

MASG

Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

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1. Unofficial Minutes of the Mine Action Support Group Meeting, 18 February 2004, New York

1. After welcoming the different speakers, the chairman introduced the subject of the day's meeting: evaluations, one of the priorities outlined in the non-paper. The chairman expressed his wish to move – through a discussion on the basis of the presentations - towards a better understanding of MASG on how to evaluate mine action projects in the field. The agenda for the meeting was adopted.

2. Alistair Craib, DFID EOD and Demining Advisor, first explained the DFID's approach to evaluation (mandatory vs. optional). The optional evaluations are the majority, they have no set format, and the ToR are written according to the format. In order to reduce the so-called "donor tourism", DFID would be willing to announce its evaluations in order to see if cooperation with other donors was possible.

Secondly, Mr. Craib raised three issues that are still valid from the joint evaluation (UK, Denmark) in Afghanistan in 2002: narrow management pyramid of MACA; overwhelming funding needs and residual liability. Thirdly, Mr. Craib presented the DFID evaluation in Mozambique. As shown by the Mozambique experience, the MASG could play an important role (worldwide) in improving the inter-donor cooperation as well as in coordinating the efforts of trying to improve the commitment of the host-government.

3. Katrin Kinzelbach, UNDP, provided a general overview of its approach to evaluations. UNDP evaluations are results-oriented; they help UNDP to learn from the experience, to make more informed decisions and to reposition itself. The results are hierarchized. In a mine related project, the lowest level of results would be the question if a mine action strategy has been prepared, whereas the highest level would be the question whether the impact of mines has been reduced.

Evaluations of UNDP projects are not mandatory anymore, whereas the reporting is. Role of indicators: They can only indicate that change is happening, but they do not explain why or how the change occurs. They can provide early warning when things go wrong. Specific mine action evaluations by UNDP in Bosnia, Laos, Yemen and Croatia had a specific focus, but the major key issues are the same (relevance, impact, sustainability, national ownership).

4. John Flanagan of UNMAS talked about the evaluation of its program in Kosovo, the first program executed under UNMAS auspices. Four criteria were used in the assessment: Did the programme have a positive impact on the population and institutions of Kosovo? Did the mine action programme adhere to the international standards? Did the UN manage the programme effectively? Was the support of the international community adequate?

These criteria raised numerous questions, particularly the one concerning the acceptable residual level of threat. Seen from today's perspective, the most important recommendations from the report are: Coordination between the UN and the donor community should be encouraged at an early stage; inclusion of a robust mine action programme into the mandate and the budget of PKO; integration of standard language in every peace agreement concerning the disclosure of minefields, booby-traps etc. These recommendations have been implemented since.

5. Ian Mansfield explained that the GICHD intends to make the evaluation of mine action programmes part of its core business. The GICHD is already conducting various evaluations and is also contributing to a standardised approach to evaluations through various publications, the IMSMA, the IMAS and a framework on Mine Action Legislation. A handbook on evaluations will be published by the GICHD in the coming weeks.

A study on the evaluation of mine action programmes, which shall provide a framework (as an IMAS) of techniques for the evaluation of mine action programmes is ongoing.

There is also a possibility that the GICHD might function as a repository, a follow-up to evaluations could thus be coordinated more efficiently.

6. One of the issues raised in the discussion following the presentations was the commitment (and lack thereof) of host-governments. According to DFID there is a role for MASG in addressing matters at government level in a joint approach (e.g. Eritrea experience).

Germany raised the issue of how to deal with sensitive information contained in evaluations. According to DFID there is the possibility of a restricted annex which would not be circulated and would allow the report otherwise to be shared. UNICEF has Standards for mine risk education evaluations; for their evaluations the transparency issue is always negotiated. As possible themes for thematic evaluations the following subjects have been pointed out by DFID: the merits of capacity-building in mine action; the application of risk management in mine action; an evaluation of the management training courses for national staff.

7. In the discussion following the meeting, the four presenters have pointed out two areas where the MASG could play a role in evaluations: MASG as a forum where a joint donors' approach towards host-governments is discussed; MASG as a "clearing house" for inter-donor cooperation and coordination where donors can share information on future or past evaluations, their aspirations and frustrations. If findings are presented among members, the problem of transparency can be partly overcome. At the same time donors could be made aware of the necessary and possibly coordinated follow-up to an evaluation.

8. Concerning the Angola evaluation to be financed by some MASG-members, UNDP presented the different possibilities outlined in the letter circulated on 9 February (separate MASG-evaluation vs. combined evaluation UNDP-MASG).

UNDP's wish is to approach the evaluation as broadly as possible by integrating an examination of the institutional structures and an impact survey. The evaluation should be ready by 1 May. Germany stated its interest to participate and to contribute financially. UK and Netherlands had not taken any final decision yet, while Portugal was interested to participate in the drafting of the ToR. It has been decided that a task force among those members interested in co-financing the evaluation was to be set up. The task force would as soon as possible (together with UNDP) elaborate the ToR and decide on the financial shares.

9. The chairman then informed the MASG about the latest developments concerning the visit of the Geneva based Resource Mobilization Contact Group (RMCG) to the World Bank. The World Bank has answered favourably to the request and a meeting between a RMCG-task force and the World Bank shall be organized no later than the June Intersessionals. The chair of the MASG has been invited to take part in this visit.

According to the chair, duplication between the MASG and the RCMG in the wish to get the World Bank engaged and to discuss the link between mine action and development can thus be avoided.

10. The revised Draft Calendar for 2004 was adopted.

The meeting was closed at 12:10 p.m.

