATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

General Policy

UNMAS chaired the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) on 27 July. Topics on the agenda were: 1) Review of the Rapid Response Plan, 2) Review of the UN Policy on Mine Action, 3) Preparations for the Review Conference of States Parties to the APMB on 29 November – 3 December 2004, and 3) Mine action in Burundi. In addition, the UNMAS Liaison Officer from Geneva made a presentation on the CCW process. (Discussions in the Group of Governmental Experts in Geneva regarding the regulation of Mines other than Anti-Personnel Mines and on issues relating to sub-munitions and Explosive Remnants of War.)

Information

UNMAS invited delegations, UN staff, nongovernmental organizations, and the press to a July 15 2004 open panel discussion on goals and expected outcomes of the upcoming Nairobi Summit for a Mine Free World, which will bring together world leaders, top UN officials, and key players in the movement to ban landmines on the fifth anniversary of the entry into force of the antipersonnel mine-ban treaty. The panellists were *Judith Mbula Bahemukar*, Kenya's Permanent Representative to the United Nations; *Ross Hynes*, Canadian Ambassador for Mine Action; *Jean-Marie Guéhenno*, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; *Susan Walker*, International Campaign to Ban Landmines, *Julia Taft*, Assistant Administrator and Director, UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention & Recovery; *Dan Toole*, Director of UNICEF's Office of Emergency Programs, and *Martin Barber*, Director, UN Mine Action Service. At the Nairobi summit, officials from the 143 countries that are states parties to the mine-ban treaty will develop a joint plan for achieving the treaty's goals for banning the use, sale and transfer of antipersonnel mines, removing them from the ground, destroying any remaining stockpiles, and assisting victims. The action plan emerging from the summit will include concrete strategies for meeting this goal. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is scheduled to convene the Nairobi summit. (See Press article attached)

Treaty Implementation

UNMAS attended the Eighth Session of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE VIII) of States Parties to the Convention on certain conventional weapons (CCW), held in Geneva from 5 to 16 July, 2004. UNMAS made a statement recalling the common IACG-MA position on Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM) and the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) call for "an immediate freeze on the use of cluster munitions until effective legal instruments that resolve humanitarians concerns are in place".

UNMAS produced a CD-Rom entitled "The CCW, the United Nations & Mine Action", containing all UN documents on CCW relevant to Mine Action, including working papers and reports of all GGE sessions. The CD-Rom was presented and circulated for the first time at the GGE VIII."

The UN Mine Action Team presented revisions to the draft review document for the First Review Conference.

PROGRAMME SUPPORT

Afghanistan

The UNMAS Program Officer and UNOPS Portfolio Manager for Afghanistan deployed to Kabul over July-Aug to examine the status of the Mine Action Program. Consultations occurred with key donors, including representatives of the European Commission and Japan, all NGO implementing partners, UNDP, UNICEF and UNOPS, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs within the Government. Discussions covered areas including progress towards program nationalization, increased inter-agency cooperation, current and future funding, and internal management.

Operations in the field continued to be implemented throughout the country in areas where the security situation allowed, supporting both development and humanitarian objectives. Resource allocation between these tasks is now close to evenly split across the program in terms of assets funded and deployed. Consultations with key development partners are also expected to occur in the coming months to allocate additional funds to existing capacities in support of critical new infrastructure projects.

Information collection in the field for the Retrofit Landmine Impact Survey is expected to be completed towards the end of the year. This information will form the basis for a strategic review of the program, now expected to be conducted in early 2005. The security situation also continues to be volatile, with the newly arrived Security Officer for the Program strengthening ties with the UN and other security apparatus to better direct safe operations.

UNMEE MACC

Two investigations were completed into UXO incidents that occurred in the TSZ (Sector Center and Sector West). In both cases, young boys were tampering with fuses by hitting them with stones. Both boys lost several fingers as a result. MRE efforts are currently being directed at young shepherds in these regions.

The MACC Program Manager (PM) traveled to Addis Ababa where he gave a general briefing on the current status of MACC operations to the donor community in Addis Ababa for the purpose of raising funds to cover outstanding budget requirements for this year and for the full budget requirements of 2005. He conducted the same briefing at the UNMEE MACC for the donor community in Asmara. The PM and Chief of Operations briefed the new FC on the operational activities of the PFK and MACC demining assets in the Mission area.

The majority of clearance activities were carried out in the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) in Sector West in the minefields of Shilalo, where the population of the TSZ remains most affected by the presence of mines and UXO. All UNMEE related assets cleared more than 14,800 square meters of land, 135 km of and more than 15 mines and 185 UXOs. 1168 people were also provided mine risk education.

UNFICYP MAC

The mine action team provided standardized briefings to prospective contractors for both the demining and quality assurance contracts. In total, five firms submitted bids for the demining contract and three organizations for the quality assurance. Bids will be reviewed in August with the EU funds for the project slated for release in September after which selected contractors can begin work.

