

MASG

Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

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1. Report of the MASG-Fieldtrip to Sudan

I Objectives

The objective of the mission was for donors to gain first hand insight into the Sudanese mine action program and the related political, technical, logistical, infrastructural, geographical, and climatic challenges on the ground. The following dimensions were of particular importance to donors: assessment of ongoing mine action activities and their continuity; activities of different UN agencies on the ground; developments in relation to the establishment of UNMIS and the use of demining assets of UNMIS; national capacity and institution development; priorities for future funding.

II Program of the visit (*see also attached agenda*)

The first day in **Khartoum**, at the UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO), the MASG-delegation was welcomed by Jim Pansegrouw who is the Chief Technical Advisor to the Government of Sudan and SPLM and at the same time Programme Manager for the UN Mine Action Programme for which he directly reports to the Deputy SRSG. The MASG then heard an address by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Mr. Ibrahim Mahmood Hamid and a briefing by Paul Heslop, Chief of Operations and Planning. Subsequently the Director of the National Mine Action Office, Mr. Hamid Ahmed Abdelaleem, gave a presentation on the mine action program in Sudan. In the afternoon the donors met with the SRSG, Mr. Jan Pronk, the DSRSG, Mr. Manuel Aranda da Silva, Representatives from UNICEF and international and national NGOs.

The second day, the delegation travelled to **Kadugli**, where it received briefings by the Regional Technical Advisor, Simon Porter and the head of the Joint Military Commission (JMC), Brigadier General Jan Erik Wilhelmsen. After a succulent lunch at the JMC Cafeteria, the MASG delegation took a helicopter to **Andulo** to visit the DCA task. Donors were then flown to **Rumbek** where they met with the Director of the New Sudan Mine Action Directorate, Jurkuch Barach Jurkuch and other senior SPLM members.

After a (voluntary) city tour of Rumbek the following morning, the MASG received a briefing by Steve Robinson, Regional Technical Advisor for the Southern Region. Mr. Jurkuch was also present and offered additional comments. After that, the delegation left for **Yei** where it was transported in a "Caspir" to the Mechem clearing project, as well as to the FSD site and a MRE-coordination meeting between MAG and representatives from local NGOs. That same afternoon the group of donors returned to Khartoum (through Juba and El Obeid).

On the final day in **Khartoum**, there was a debriefing with the CTA and the Director of the NMAO, as well as a reception at the Swiss residence, where the head of delegation (Ambassador Chesnel from France) presented the delegation's concluding remarks to a group of representatives from Embassies in Khartoum as well as the UN and ICRC.

The agenda as such was very packed. Thanks to the excellent organization by the UNMAO and the chartered flight that was put at the delegation's disposal by UNMIS, in little time many projects could be visited and information collected, and, most importantly: swift "cross-line" movements were possible.

III Highlights

1 Overview (based on the meetings in Khartoum)

1.1 The Mine Action Structure

UNMAS initiated its mine action support to Sudan in 2002 on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Government of Sudan (GoS), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) and the UN. Under the terms of the MoU, the UN is seeking to help both parties to jointly develop a national mine action strategy that meets the immediate needs of the emergency humanitarian situation and plans ahead to post-conflict Sudan. Mine clearance operations began in January 2003.

In terms of legal obligations, the GoS ratified the Ottawa Treaty in April 2004. The SPLM signed the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment, the equivalent of the Mine Ban Treaty for non-state actors in 2001.

The GoS, SPLM and the UN signed the Sudan National Mine Action Strategic Framework in August 2004 which prescribes a "one country" approach for mine action in Sudan.

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that was signed on 9 January 2005 foresees three pillars for the Mine Action Structure:

- 1- GoS: Northern Mine Action Authority [to be established] and National (Northern) Mine Action Office (NMAO)
- 2- New Sudan (South): New Sudan Authority on Landmines (NSAL) and New Sudan Mine Action Directorate (NSMAD)
- 3- UN Mine Action Office (with regional offices in Rumbek and Kadugli and sub-offices in Wau, Juba, Malakal, Damazin, Kassala, Darfur).