2. Agenda for the MASG Meeting on 19 March 2004, Geneva

1. Welcome address by the Chair

2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Introductory Presentations

3.1. Mine Action on the peace and security agenda

3.2. Demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) and mine action

4. Discussion and Break

5. Thematic Presentations

5.1. Mine Action and the Peace Process in Sri Lanka

5.2. Mine Action and the Peace Process in Sudan

5.3. Case Studies Sri Lanka and Sudan (PRIO)

6. Discussion and Conclusion

7. AOB

MASG Calendar for 2004
28 February 2004

MONTH	OBJECTIVE	TOPIC	SPEAKERS	OBJECTIVES & (ANNOTATIONS)
January 22	General	Agenda-setting for 2004	- Chair, Amb. Staehelin - UNMAS, Martin Barber - UNDP, Sayed Aqa	- 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	* Lessons learned on evaluations & proposals for future evaluations	- UK (DFID) on Afghanistan evaluation - UNMAS on Kosovo evaluation - UNDP on generic terms of reference - GICHD on plans for evaluation service - UNDP on evaluation in Angola	- MASG decides on scope of Angola evaluation - Task Force will define ToR - MASG endorses revised calendar <i>(9 – 12 Feb: Standing Committee Intersessionals in Geneva)</i> <i>(10 Feb: Meeting of Resource Mobilisation Contact Group in Geneva)</i>
March 19-Geneva	Peace Processes	*Integrating mine action into peace processes	- Mine Action on the peace and security agenda (UNMAS) - National & UN programme coordinators Sudan and Sri Lanka - Case Studies (PRIO)	- MASG members commit to pushing for MA funding at Oslo donors' conference on Sudan which follows March JAM <i>(7th Programme Directors meeting Geneva 15-18 Mar)</i>
April 27	Development Funding needs and priorities	* Integrating mine action into Bretton Woods institutions * Comparative analysis of donor and programme funding priorities and Portfolio shortfalls * Lessons learned on Portfolio and local donor coordination processes	- World Bank, ADB - UNDP - Mine-affected state [TBC] - UNMAS, UNDP or UNICEF - UNMAS	- encourage MASG members to include mine action in ECOSOC interventions <i>(Meeting of ECOSOC with Bretton Woods institutions)</i> - MASG takes note of Portfolio shortfalls
May 17-24	Evaluations	MASG visit to Angola		- Approx. 12 MASG participants visit Angola (on the basis of an evaluation carried out beforehand)
June 10	Development	* UNDP study on mine action and development * Mainstreaming Strategy * NGO perspective * Follow-up on visit to World Bank	- UNDP - Canada [TBC] - [TBC]	- MASG reviews UNDP study recommendations - Conclusions can be used as arguments/tools for World Bank board-members as well as for national development agents. <i>(14-25 Jun: UNDP Board meeting)</i> <i>(21–25 Jun: Standing Committee Intersessionals in Geneva)</i> <i>(28-29 June: Review Conf. Prep Comm in Geneva)</i>
July	Funding needs and priorities	* Comparative analysis of programme funding priorities and Portfolio shortfalls	- UNMAS, UNDP or UNICEF	- MASG takes note of Portfolio shortfalls, and makes appropriate funding commitments <i>(xx Jul: Humanitarian segment of ECOSOC substantive session)</i>
August				Summer holidays/ no meeting
September	Peace Processes	* Briefings by DPA, DPKO and UNDG working group on transition * Fafo AIS/Landmine Action research project on the peacebuilding impact of mine action	- [TBD] - [TBC]	- MASG discusses integration of mine action into peacemaking and peace-building processes and into mission planning.
October				No meeting
November	Evaluations Funding needs and priorities	* Review of the year * MASG report on Angola visit and evaluation * Panel Discussion * Portfolio launch * Report on Portfolio and local donor coordination processes	- [TBD]	- reinforced MASG <i>(29 Nov – 3 Dec: Nairobi 5-year review of APMBC)</i>
December		* MASG Field Trip 2005 * Calendar 2005	- [TBD]	

3. UPDATES

3.1 Update from UNMAS

Policy Coordination

General policy

The working level Inter Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) met on 24 February. The participants were briefed on the February 2004 Intersessionals and the 1st Preparatory Meeting of the First Review Conference of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty. The participants discussed the draft UN advocacy strategy for mine action to be endorsed at the IACG-MA Principals' meeting on 13 April 2004, an IACG-MA common position on mines other than antipersonnel mines (MOTAPM), measures to strengthen collaboration between UNHCR and the DPKO. UNMAS also provided an update on the DRC. The next IACG-MA meeting will be convened on 30 March.

Portfolio Process

The Portfolio review process has been launched, and an official revision of the Portfolio will be available online and on CD-ROM in April 2004.

To request copies, please call +1-212 963-8495. A link to the Portfolio from the www.mineaction.org home page has been established, and searches can be performed by country. A newly-contracted New York-based web developer (see below) has begun its work on upgrading the on-line Portfolio to allow for user-friendly and targeted searches.

For questions/feedback on the Portfolio please call +1-212 963-9407.

Advocacy and treaty implementation

The Standing Committees to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and the First Preparatory Meeting for the Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention convened from 9 to 13 February 2004 in Geneva. The UN Partners (UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF) gave presentations on the revised UN mine action strategy for 2001-2005, victim assistance, and the status of UN-supported programmes.