Sudan

The framework document for a National Mine Action Policy in Sudan was completed. The document was developed and adopted after a tri-partite meeting held between the SPLM/A, the Government of Sudan (GoS), and the United Nations on 14 July 2004 in Nairobi. It was suggested that the framework be used for the Naivasha peace talks. The Sudan National Mine Action Strategic Framework Conference is currently being prepared to be held from 25-27 August 2004 in Nairobi. Clearance operations in the Nuba Mountains continue with LMA conducting demining operations and FSD conducting survey operations. MECHEM continues with the clearance of the Kapoeta, Torrit, Juba, Mundri, Rumbek route. The Cross-Line Partnership project objective is to build and maintain Sudanese national capacities to implement the managerial elements of the cross-line mine action program in an effective and confident manner, where the UN Chief Technical Advisor provides the neutral bridge within the tripartite arrangement of the cross-line liaison team, in accordance with the GoS/SPLA/UN Memorandum of Understanding of 19 September 2002. The project life span should coincide with the current run-up to an anticipated Peace Settlement and then the following six-month pre-interim period. An additional \$160,000 is required urgently to see the project through December 2004.

New pledges in the VTF 1 July through 31 July 2004

12/07/2004	Japan	\$ 506,484	not yet earmarked
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New contributions in the VTF 1 July through 13 August 2004

30/07/2004	Australia	\$ 895,180	Afghanistan
09/08/2004	Japan	\$ 505,110	Sudan (earmarking of contribution already received)

TECHNOLOGY / SAFETY

The U.S. Department of Defense (U.S. DoD) held their annual Humanitarian Demining Workshop in July. Twenty five different mine affected countries attended and put forward their requests for technology assistance. UNMAS and GICHD also attended. The broad message was that there remains a priority need for large area cancellation techniques and efficient road proving devices capable of covering hundreds of kilometers per month. The dual sensor close-in detection capability (ground penetrating radar and metal detection combined) appears to offer the most immediate potential for manual demining. The U.S. DoD detecting system, HSTAMIDS, will be taken on a tour of programs to show off this capability.

THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS ARE FROM AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE 15 JULY 2004 NAIROBI EVENT PUBLISHED BY INTER-PRESS SERVICE ON 20 JULY 2004:

"The sense of a real national direction will keep states and the international community focused on the (mine-ban treaty's) goals," said Jean-Marie Guéhenno, U.N. undersecretary-general for peacekeeping operations.

"Even if there has been great progress, the job is not yet done," said Ross Hynes, Canadian ambassador for mine action. For instance, mines kill or injure 15,000-20000 people each year, according to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). According to Hynes, the number of mine-producing countries has declined from 55 in 1997 to 15 today, among them China, Israel, Iran, India and the United States. Those nations are counted as producing countries even if they have not manufactured landmines in recent years because they have not yet banned production. For example, the United States stopped making landmines in 1997 but reserves the right to start again. "There are also no confirmed transfers of mines (occurring) today and there have been only six documented cases of using (mines) last year," said Hynes. Thirty-five million stockpiled mines have already been destroyed; another 10 million still need to be destroyed.

According to Guéhenno, coordination among non-governmental and governmental players must continue. "It is an essential part of making the best of resources; coordination is an integral part of good management of resources that are always scarce."

Added ICBL Inter-sessional Program Officer Susan Walker, "The close partnership between the governments and civil society has been the key." In her opinion the Mine Ban Treaty is one of the few multilateral processes that is working today. According to Hynes, it is hoped the Americas will be declared mine-free next year. Yet 50 countries that are party to At least 10 states could reach the goal of being mine-free by the beginning of the summit. "Among them are Guinea-Bissau, Yemen and Malawi," said Julia Taft, assistant administrator and director of the U.N. Development Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. Taft considers the Mine Ban Treaty a conflict-resolution tool because mine-clearance is one of the first things that rebel or fighting groups agree to when they begin negotiating for peace. For example, the first collective action of Bosnia-Herzegovina was to become a party to the Mine Ban Treaty.

Seen as part of conflict resolution, "removal of mines is a development investment and needs to be inserted in the national development plans and in all the planning documents for that country," Taft said. The summit is also viewed as a necessary forum to increase funding sources. Five billion dollars have been spent since 1997 to destroy stockpiles and clear mines. But how much more is needed to reach the treaty's goals seems to be uncertain. "It is impossible to calculate," said Martin Barber, director of the U.N. Mine Action Service, because mines are still being planted, in Burma, Chechnya and Colombia, for example. Walker suggested that some money could be better spent if it was used for basic equipment rather than to develop hi-tech equipment that cannot be used in mine-affected countries. "I have seen millions, if not billions, being spent on doing research and statistics," she said. "And sometimes all we need is a better mine-detector." She asked states to "send the highest level of representation possible from your governments, work to ensure that they arrive in Nairobi with strong statements reaffirming their political and resource commitments and that the needs of landmine survivors and mine-affected communities are being addressed in national plans."