An UN proposal that a template for national plans form the basis for comparability of data across States Parties was agreed. The draft template is being prepared for clearance by the Friends of the Chair, and will be distributed to all States Parties. During the Intersessionals, UNMAS facilitated discussion on methodologies for casualty data collection. The IACG-MA this month agreed to encourage all UN-supported mine action programmes to assist States Parties with their Article 7 reports (due on 30 April).

The UNMAS Gender Consultant visited Eritrea to examine gender issues in mine action as part of the study on gender mainstreaming and the creation of gender guidelines for mine action. The visit to Eritrea was the first in a series of programme visits as part of the study.

Information

The UNMAS Information Unit contracted a new web developer which has begun completing tasks started by the former developer. A new search function and a "My E-MINE" feature on www.mineaction.org is being introduced which allows users to request automatic alerts whenever new content is entered on pre-selected topics.

The Unit met with Eric Falt, Director of the Nairobi UN Information Centre, to prepare a communications plan for the Nairobi Review Conference scheduled for 29 November – 3 December 2004.

New contributions in the VTF 1 December 2003 through 5 March 2004

December Donor

Date received	Amount/Earmarking
02 December 2003	\$1,896,447 (Iraq)
05 December 2003	\$482,000 (Sudan)
05 December 2003	\$639,275 (Afghanistan)
05 December 2003	\$426,662 (Afghanistan)
05 December 2003	\$40,000 (Africa)
16 December 2003	\$3,807,760 (Afghanistan)
18 December 2003	\$407,169 (HQ Coordination)
24 December 2003	\$49,680 (Sudan)

January Donor

Date received	Amount/Earmarking
05 January 2004	\$846,381 (Afghanistan)
07 January 2004	\$510,873 (HQ Coordination)
21 January 2004	\$119,975 (Lebanon)

February Donor

Date received	Amount/Earmarking
05 February 2004	\$128,469 (Sudan)
05 February 2004	\$125,600 (Advocacy)
12 February 2004	\$20,000 (Technology)
17 February 2004	\$100,000 (Eritrea/Ethiopia)
19 February 2004	\$246,660 (HQ Coordination)
25 February 2004	\$10,000 (Iraq)
26 February 2004	\$50,000 (Eritrea/Ethiopia)

March Donor

Date received	Amount/Earmarking
02 March 2004	\$246,617(Afghanistan)

New confirmed pledges obtained during the month of February:

Canada (DFAIT)	US\$ 61,900	Technology (2nd installment)
Japan	US\$ 409, 836	Unearmarked
Roots of Peace	US\$ 70,000	Afghanistan

Technology

Preparations are underway for the forthcoming Mine Action Programme National Directors and Technical Advisors Conference in March. At this conference there will be a Technology Workshop which will cover locally conceived and adapted “good ideas” in demining. The aim is to share these with others and encourage simple initiatives.

UNMAS coordinated the analysis of lessons learned in mine action gathered by James Madison University's Mine Action Information Centre.

UNMAS-SUPPORTED PROGRAMMES

Rapid Response Plan

Following the activation of the Rapid Response Plan (RRP) in Iraq, UNMAS commissioned an independent evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan and recommendations for future implementation. The evaluator's draft report has just been received and is being reviewed.

An RRP Lessons Learned Workshop with mine action stakeholders (including UN agencies and NGOs) is planned for late April.

Iraq

UNMAS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with UNDP, transferring lead responsibility for UN Mine Action Assistance in Iraq from UNMAS to UNDP. UNMAS/UNOPS procured equipment has been transferred to UNDP for continued use in mine action activities in Iraq. UNMAS will continue to support the UNDP-led programme in a number of areas.

UNDP has assumed the leadership of the mine action sector in Amman working closely with UNICEF, the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), the National Mine Action Authority (NMAO), and the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) to develop a strategy for future UN assistance to mine action in Iraq.

The Emergency Survey conducted by Mines Advisory Group (MAG) is continuing in the Northern Governorates and Mine Tech has continued its explosive ordnance disposal and manual clearance operations in the Southern Governorate of Missan.

The Mine Tech contract has been extended by one month to 20 March 2004 for the provision of mine action capabilities until local capacity is established. Deteriorating security in the Basrah region has forced Danish Church Aid (DCA) to close its operations in the area. DCA has now completed its project, and is preparing to depart from Kuwait.

Afghanistan

Four mine clearance personnel from the Afghan national NGO OMAR were killed in an ambush on their convoy in Farah Province of western Afghanistan. This attack led to the suspension of operations in the vicinity of the incident, with mine action assets being relocated to more secure areas to continue work. An investigation into the attack is underway, in coordination with the UN security representatives.

Other security restrictions remain in place in the southern provinces of Ghazni, Zabol and areas of Oruzgan, as well as the eastern provinces of Paktika and Paktia. Assets previously deployed in these areas remain relocated to other sites to enable continued operations in safer locations. The Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA) continues its close monitoring of the security situation.

Negotiations with NGO implementing partners are almost complete for the continuation of their funding past the current conclusion of most of their agreements at the end of March 2004. An UNMAS Programme Officer was deployed to oversee this process throughout February.

It remains the intent to extend their operations until March 2005, in line with the Afghan National Development Budget Framework.

Additionally, the UNMAS Chief of Programme Support travelled to Afghanistan at the end of February to conduct consultations with the Afghan Government, United Nations partners, donors and implementing NGOs to plan the transition to greater government responsibility for mine action. He was joined in these meetings by a representative of the UNDP Mine Action Team in New York. As a result of a meeting of the Mine Action Consultative Group, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a Task Force to lead this process was established, with representation from all partners.