4.2. Update from UNDP

UNDP MINE ACTION UPDATE

August 2004

The following is a summary of key achievements, objectives, and funding issues for UNDP-supported country programs, presented by region:

ARAB STATES REGION

Iraq

Key Achievements

- UNDP continued cooperation and coordination with UNICEF, the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA), and other stakeholders, aiming to assist NMAA in the development of a national management capacity and the establishment of an indigenous and sustainable mine-action program in Iraq.
- UNDP Mine Action, as manager for the UN Mine Action Cluster, conducted three intra-Cluster meetings during July 2004. Among the issues discussed were the facilitation of and support to NMAA; administration and financial arrangements for NMAA capacity-building missions; update and implementation of the UN Mine Action Cluster; preparation for the UNCT/Cluster Managers Workshop on 27-28 July 2004; the 2005 Mine Action Portfolio for Iraq; and the development of a marketing strategy for the UN Mine Action Cluster.
- During the reporting month, UNDP Mine Action held several meetings to enhance UNDP/UN Mine Action coordination and support to mine-action implementation. A meeting was held with Vietnam Veterans Foundation of America (VVAFA) to review the progress of the Landmine Impact Survey in Iraq, for which the senior coordinator is funded by UNDP. The issue of mine-risk education was discussed with Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and Handicap International France (HI F). In a meeting with Cranfield University, the Cluster discussed the subject of mine-action management training, development of Iraqi national mine-action strategic planning, and possible UN support to NMAA. In addition, a presentation was made to representatives of the UK's Department for International Development (DFID).
- UNDP Mine Action held a meeting on 25 July 2004 with the three NMAA senior staff members en route to Baghdad who undertook a Mine Action Exchange Program (MAX) mission during the period 25 June to 25 July in Yemen. The primary purpose of the meeting was a de-briefing by the three staff members about the lessons learnt during their MAX mission and how the NMAA will benefit from them. The participants appreciated the opportunity to see a well established and functional mine action program first-hand. One of the important lessons learnt was the necessity of conducting a Landmine Impact Survey in Iraq to provide a basis for strategic planning. In addition, the participants found it very useful to observe how quality assurance, priority setting, resource allocation, and data flow/reporting worked in the Yemen program. The participants also learnt how Yemen has managed to sign the Ottawa Treaty on Landmines and to meet its obligations as a State Party to the Treaty.
- In a competitive bidding process, UNDP has issued a Request for Proposals for the deployment of ten Technical Advisors to the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) inside Iraq in various fields, including Quality Assurance, Multimedia, Victim Assistance, Mine-Risk Education (MRE), Administration/Finance, and Public Relations. Selection and contractual agreements are hoped to be finalized by early August.

Key Challenges

- The security situation in Iraq.
- Deployment of a focal point for UN Mine Action in Baghdad to coordinate and liaise with mine-action activities in the field.
- Expansion of operations capacity (MRE, mine/UXO clearance).
- Establishment of local mine-action nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and private firms.
- Movement of mine-action personnel.

Key Objectives

- Continue to provide management and technical assistance to NMAA and other stakeholders.
- Support and facilitate development of a NMAA Strategic Plan for 2005 and first half of 2006 (to be ready by August/September 2004).
- Support and facilitate the proposed donor conference, to be organized by NMAA in October 2004, in order to start mobilizing the required resources for the Iraq mine action program.
- Continue to develop a concept for the building/expansion of local mine-action capacity. A Request for Proposals will be sent out shortly.
- Finalize the recruitment of a Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) for the Iraq program.
- Facilitate the procurement of a US Visa and provide all other administration/financial arrangements on behalf of an NMAA member who has been nominated for the Senior Mine Action Managers course scheduled to be held in the United States, 22 September to 24 October 2004. The course will be conducted by James Madison University, located in Virginia. UNDP will cover all costs of the participation.
- Search international implementing partners for development of local/national operational capacity building inside Iraq.
- Develop a UNDP mine-action strategy for 2005 and beyond.
- Develop a 2005 Mine Action Portfolio for Iraq. An invitation letter to participate has been sent to all mine-action agencies currently operating, or planning to operate, inside Iraq. Coordination with concerned organizations is on-going.
- Prepare a landmine/UXO safety package and integrate it into the existing training packages for UN and other agency staff members currently working, or planning to work, inside Iraq.
- Maintain regular video conferences with NMAA.

Funding Update

- UNDP has received US\$5.4 million (US\$ 5.8 million including the remaining 20 percent from the EC contribution) for 2004 and first half of 2005. Additional needs for this time period is approximately US\$4.9 million. Because the strategic work process is currently unfinished, additional needs are not clear at this time. The process started with a strategic framework workshop in May 2004 in Jordan, organized by UNDP, and a follow up workshop in August in Baghdad. A further workshop is planned during the October donor conference in Jordan.
- Estimated total funding needs for the whole Iraq mine-action program for 2005 is US\$60-120 million. Probable fund needs for 2004 and first half 2005 from resources other than Iraq is US\$40-80 million.

Eritrea

Key Achievements

- The training of two new manual clearance/technical survey teams was successfully completed in mid-July. These teams were deployed in mid-August and immediately began collective training for accreditation according to International Mine Action Standards.
- The Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) and Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO) hosted a donor visit to one of its areas of operation in the Shilalo area on July 27. Invitees from UN agencies and donor countries were given a tour of a minefield being cleared by EDO manual clearance teams, a mine detection dog demonstration from RONCO, and a briefing on the Victim Support program in Eritrea. They also observed a mine-risk education lesson in Shilalo village.