UNIFIL - Southern Lebanon

The United Arab Emirates-funded Operation Emirates Solidarity (OES)/Area 5 continues to be effective at clearing minefields in the Marjayoune and Jezzine areas. Since project initiation in May 2002, a total of 4,850,000 square meters of contaminated land has been cleared and handed back to the communities of southern Lebanon, with 70,000 mine/UXO items already located and destroyed.

The BACTEC demining company was able to clear all contracted tasks for OES Phase 3/Area 5. After a Christmas stand-down and gradual redeployment, the first BACTEC Technical Survey Teams commenced work on 19 January with all assets accredited and operational by 4 February 2004. Additional identified tasks have been refined through a technical survey carried out in winter.

While discussions with the government of the UAE are underway to seek further support for OES, planning for Area 6 continues with information and data collected from the Lebanese Armed Forces being rationalised with existing IMSMA data. The past two months have seen a consolidation of the majority of the targets, and a realistic initial target list is now emerging. The first Post Clearance Review report of the first section of the OES-cleared area, was finalised and distributed by the Mine Action Coordination Centre in southern Lebanon to embassies and UNDP. This will allow potential donors to make funding available to rehabilitation and development needs identified in the report.

MONUC - Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Locally-recruited deminers from the Swiss Foundation for Demining (FSD) mobile emergency mine/UXO clearance teams started working at the end of January 2004 in the Bunia area (Ituri District). They will operate through July 2004, thus allowing the Mine Action Coordination Centre-DRC to address the emergency humanitarian requirements identified in the Ituri District and to conduct emergency technical surveys.

Within the coming weeks, the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA) will initiate emergency survey activities within mine-affected areas, starting in Ituri. Danish Church Aid (DCA) will deploy by mid-March in the Kalemie area (Northern Katanga) to initiate a mine risk education (MRE) project. However, assessment missions, which were recently conducted by the MACC/DRC, along with UN agencies and local NGOs, in the Equateur, Kasai and Kivu Provinces, have identified hundreds of mine/UXO victims, showing that the problem is more serious than initially anticipated, and that significant mine action assets are required as soon as possible to address the most urgent humanitarian needs in those regions.

A UNICEF MRE specialist has been co-located within MACC/DRC to develop an MRE plan of action. MONUC is concentrating its efforts in eastern DRC, and has identified the re-opening of major roads as a key priority, to further enhancing its deployment and to allow for economic rehabilitation of eastern regions.

Mechem of South Africa is still continuing verification and clearance of the road Bunia-Beni (Ituri); they have now reached the city of Komanda, and the operation is expected to be completed by mid-May 2004. Mechem will then address additional requirements as identified by MONUC in the Ituri District and possibly in the Kivus.

Sudan

On 6 February following the result of the competitive tender Mechem was contracted for the provision of a route clearance and verification capacity for the Lokichokio-Rumbek route, via Kapoeta. The capacity comprises two route survey teams using an integrated detection system mounted on a mine-protected vehicle, two integrated explosive detection dogs and manual route clearance teams and one technical survey team.

Mechem has mobilized into South Sudan and is currently undergoing preparations and accreditation by the National Mine Action Office (NMAO) to begin survey and clearance operations in March.

On 18 February following the result of the competitive tender Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) was contracted for the provision of a Technical Survey capacity in the Nuba Mountains region. The capacity consists of four teams and is currently mobilizing into Sudan to start survey operations in March.

The Crossline office was established in Nairobi, Kenya, to facilitate a joint approach to mine action across Sudan, the initiative has already proven successful as a common accreditation system has been adopted by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the Government of Sudan. Planning is underway for Sudan Rapid Response Plan (RRP) to be invoked upon signature of the Peace Agreement.

UNMEE - Eritrea

There were no reports of mine accidents in the TSZ or areas adjacent during the month of February. The UNMEE MACC continued to coordinate the UNMEE Force demining assets, the MACC road clearance contractor (MECHEM) as well as the MACC Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) and Mine Risk Education (MRE) Teams. Force demining assets and the MACC EOD team cleared a total of 70,965 square meters and 5 km of roads, destroying 74 anti-tank landmines and 12 UXO in the process. MECHEM proved an additional 270 km of roads.

UNMAS and UNOPS HQ visited Eritrea to review the current status of operations, implementation and support of the UNMEE mine action programme and UNDP's Mine Action Capacity Building Programme (MACBP). An Evaluation Team from the Swedish International Cooperation Agency (SIDA) visited the Mission area to evaluate SIDA-funded support by the Swedish Rescue Service Agency (SRSA) to the UNMEE MACC as well as to UNDP's Mine Action Capacity Building Project. The UNMEE MACC visited Addis Ababa to establish a Mine Risk Education (MRE) Field Team consisting of three Ethiopian experts to support clearance in the TSZ.

It is hoped the project can be finalized and implementation begin by early April 2004.

UNMEE MACC is seeking funds to cover MECHEM's road clearance in May and June 2004, until UNMEE assessed contributions are made available at the beginning of July.

UNFICYP – Cyprus

Work continued on development of a clearance project with the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between UNFICYP and UNDP that details their cooperation on the demining project in Cyprus. UNFICYP is currently negotiating with the responsible Greek Cypriot authorities on matters related to establishment and operations.

UNMAS is working with the International Trust Fund (ITF) to confirm sufficient funding to begin operations in early 2004.

BURUNDI

UNMAS participated in a DPKO assessment mission to Burundi from 21 to 29 February 2004. The objective was to estimate the possible impact of the landmine problem on the deployment and implementation of a potential peacekeeping mission, and to assess its impact on the humanitarian situation.

The key findings and recommendations are as follows.

- Nature of the problem

In 1998 an inter-agency assessment mission had concluded that in Burundi “the presence of landmines is real and contributes to the state of insecurity, but does not constitute a major humanitarian and socio-economic concern”. The landmine and unexploded ordnance contamination has seriously aggravated since then, particularly during the last years of conflict. The exact scope and nature of the landmine problem is still difficult to assess, as none of the parties involved have kept any record of their respective mine laying activities. Therefore the problem will need to be further assessed. However, it is certain that most of the belligerents have been laying landmines.

Considering the nature of the conflict, the mine threat would be constituted of more or less extensive barrier minefields along the border with Tanzania, in particular in the Provinces of Makamba, particularly in the southern tip of the province, and Rutana and Ruyigi. Border minefields also exist along the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo in the Province of Citiboke. Defensive small-scale minefields have been laid in the vicinity of military positions and of internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. Mines have also been used for harassment and nuisance purpose, and to prevent access to certain areas, in particular into the National Park of Kibura, Province of Bubanza.

In addition, there have been more extensive minefields in Bujumbura Rural and in the immediate vicinity of Bujumbura City since the attack of July 2003. Those minefields are reportedly neither marked nor recorded, but are mainly made up of antipersonnel landmines. In addition, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and booby-traps are undoubtedly increasing the contamination in many areas where fighting took place.

Statistics on mine accidents and victims are the only reliable indicator of the existence of the landmine problem. A survey on mine victims conducted by UNICEF indicates 230 casualties due to landmines and UXO in 2001 and 2002. Casualty figures provided by ICRC report a minimum of 80 casualties in 2003. An increase of mine victims has been noticed within recent months, following the voluntary return of IDP and refugees.

The actual number of accidents and casualties is certainly higher, when considering that records do not include casualties among belligerents, victims who died before reaching a hospital, and those who reached hospitals in Tanzania. The real impact of the landmine contamination will be known when emergency survey activities have been implemented. According to available information and data relating to victims and mine accidents, the threat appears to be serious to the population, particularly to the returning populations and the associated humanitarian relief efforts.

- Positive developments

As a result of the advocacy activities of UNICEF and of the Geneva Call, recent positive political developments would now allow for the development of effective mine action in Burundi. The Government of Burundi ratified the Anti Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (APMB) in October 2003 and will become a State Party to the APMB Treaty in April 2004.

The CNN-FDD signed the Deed of Commitment of the Geneva Call and confirmed their commitment to comply with the terms of the APMB treaty and to cooperate in mine action. Similar negotiations are still underway with the FNL, which is not involved in the peace process yet.

The "Ceasefire agreement between the Burundi Transitional Government and the Burundi Armed Political Parties and Movements" calls for "a complete ban on any mine-laying operations and the hindering of operations to remove mines". The Government of Burundi included proposals for mine action within its National Programme for the Rehabilitation of Affected People, which was presented at a donors meeting in Brussels in January 2004.

A workshop on the APBM Treaty was organized in Bujumbura on 20 February 2004 by the International Committee to Ban Landmines. Most of the mine action stakeholders attended the event, and several donors (in particular Belgium, Canada and the European Union) and international NGOs expressed their interest for funding and implementing mine action projects in Burundi.

Existing mine action capacities

A UNICEF sponsored mine risk education (MRE) project is being implemented within the five most affected areas of the country, and Handicap International Belgium (HIB) is supporting three victim rehabilitation centres. A national coordinator for MRE has been designated, and a national institutional framework for mine action is under consideration. However, current mine action capacities in Burundi are estimated to be insufficient, in particular in the areas of coordination, information management, technical expertise and operational capacities, to deal effectively with the problem without substantial support from the international community.

In this respect, HIB stands ready to implement MRE projects, in country, and possibly within the refugee camps of Tanzania, as well as emergency survey activities. Both the Danish Church Aid and the Swiss Foundation for Demining are looking into development of MRE and/or technical survey activities.

- UNMAS recommendations

As part of a future UN peacekeeping operation in Burundi, UNMAS is preparing a mine action programme in order to provide mine action support to the operational needs of the peacekeeping mission, and to provide mine action support to the governmental and humanitarian efforts, including the repatriation of refugees and IDP.

This will include the provision of technical advice, assistance in coordination, information management, capacity-building and resource mobilization for mine action.

Pending the establishment of a mine action assistance programme to Burundi as part of a peacekeeping mission, urgent needs for international assistance have been identified, particularly in the fields of information management, needs assessment, prioritization of activities, technical expertise for the development of MRE and survey projects, and coordination of efforts. UNMAS is currently planning to deploy as quickly as possible a core mine action coordination/technical advisory capacity to Burundi.

The immediate priorities will be:

- Establishment of a coordination mechanism;
- Establishment of an information management system for mine action (IMSMA) to collect, record, analyze and disseminate mine/UXO related information;
- Technical assistance for implementation of emergency mine/UXO surveys, technical mine/UXO surveys, and MRE activities;
- Assistance in resource mobilization;
- Assistance in development of national capacities, including institutional arrangements and coordination.

3.2 Update from UNDP

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

AFRICA REGION

Eritrea

- Eritrean Demining Operations Manual Clearance Teams (MCT) continue operations in the Temporary Security Zone in minefields that are restricting the return of Internally Displaced Persons.
- The MCT have initiated joint clearance with RONCO Mine Detection Dogs, a process that is significantly expediting the clearance operations.
- Six Mine Risk Education (MRE) teams are fully functional and are continuing to conduct field operations.
- Conduct a countrywide assessment of needs for mechanical assistance and determine options to provide a mechanical capability.
- Install IMSMA at the HQ of the Eritrean Demining Authority.
- Continue analysis of the disability survey conducted by the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare and assist the Ministry in providing access to prosthetics and rehabilitation centers.