Key Objectives

- Training for the EDA's first Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team will begin on 9 August and should be completed in early September.
- The first draft of the National Mine Action Strategic Plan will be completed by the end of August, which is a necessary step for Eritrea to fulfill its obligations under the Ottawa Treaty.
- An appraisal team is currently conducting a review of the UNDP Mine Action Capacity Building Program, which will evaluate its suitability and adequacy to address the landmine and UXO problem in the country, ascertain whether it is technically feasible, and ensure that the program is in line with government policies and national development priorities.

Funding Needs

- The mine action capacity building program has received a pledge of 60,000 Euro from the Italian Government and another for US\$50,000 from the South Korean Government. The current funding shortfall for 2004 is US\$3,252,798.

Sudan

Key Achievements

- Creation of a liaison office for UNDP Sudan's mine action program in Nairobi in order to intensify liaison with Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM) counterparts involved in mine action.
- Coordination of capacity-building training in Information Technology for South Sudanese counterparts based in Nairobi.
- Co-chairing the technical review session for the 2005 Mine Action Portfolio.
- Organizing a research trip to the World Food Program camp in Lakkichioggo, and convening meetings with UN agencies and NGOs working in Southern Sudan.
- Conducting a mission to Khartoum to assist in the development of the annual work plan and budget for UNDP's mine-action program.
- Drafting a project proposal for community mine action with ex-combatants for the 2005 Mine Action Portfolio in coordination with UNDP's DDR Unit.
- Supporting advocacy efforts for a Regional Strategy Against Landmines by developing a workshop concept for the Greater Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region, planned for September 2004.
- Preparations for the drafting of a National Mine Action Strategy Framework.

Key Challenges

- Initial resistance from both the Government of Sudan and the SPLM to their participation in an inclusive National Mine Action Strategy formulation process. Both parties have requested two separate strategy workshops, one to be held in the North of Sudan, the other in the South.
- Insufficient information and limited available sources on the number of mine/UXO victims and survivors, as well as the extent and socio-economic impact of mine/UXO contamination in Sudan. Without a comprehensive national survey, the identity and needs of affected Sudanese beneficiaries will be difficult to ascertain.

4.3. Update from Unicef

Angola

The bi-monthly co-ordination meeting for Mine Risk Education was held in July, chaired by CNIDAH. The packed agenda saw CNIDAH give information about the new projects in MRE which it will conduct in the coming months. These include: a National Media campaign; translation, adaptation and adoption of international mine action standards for mine action, Annual meeting for MRE implementer; production and dissemination of a monthly mine action information bulletin.

UNICEF will fund this range of initiatives. In addition, two projects supported by UNICEF are in their final stages of development with the Angola's government counterparts. The first project concerns the reformulation of the school curriculum and materials for teachers/pupils and community-based MRE instructors while the second concerns the design of a trainer of trainers course and materials for MRE professionals.

UNICEF continues to support the development of the national strategy for MRE in Angola, and to this end is providing support an orientation for MRE partners at provincial level. This will help them in the development of their projects to be included in the national mine action plan for 2005. UNICEF's Project Officer is traveling with CNIDAH and UNDP staff to visit each of the provinces to meet with provincial governors and other partners and to provide support to gather data and ensure that effective coordination mechanisms are developed for integrating all mine action activities.

UNICEF continues to work with the Ministry of Education, as part of the national teacher training plan, and is seeking to train 20,000 teachers in MRE during 2004. The training program is on schedule and the municipal teachers who received their first training in January received refresher training in May and will receive further refresher training in August 2004.

UNICEF continues to support national MRE by supporting NGO partners to develop their range of activities in eight Angolan provinces. The main focus on NGO activities will be in the development of community mine committees in 160 localities over the course of a 12 month period.

The Organizations planning to conduct MRE in 2005 were invited to prepare and submit their project summaries to the Vice Governors of their respective provinces in order to gain approval by the end of August. These projects will be consolidated to form the National Mine Action Plan, with each province having a provincial mine action plan.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

UNICEF continues to support the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Center (BHMAC) the Civil Protection (responsible for MRE training), and implementing agencies working at community level thanks to the financial support of the Italian government and of the UNICEF National Committees of Ireland and Austria.

UNICEF provided technical assistance and financial support to the revision of the national mine action strategy. The MRE technical working group composed of representatives of local government institutions and non-governmental organizations completed the strategic analysis and strategy revision process, and produced a draft integrated MRE strategic plan for the period 2004 – 2008.

Through Handicap International Share SEE, UNICEF continues to provide technical assistance to the Landmine Victim Assistance Strategy Working Group (LVASWG) which has recently developed a victim assistance strategy. All the stakeholders participating in the Strategy's development process have agreed on common strategic objectives and priorities and agreed to consider landmines victim assistance as an integrated part of the disability issue.

The integrated MRE information management system developed by the BHMAL has been completed. The database is composed of information provided by the implementing agencies and linked to the results of the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS). The first maps indicating priority municipalities and showing MRE activities are being produced.