Mine Action Capacity Building Programme:

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| • Canada: | US\$ 727,836 |
| • European Commission: | US\$ 1,051,643 |
| • EC (pledged for LIS) | US\$ 684,000 |
| • EC (pledged for MAP 04) | US\$ 1,230,000 |
| • Netherlands: | US\$ 500,000 |

Ethiopia

- The last issue of the MASG newsletter stated that the Ethiopian Mine Action Office has contracted a mine detection dog capability and procured mini-flails to support its manual clearance activities. In fact, EMAO is currently tendering for two clearance contracts, one for a mine detection dog capability and one for mechanical clearance support.

Mozambique

Key Achievements

- Building on funding received from Italy, and pending contributions from France, Switzerland, and Austria, the National Demining Institute (IND) is in the process of recruiting, equipping, and training three regionally based QA teams. For the first time, the Government will have its own QA capacity. This represents both technically and logistically a key opportunity and challenge for the IND in 2004.

- In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, a train-the-trainers MRE program was active in the most highly impacted districts in southern Mozambique. The project is financed through a UNICEF grant and it is expected that 275 teachers will be trained through the project. The challenge remains expanding this pilot project to include all 10 of Mozambique's 10 provinces.

Funding Update

- A second phase funding agreement with Canada for \$900,000 was signed in January which will provide one further year of support for capacity building to the National Demining Institute in the areas of IMSMA, GIS production, planning, and impact assessments. The major emphasis of the second phase of the project will be on supporting IND's two regional offices.
- The EU has provided €1,000,000 to conduct a Technical Survey in the Province of Inhambane and parts of Gaza Province. The project will provide the National Demining Institute (IND) with an accurate picture of the exact location, dimensions, and physical geography of the 77 'highest priority' suspected mined areas (SMAs) in the Provinces of Inhambane and Maputo.
The target beneficiaries are the approximately 150,000 at-risk Mozambicans still living with landmines more than 10 years after the cessation of conflict.

Somalia

Key Challenges

- Passing the Mine Action Policy in both Somaliland & Puntland. Neither of these regions have made any progress on the policy.
- Importation of explosives through Dubai. Currently, Dubai is not accepting trans-shipment of explosives to Puntland.

Key Objectives

- Policy approval in Somaliland & Puntland
- Completion of PMAC Premises
- Completion of PROC for LIS Puntland
- Completion of Refresher training for Somaliland Police EOD Teams
- Start training for Puntland Police EOD Teams

ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Afghanistan

- The last issue of the MASG newsletter stated that the transfer of the mine action programme to the national authorities is scheduled for 2004. In fact, UNMAS and UNDP have recently begun discussions with the Afghan Government and donors in Kabul about effecting such a transfer as soon as practically possible.
- In February 2004, UNMAS and UNDP conducted a joint mission to Afghanistan to discuss issues related to the planned transfer of the programme to the national authorities. As a result, a joint task force has been established to develop a detailed transition plan, which will be presented to the next Mine Action Consultative Group in Kabul in April 2004.

Sri Lanka

- None of the recent political moves, or the fact that peace talks between the government and the LTTE remains stalled, have affected the Sri Lanka Mine Action Programme. All activities continue as before; we will continue to monitor the situation and advise if any change occurs.
- Most agencies carried out refresher and new training programmes for existing and newly recruited personnel before re-deployment, following the break during the monsoon season. In 2004, many of the agencies are expecting to increase their personnel, thus increasing the coverage of high priority areas.

Key Achievements

- The Quality Assurance Consultant contracted by UNDP has completed the Sri Lanka Mine Action Standards (Edition 1) and set up curricula for training of new QA personnel.
- As part of the capacity building process, UNDP and UNICEF also trained the identified focal point for Trincomalee. In addition to this, work plans have been completed for Vavuniya, Mannar and Batticaloa. The Field Working Group (FWG) that comprises all mine action agencies has already had three meetings; the Sri Lanka Mine Action Standards and IMSMA reporting formats have been the focus of the meetings so far.
- As part of its support to mine action operators, UNDP is presently setting up a safety network to enable wider coverage and connectivity for all mine action operators. A transmitter has already been set up at the Area Mine Action Office in Vavuniya. Two others are to be set up at the Jaffna and Killinochchi offices. The local Vavuniya network is already operational while the entire network is expected to be fully operational by end March.
- UNDP IMSMA personnel have recently undergone GIS, Network Sensing and Geo Informatics training. IMSMA continued to be updated with information gathered from field offices, including updates on field-based Mine Risk Education activity.

Key Objectives

- Plans for 2004 include the expansion of mine action activity, both in terms of personnel and area covered. Other activities requiring funding are: impact analysis and verification, assistance to survivors and vocational training for the disabled, and for clearance, survey and marking.

Funding Update

- Canada has provided funding toward another important focus for UNDP in 2004 - advocacy against the use of anti-personnel landmines.
- The Australian government has provided funding for the Future Operations Project implemented by the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD), as well as for UNDP's core mine action activities.
- The combined total of funds required by NGOs, UN agencies and the Sri Lanka Army is approximately USD 15.6 million for 2004.

ARAB STATES REGION

Iraq

Key Achievements

- UNDP is proceeding with plans to provide support inside Iraq through outsourcing. UNMAS and UNDP signed an MOU in February 2004 to transfer the lead responsibility for mine action in Iraq from UNMAS to UNDP. In accordance with this MOU, equipment has been/is being transferred for the use by UNDP and donated to the NMAA.