The Civil Protection continues to run monthly 5-day training in Mine Risk Education and Management for field personnel. In July, 25 participants including community volunteers, staff from local and international NGOs, the Civil Protection, the police, the Armies and the Red Cross participated in the training that focuses on risk assessment and risk reduction at community level through MRE and integrated mine action.

The assessment of MRE within the education sector that UNICEF has commissioned to Handicap International has been completed. The findings were presented to the representatives of the Republika Srpska, Federal and Cantonal Ministries of Education, in a workshop also attended by SFOR, the Red Cross and local NGOs.

UNICEF supported the Italian NGO INTERSOS to undertake a sociological research on risk attitudes of men and women of working age from highly endangered groups in impacted populated places. The research—conducted in cooperation with BHMAL, Entities Trade Unions and the Universities of Sarajevo and Rome 3, was proved critical to programming of MRE and mine action and timely in the assistance of the revision of mine action strategic directions for the country. The report is to be published in Bosnian and English in autumn. An Italian version will also be available.

UNICEF, in partnership with the Italian NGO Intersos, is planning the implementation of a Community Mine Risk Management project to be implemented in collaboration with the BHMAL, the Civil Protection, local authorities, Trade Unions and local associations in 6 municipalities of Central and Eastern Bosnia.

UNICEF is supporting the local NGO 'Genesis Project' in the implementation of comprehensive school-based MRE. The project, developed in collaboration with the Ministries of Education, is presented to schools with interactive and participatory puppet shows, training of teachers, peer education activities and participation of teachers and parents in community assessment and risk reduction planning. Within the last school year the project piloted and revised innovative methodologies, training 300 schoolteachers and 209 MRE peer educators who in turn conducted education workshops for approximately 1,300 of their classmates.

In North-East Bosnia, the UNICEF supported local NGO AMI is supporting the implementation of 5 municipality mine risk management plans. Activities include: risk education through-door to-door visits and training of community representatives. An external evaluation and documentation of approaches and lessons learned has been completed, the report is being finalized.

The absence of funds beyond the end 2004 is of serious concern and already has implications on UNICEF mine action programming, as it prevents planning of activities and commitment to partners beyond the end of this year.

Cambodia

In Cambodia UNICEF is continuing providing financial and technical support to Community Based Mine Risk Reduction as well as Mass Media (through the Cambodia Mine Action Center), School Mine Risk Education for Children (through Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport), and provision of prostheses, wheelchairs, other mobility devices and other assistances to children and women victims of landmines/UXOs and other causes of disabilities.

In July 2004, 34 new casualties were reported by the Cambodia Mine/UXO Victim Information System. This shown a decrease of 47% compared with 64 casualties reported in July 2003. In the total of 34, 25 were men, 4 were children under 18 year and 5 were women. 8 (24%) casualties were injured or killed by UXOs and 26 (76%) were by mines. 33 of the total casualties received mine risk education. Among the 4 children who were injured or killed 2 of them were caused by tempering with UXOs.

A National Strategy on Mine Risk Education has been developed and this document will be finalized at the next coming Mine Risk Education Coordination meeting which will take place in November 2004. In addition, a mine risk education technical working group has reviewed the mine risk education teaching materials.

A special consultation meeting on Mine Risk Reduction was held at the Office of Council of Ministers in July 15, 2004 under presidency of his Excellency Sam Sotha, Advisor to Prime Minister Hun Sen and Secretary General of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority. The purpose of the meeting was to find out the causes of the increased accident rates by UXOs and to formulate immediate solutions and recommendations to address this particular issue caused by UXOs. All mine action operator representatives, relevant ministries and province governors of the affected provinces have participated. The consultation meeting resulted in detailed recommendations in the area of increase and targeted UXO awareness, improved and increased UXO reporting and demolition (including from the metal crap collectors) and alternative handling of UXO in order to create a safe metal crap collection procedure and business.

Colombia

In the last month, UNICEF has continued providing technical assistance to the Colombia Landmines Observatory both on MRE and Survivor Assistance, in order to develop a coherent action Plan led by the national Government. At a regional level, UNICEF has also provided technical assistance to the departments of Antioquia and Cauca.

At a community level, UNICEF continues to work together with the local authorities and community leaders of 20 municipalities in Cauca and Antioquia, developing MRE activities, Risk Diagnoses and legal support to landmines and UXO victims.

Ethiopia

Thanks to the assistance of the UNICEF Sri Lanka, a Mine Risk Education (MRE) delegation from the Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO) went on a study tour to Sri Lanka to see how the MRE project is developing in Sri Lanka. The study tour was extremely successful due to the assistance of UNICEF, UNDP and the National and International Mine action staff of Sri Lanka. EMAO staff stated that the tour was of great benefit to them and will help them in further developing their own MRE project in Ethiopia.

Training in surveillance and data collection will commence on the 16th August for all the MRE actors. Once the training is conducted, data collection on Suspected Dangerous areas, Victims/survivors, and MRE activities will commence in Tigray and Afar regions. The local NGOs will supervise this implementation of the data collection system alongside with the federal agency EMAO to see that data is been collected accurately effectively and ensuring that the privacy of the victim and family if not violated.