Key Objectives

The following projects are being developed with the NMAA:

- Institutional capacity building, including training and development of expertise in areas such as governance, policy, management, priority-setting, monitoring and evaluation, development of indigenous capacity and environmental and social safeguards, victim Assistance national policy and framework development in collaboration with developing health and social service national plans.
- Data support for planning, monitoring and evaluation of mine clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance activities.
- Technical and operational capacity building, including training and expertise in areas such as standards and guidelines, national ownership, technical knowledge and linkages with regional and international mine action organizations and activities..

Funding Update

- The EC and Italy have provided generous contributions toward UNDP's mine action capacity building programme in Iraq.
- 44% of funding needs have been fulfilled. An additional US\$5.6 million is required to fully fund the project for 2004.

EUROPE & THE CIS REGION

Azerbaijan

Key Achievements

- In January 2004, upon a request from ARRA (Agency for Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Azerbaijan), the MT&QA Team of ANAMA has identified 45,000 sqm. of mine contaminated area in Giyamadinly village of Agjabedy district. This former battle area is in the priority list of Government's plan for reconstruction and rehabilitation for the IDPs to return. ARRA intends to construct a power line. Because of the area's strategic importance, ANAMA has decided to complete the task as fast as feasible with its own resources.
- About 70% of the construction work on ANAMA's 2nd Regional Office in Khanlar has been completed. The construction of this Regional Office is being funded by the Governments of Azerbaijan, the U.S., EC and Italy, as well as UNDP. It is anticipated that in late-April 2004, the 2nd Regional Office of ANAMA will be fully operational.

3.3 Update from Unicef

Bosnia and Herzegovina

UNICEF support to strengthen Ministries of Education coordination and policy development capacity

Regular coordination meetings and participation of the representatives from the Ministries of Education to the Technical Working Groups are facilitating the development of a common approach to mine risk education (MRE) and are providing a forum for experience sharing. One noticeable result is the invitation by the FBiH Ministry of Education to the Republika Srpska-based NGO, Genesis, to implement their school-based activities in schools of the FBiH.

In addition, UNICEF is preparing research that will provide for a comparative study on the delivery of school-based MRE in different cantons, respective training needs for teachers and other education professionals, children and parents expectations and the impact of child to parents activities.

School based MRE

UNICEF is supporting a project by the local NGO, Genesis, and the Ministry of Education on school-based MRE and disability awareness for young children. The project also pilots discussion groups with adults in which adults participate jointly with local mine action professionals into a participatory mapping and problem solving exercise that results into the development of community mine impact reduction responses.

The NGO facilitators are providing participants with clarification on the prioritisation and planning process for clearance.

In addition, landmine victims living in the community are identified and, when required, referred to a landmine victim assistance agency, Landmine Survivor Network, which is able to assess and address their needs. In 2004, the project is conducting training for teachers in integrating MRE into core education subjects, developing MRE educational materials for teachers as well as pupils, supporting peer education and lobbying.

Community Mine Risk Management and Education

In four municipalities of North East Bosnia, MRE instructors and volunteers work in collaboration with community cluster president and other key community members to assess and address mine-risk. The team also collaborates with 3 demining agencies, facilitating communication between the agency and the community during clearance operations.

In 2004, five round table meetings, hosted by the municipality council, have been held to gather representatives of the communities, the civil protection, municipality and cantonal authority, central and regional BHMACH offices and periodically influential religious leaders. Throughout the working session, issues related to mine risk and impact reduction, which were identified during the initial phase, are addressed.

The participants develop solutions to improve mine action responses or to reduce risks, such as the mobilisation of the agriculture cooperative to make safe land available to farmers until their contaminated land is cleared. The meetings also allow for issues of concern to be raised and increased transparency in the decision making process related to the prioritisation and planning of mine action.

UNICEF Support to strengthen MAC coordination and policy development capacity

UNICEF, through the Mine Action Centre (BHMAC), has facilitated the process of revision and adaptation of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) for MRE to the Bosnian context. Several workshops have been held to gather mine action professionals, representatives of government and non-governmental agencies.

A specific working session gathering the representatives of the different Ministries of Education ensured collaboration by all stakeholders into the final documents. The set of standards is in its final draft form, its finalisation and endorsement by the BiH Government, together with the development of initial related Operations Procedures, is foreseen by April 2004.

Starting off 2004, the BHMAC introduced the integrated information management system for MRE which is based on the findings of participatory information needs assessment carried out at the end of 2002. The database is an integral part of the BiH mine action information system and is linked to the results of the landmine impact survey (LIS).

In late 2003, the BHMAC had started the preliminary work to prepare the revision of the BiH Mine Action Strategy 2001 – 2010. As part of the process of the strategy review, in September 2003, the BHMAC hosted the first mine victim assistance coordination meeting, and in November, the round table in which 25 government and non governmental agencies representatives validated the findings of the Handicap International overview on Landmine Victim Assistance (LMVA) in BiH.

The report is available upon request to the BHMAC or UNICEF. In February, the BHMAC gathered LMVA stakeholders to introduce the LMVA strategy development plan and to provide an introduction to the concept of Disability Creation Process.

In January and February, the BHMAC organised two three-day MRE workshops involving over 50 participants from governmental and non-governmental agencies in a participatory planning exercise resulting in a consensual agreement on strategic objectives, the development of a consolidated logical framework for the overall programme, including an analysis of existing capacities, identification of required external inputs and indicators.