Funding for the MRE projects has come from the Italian Government, US department of State and UNICEF.

Georgia

UNICEF Georgia continues to strengthen Mine Risk Education (MRE) and survivor assistance programs in affected areas of the Abkhazia region and in Georgia. Presently, this is being accomplished largely through the UNICEF project which provides support to the HALO Trust.

Aided by UNICEF support in the form of MRE communication materials, children and families in the republic of Abkhazia, as well as in Zugdidi and the Sagarejo regions of Georgia are being educated in mine/UXO awareness and risk reduction. UNICEF is facilitating the development and production of culturally appropriate, age specific and locally accessible communication materials (i.e., copybooks and board games with MRE messages for schools, and coloring books with MRE messages for kindergartens). Over 34,500 students at 214 schools take part in interactive MRE workshops conducted by the HALO Trust.

Organized jointly with the HALO Trust and the Sukhumi Rehabilitation Center *Rainbow*, UNICEF Georgia is also funding a one-month rehabilitation summer camp for child survivors, their families and teachers in mine-affected regions of Abkhazia. Spanning the month of August 2004, the program aims to:

- Create a positive, safe and supportive environment for children who have been injured by landmines;
- Lay groundwork for the development of a community-based rehabilitation network involving information sharing, advocacy, community mobilization, social reintegration and participation for children who have been injured by landmines, their families and community members.
- Promote self-acceptance, self-confidence and psychosocial development amongst injured children through non-formal education, play and recreation using interactive learning techniques.

Lebanon

UNICEF is in the process of putting together all tools and awareness materials (training manual on Mine Risk Education and a coloring book for children on mine risks) produced in a training kit for teachers in schools in the post conflict areas in South of Lebanon. The drawings of this book were created by children from the South in a creative and motivating setting where children drew their own ideas of how Mine Risk Education should be.

UNICEF in cooperation with the Landmines Resource Center (MRC) at the University of Balamand and the National Demining Office (NDO) is planning to seek collaboration with the Ministry of Education to incorporate MRE material in the school curricula. This initiative is still awaiting approval for funding.

In cooperation with the National Demining Office (NDO), UNICEF is in the process of supporting the development of a play on Mine Risks, which will be developed with landmine victims (children and adults) with the guidance of a professional children's theatre director. More than 100 shows will take place in the South as well as in Mount Lebanon in the post conflict areas. This activity is still in development process; it's expected to launch in October-November.

The Starwood Lodging Company, owner of Sheraton Hotels worldwide is organizing sports events this summer to coincide with the Olympic Games. The Sheraton Coral Beach Hotel in Beirut proposed to hold such an event at their resort location in partnership with UNICEF. In order to get visibility and draw attention to land-mine victims and disabled persons in Lebanon, UNICEF proposed to have a team of disabled young people (15-20 years old) who are mine victims to play against the Lebanese national basket-ball team. In order to maintain a balance in the game, the Lebanese National Team will be playing in wheel-chairs. The event will mobilize a crowd a young people around the match, but personalities as well as corporations will be involved to support the plight of mine victims in Lebanon.

Mauritania

A technical meeting with BNDH and international NGO HAMAP on military component of de-mining was held at the end of June. The Action Plan was finalized in collaboration with BNDH and an information and advocacy mission took place last July in the mine-affected areas of Nouadhibou and Zoueratt. The main objective of this mission was to create awareness and inform civil and military administration, local NGOs, community representatives, health and education technical services. The gathering and analysis of data concerning landmine victims will be developed in August. This activity will lead to a database constituting a reliable source of data, risk factors and indicators.

Nepal

Last July more than 20 people attended a five day workshop organized by UNICEF and GICHD for members of the Nepal Mine Risk Education Working Group. The aim of the workshop was to generate a common understanding on the issue related to the threat of mines and improvised explosive devices which is a relatively new one in Nepal. The participants represented the following agencies: CARE, Child Workers in Nepal Concern Center (CWIN), Digital Broadcast Initiative/ Equal Access (UNDP-funded), ICRC, ILO-International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour, Nepal Campaign to Band Landmines, Nepal Red Cross, Porters' Progress, Save the Children Norway, Save the Children US, World Education, World Vision and UNICEF.

An important recommendation of the workshop was for UNICEF and the GICHD to work to bring a needs and capacity assessment mission to Nepal next September. While UNICEF and GICHD offered to fund and provide support for a consultant to research and write the analysis, partners of the Nepal Mine-Risk Education Working Group are ready to contribute with data and assist in the field missions. The aim is for GICHD and UNICEF to work with the partners of the Mine-Risk Education Group on the conclusions and recommendations section of the analysis and have a common document which can serve as the base for future planning, activities and cooperation.

The Nepal Mine-Risk Education Working Group continues to develop posters warning children of the dangers of socket bombs and other improvised explosive devices and UXO. Pre-testing testing on the posters has been done in the Terai and Hills, and a draft version is being used in a trial in the Far-Western region as part of Schools as Zones of Peace education package for conflict-affected schools. Partners are now working with World Education on the guide to support the posters. A secondary aim is for distribution immediately following an engagement between Maoist and security forces.

Some 300 incidents involving explosive devices have been reported in the media between November 2003 and June 2004, according to a media survey undertaken by UNICEF. Of the 300 incidents only 31 were reported to involve mines. Most of the incidents were attributed to Maoist-fabricated IEDs. Some 170 incidents were said to involve some type of unspecified bomb – likely to have been something like a pressure-cooker or bucket bomb if the target was a building or structure, and a socket bomb if a child was killed or injured. More than 60 children were reported in the survey to have been killed or injured, about half of whom were aged between six and 11 years. Thirteen incidents involved children under five years, including two boys who had been picking berries.

On the issue of staff safety, UNICEF organized with the UN National Field Security Officer a briefing for Kathmandu-based UNICEF staff, including all drivers, on the dangers posed by improvised explosive devices, particularly those used against vehicles. UNICEF and the UN National Field Security Officer working with UNMAS on a Nepal-specific version of the Landmine Safety Program country brochure to go inside the *UN Landmine and UXO Safety Handbook*.

Northern Caucasus

On 15 July, UNICEF chaired an inter-agency coordination meeting for Mine Action, with the involvement of all key governmental and non-governmental stakeholders as well as ICRC. A special attention was paid to the CAP 2005 preparation process, which will start in August. All actors were asked to consolidate their planning for future activities, with a view to the 26 August Mine Action CAP workshop.

A meeting of the data gathering agents for the UNICEF-managed IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) database was held during the reporting period, with participation from 'Voice of the Mountains'(VoM), 'Let's Save the Generation' and 'Minga'. The meeting discussed and reviewed the progress of the ongoing data gathering process. Participants were briefed on the IMSMA training which was held in Armenia by GICHD in June, with the participation of the VoM database manager. In the future, availability of resources permitting, UNICEF will consider the possibility of sending two specialists from VoM Cambodia, where they would be trained by the Cambodian National Center for Mine Action.

Community-based MRE has been offered by VoM to the population living in the Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs) n. 28, 119 and 24 in Grozny, thus covering 950 children and adults. In Achkhoy-Martanovskiy and Urus-Martanovskiy districts of Chechnya, VoM has been working through several focus groups, which are actively involved in dissemination of MRE materials. A new MRE diary-book will be printed shortly, with financial support from ECHO, and distributed through the Ministry of Education of Chechnya and VoM.

On 30 July, UNICEF and ECHO representatives visited to one of the mine risk reduction leisure centers established by UNICEF, with financial support from ECHO, and located in four schools in Grozny. Some 15-20 children attend Centers daily. The opening of these centers (three more are expected to be opened before the end of the year) was aimed at reducing the mines/UXO impact on children in Grozny through the provision of a safe playing environment.

Let's Save the Generation and the State Chechen Drama continued to cover with MRE drama presentations several communities in Urus-Martanovskiy district and in Michurina village (Chechnya), with financial support from the Governments of the Netherlands and Germany. The dissemination of posters, note-books and pens carrying MRE messages accompanied the interactive presentations.

UNICEF has continued to strengthen the capacity of Grozny's Prosthetic Workshop through the provision of trainings for some of its staff. Four specialists from the workshop commenced their training on orthopedic footwear production on 15 July in Vladikavkaz (North Ossetia). The training will be completed on 24 December. Another training is being held in St. Petersburg (from 7 July-30 September) for an orthopedist from Grozny. This training will be covering modern methods of prosthetic-orthopedic assistance.

In July the Vladikavkaz Prosthetic Workshop reported the production of 8 new prostheses, 6 pairs of orthopedic shoes and 4 tutors, with financial support from the Governments of Germany and the Netherlands, as well as from the Dutch National Committee for UNICEF. In addition, three prostheses have been repaired and 9 new patients have been registered for receiving treatment. In the framework of its physical rehabilitation program, UNICEF continued its cooperation with the Republican Clinical hospital and Minga: 16 disabled children from Groznenskiy district of Chechnya have been receiving treatment, including ultrasound therapy, electrophoresis and magneto-therapy.

Psychosocial assistance for mine/UXO victims and disabled children continues to be provided by UNICEF through CARE, which is managing individual and group counseling as well as cultural and recreational activities in the premises of the Library for the Blind in Grozny. The "Believe in You" Centre, established by CARE, creates positive opportunities that encourage the participation of disabled children and increase their self-esteem. Vocational trainings on tailoring and computers are also being introduced, together with out-reach counseling for parents.

The Chechen branch of the All-Russian Society of the Disabled has continued to offer vocational training on tailoring for 20 disabled girls in Grozny. The society reported on the high motivation of students, which are trained by two teachers. The Ministry of Social Protection and Labor and the Society for the Disabled itself will be seeking future employment opportunities for the graduates upon completion of the course. In addition, a vocational training on carpentry for mine/UXO victims, implemented with financial support from the Dutch National Committee for UNICEF and DFID, continues to be attended by almost 30 students from Achkhoy and Urus-Martanovskiy districts (Chechnya).