The Italian NGO Intersos in collaboration with the University of Sarajevo is conducting a sociological research on risk perception and behaviour among adult men involved in forestry, agriculture and construction activities. The findings will provide essential input into the situation analysis phase of the strategy review process.

In addition, separate research is being prepared in collaboration with the School of Journalism to assess the role, shortcomings and training needs of media professionals in participating in MRE.

Training

Collaboration between the BHMAC and the Civil Protection has resulted in the participation of the entities Civil Protection senior managers in a BHMAC-run training in MRE. With UNICEF support, the Civil Protection is now organising and delivering training for their middle managers. The Civil Protection in BiH is responsible for emergency response and WOD, clearance of houses and small minefields, and emergency marking.

Northern Caucasus

In February, aiming at the development of UNICEF's community-based approach in mine risk education (MRE), the Chechen State Drama Theatre, jointly with UNICEF's partner - Let's Save the Generation (LSG), started actively working at the establishment of MRE drama circles in Chechnya. Urus-Martanovski district was selected as the start up point.

In parallel, UNICEF's partner, the Voice of the Mountains (VoM) MRE instructors provided instruction for 1,444 schoolchildren from two secondary schools in Argun and one school in Chechen Aul. The team has also started the dissemination of MRE notebooks, booklets and posters, which were recently produced with the financial support of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO).

In light of the fact that mine and UXO incident/casualty data analysis is key for successful programme planning, UNICEF has continued paying special attention to data gathering during February. One hundred twenty-two IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action) forms on mine/UXO casualties have been gathered through a joint effort of three local NGOs working in different districts of Chechnya –VoM, Minga, and LSG.

In order to evaluate the appropriateness of the IMSMA database management, effected by UNICEF through the Voice of the Mountains, the mine action programme invited the IMSMA Integration Officer from the Geneva International Center for the Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), to visit the programme from 17-21 February.

The integration officer has determined that the process in the Northern Caucasus is going in the correct direction with a high level of effectiveness.

UNICEF is continuing the provision of psychosocial assistance to those children affected by mines and UXO. A new group of 18 boys and 12 girls has been enrolled by the local NGO New Education (with supervision of Care Canada) for the psychosocial counseling in the Medico-Psychological Center in Vladikavkaz. Additionally, fifteen mine/UXO child survivors have been registered by the Prosthetic Workshop for the treatment.

Sri Lanka

Continuing its work from 2003, UNICEF Sri Lanka is further strengthening its support to the humanitarian mine action programme in the areas of MRE, survivor assistance and advocacy for the banning of landmines.

Community based activities are now well established in the north and east. Good coverage of internally displaced people (IDPs) and affected communities had already been accomplished, while new border areas are currently under assessment. The television campaign is ongoing island-wide in all three languages; the audio-visual is now used by local agencies while working with individual communities.

The second phase of an MRE impact evaluation study has concluded with around 300 households in Vanni and Jaffna having been interviewed. The final report will be available at the end of March.

As part of the MRE in school programme, students' activity sheets are being distributed to all zone education departments in the north and east. Training for teachers is continuing in the districts of Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar, Batticaloa and Trincomalee.

In UNICEF's main role of providing guidance and technical support for MRE coordination and implementation, the MRE International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) are under the revision and adaptation process.

It is hoped that by June 2004 it will be finalised and fully endorsed by the Sri Lankan programme. After a trial period where the MRE IMSMA was adjusted, it is now fully operational and integrated within the mine action database.

The MRE technical working group (TWG) meetings with all implementing partners have been successfully carried over from last year and the first MRE TWG meeting for 2004 was held in Batticaloa on 12 February. Participants from all MRE agencies in the north and east took part in the day and a half meeting.

The following issues were discussed:

MRE Quality Assurance (QA); MRE IMSMA; adaptation of the MRE international standards; and a common MRE week in all districts. It was decided that the MRE week would be celebrated from 21-27 June.

A landmine/UXO victims' need assessment in the East was launched to assist in the development of a future action plan. The plan will be designed over a longer term and in a more systematic manner.

An advocacy forum, chaired by the Humanitarian Consortium Agencies, has introduced the advocacy strategy for year 2004. The forum is comprised of civil society groups, NGOS, donors, the UN and the SLA.

The Americas and Caribbean Region

Early this year, UNICEF in the Americas and the Caribbean Region (TACRO) received funds from the United Kingdom (DfID) and Sweden (SIDA). These funds are being used to assist in implementing landmine preventive activities in Colombia and Nicaragua, to reduce the risk of accidents produced by landmines.

In Colombia, UNICEF's activities are being developed through the Vice-President of Colombia's Landmines Observatory in coordination with relevant civil society organisations in the most affected regions.

The main activities focus on developing a participatory action plan for mine risk-reduction at municipal level, develop sensitisation activities and risk-reduction activities and advocacy. UNICEF is pleased to announce that the first destruction of landmines took place in Colombia on 1 March 2004 where 3,160 were officially destroyed.

In Nicaragua, UNICEF will be continuing to develop and expand our landmine project in five municipalities of Jinotega and in two municipalities of Nueva Segovia. Jinotega is localised around the biggest landmine field of the country (San Antonio de las Cuchillas), where the Nicaraguan army will be working at least until 2005.

Future activities in Nicaragua, include coordination with key local actors and army local demining units to elaborate a joint plan to spread awareness and provide education messages related to landmine and UXO. Workshops will be developed with community leaders, adolescents, children and teachers. We will also develop participatory meetings in communities and school as well as house-to-house visits.