A new football team of 8 mine/UXO survivors, established by Voice of the Mountains in Achkhoy-Martanovskiy district, has started to train with the existing football team ("Lamanan Az") in the building of Orgtekhnika in Grozny. VoM is currently trying to officially register "Lamanan Az" as a sport club, which would allow the team to participate in football tournaments in the Russian Federation and receive support from the Ministry of Sport of Chechnya.

Somalia

UNICEF Somalia facilitated a training workshop on MRE conducted by the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), from 10th to 12th August in Hargeisa, North-West Somalia (Somaliland). The goal of the training was to strengthen the understanding of mine-action stakeholders about successful mine-risk education tools and strategies and how to be able to practically integrate mine-risk education into their work. Participants included representatives from the Somaliland Mine Action Center, the Somaliland National Demining Agency, the EOD teams, the Ministries of Information, Health and Information, as well as from international and civil society organizations involved in mine-risk education activities.

The training initiative precedes the upcoming launching of a MRE project in Somaliland, to be implemented by Handicap International starting in October 2004, in close partnership with and with financial support from UNICEF. The project's main objective is to contribute to the reduction of mines/UXO related accidents in the affected communities of North West Somalia by providing an adequate and effective exposure to mine-risk education messages to most at-risk groups (children and adults herders from age group 5-29 years of affected communities in Awdal, Togdheer, Sahil and Galbeed regions).

Sudan

Northern Sudan: From 5-7 July a three-day proposal writing and report writing workshop was conducted by the MRE Coordinator. A total of 24 persons from NGOs, the National Mine Action Office and the Ministry of Humanitarian Aid Coordination participated.

In light of the anticipated peace agreement in Sudan, there is an expected increase in the movement of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Khartoum to their places of origin. In an attempt to prepare the IDPs for a safe return home, UNICEF is working with IOM, Care Sudan and a national NGO Friends of Peace and Development to deliver key messages to them in Khartoum through a public education campaign. Some 25,000 IDPs have already benefited from a MRE program conducted in 2003.

Southern Sudan: During the month of July/August the main Mine Risk Education activities were focused on training and mainstreaming of mine issues into development and return. A Mine Risk Education training module has been developed by the South Sudan Regional Mine Action Office (SSRMAO) to help people working in the area of return to consider the mine/UXO threat. The

module will mainstream mine issues into all sectors in UNICEF as well as other NGOs. The module has been field tested in the UNICEF child protection training (TOT) as well as other TOT trainings and workshops which targeted local authorities, community leaders, NGOs and other SRT (Sustainable Return Team) group.

In the same period, the Mine Risk Education Steering Committee met to review the MRE materials and resources which were developed during the MRE curriculum development workshop held on 17th to 22nd June 2004 in Rumbek. The aim of the meeting was to develop a core mine risk education curriculum, a MRE section for the Secretariat of Education's Life Skills series, a stand alone MRE course and core MRE messages to be used in the southern Sudan, including garrison towns and within IDP and refugee camps. The Steering Committee after the meeting developed an implementation and training plan for the resources in four regions of the new Sudan (Bahr El Ghazel, Upper Nile, Equatoria and Nuba Mountains) as well as discussing MRE related issues on sustainable return and how best they can be mainstreamed.

Sri Lanka

Mine risk education, survivor assistance and the advocacy activities are being implemented continuously from last year as usual without interruption. The community based MRE was intensified aiming to reduce Mine/UXO accidents' rate at the third quarter of the year. Main Activities which took place in the past month were:

Mine Risk Education: UNICEF Sri Lanka hosted a 10 day study tour for the Ethiopian Mine Action Office. The objective of this tour was to learn and share experiences with another affected country where there is an MRE program well established. The main topics of discussion were: Management and coordination of MRE, Quality Assurance and Monitoring, Material development, Survey needs assessments, IMSMA and surveillance system and Field work.

UNICEF submitted for approval to the National Steering Committee on mine Action, the final draft framework for MRE national standards.

UNICEF continues to provide support to the national Education system for the insertion of MRE in school curriculum. The program is now expanding to the border areas in three additional provinces. While new sets of MRE educational material is under production, the first Training-of-Trainers session for master teachers was recently conducted.

The Landmine/UXO Safety Briefings trainings to aid and development staff in all regional mine action centers were intensified. This was due to recent accident that killed three road workers who entered into a marked dangerous area. Over 170 participants attended trainings during July, among them Engineers, Supervisors, Drivers and Project Coordinators who are continuously working in the vicinity of minefields.

In the peninsula of Jaffna a new agreement was signed between UNICEF and the local rehabilitation center. Through the new agreement, rehabilitation assistance to approximately 200 landmines/UXO survivors will be provided.

The Landmine Ban Advocacy Forum, which consists of international donors, humanitarian aid agencies, NGOs, UNDP and UNICEF, organized a 'conference on ban landmines' in Colombo on July 14, 2004. The forum called on the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers to sign treaties Banning Anti-Personnel Landmines. The presence of media, government officials, military officers and diplomatic corps contributed to the success of the event. As part of the activity, new posters and stickers (60,000 and 70,000 respectively) were produced and will be widely distributed.