The "unified approach" between the three pillars as well as all the actors on the ground will be coordinated by the soon to be recruited Chief of Mine Action Sector who will report to the DSRSG. Regular institutionalized cross-line meetings between the North and the South still have to be established.

1.2 The roles of the different UN actors in mine action

UNMAS: Coordination, accreditation and quality assurance, integration with UNMIS, liaison, national capacity development, national priority-setting, resource mobilisation.

UNDP: Institutional capacity building of NMAO, NSMAD and Sudan Campaign to Ban Landmines; Victims assistance; Peace-building and DDR. A UNDP senior technical advisor is yet to be nominated in Khartoum.

UNICEF: Focus on establishment of coordination and accreditation mechanisms on MRE, develop national capacity. MRE is one of the main challenges in Sudan. Because of institutional problems and problems of access, the program is still very small. Since April 2005, UNICEF provides a MRE Coordinator based at the UNMAO in Khartoum. UNICEF will provide MRE to returnees at the current place of residence and at the final place of return.

UNHCR: MRE for refugees based in Kenya, Uganda, etc.

WFP: Road clearance

UNMIS: It is foreseen that UNMIS will have five demining companies (2 from Bangladesh, 1 from Egypt, 1 from Kenya, 1 from Pakistan). According to SC Resolution 1590 (OP 4c) UNMIS demining assets can be used (for the first time!) for humanitarian demining.

1.3 *Extent of the mine/ERW problem in Sudan*

The mine contamination is difficult to grasp. Estimations range from ½ million to 1 million mines. The problem is the high impact for the number of mines: the perceived threat impinges movement of populations, trade and development. Road clearance is particularly important for IDP/refugee returns, peacekeepers and the future use of the roads.

There are few reported casualties: the larger amount of casualties stems from UXOs, that are often stored in very precarious conditions. The MASG delegation could appreciate such a deposit under a tree next to the air strip in Yei. In Darfur, the main problem will be UXOs. Teams with EOD integrated capacities will thus be very important for the future.

There is little reliable data on the threat. Currently it is very hard to know how big and where the problem is. Currently there are only 5 emergency survey teams, 24 to 40 more teams are desperately needed. The survey capacities of UNMAO have to be increased! It is estimated that the contamination is greatest in the South (65%) followed by the transitional areas (Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile, Abyei), and the North (5%), excluding Darfur.

UNMAS calculates that with a targeted and appropriate approach 75% of the problem can be solved in the first 5 years. Currently, UNMAO counts only very limited clearing assets on the ground. For example, there are less than 100 Metal Detectors being used in the country.

The following priorities have been identified for 2005:

- Emergency Survey, Marking and Targeted Clearance
- Route Verification
- Targeted MRE
- Capacity Building (national structure and implementing partners)

According to the Ottawa Convention, the deadline for Sudan to become mine-free is 2014. What is more realistic is to get to a stadium where the country is “almost mine safe”. This target can be reached by clearing immediately the high-impact areas and thus minimizing the impact. Thereafter a residual capacity has to be left to deal with the rest of the problem.

1.4 *Challenges*

The challenges for mine action operators in the field are numerous and can be grouped in two categories:

- *Logistical*: size of country, weather conditions, problems of access through roads, etc.
- *Political*: limited freedom of movement, problems with travel permissions and visas, limited cross-line movement, limited transparency (information on minefields has to be provided according to the CPA), potentially unstable security situation (factional fighting in the South; Ugandan LRA).

1.5 *Funding situation*

According to UNMAO, the funding requirements for mine action for the year 2005 are roughly US\$ 82m. The shortfall is currently US\$ 58m. There was a slight disconnect last year between the Work Plan and the Portfolio. The Work Plan will be reviewed in May 2005, and the two appeals will be consolidated. The PKO activities are included in the 2005 budget. The PKO support is integral part of the UNMAO resource mobilisation plan to maximise effect, not to duplicate resources and efforts.

It is important that the mine/UXO is included in all the infrastructure and development projects, especially in the South. Accordingly, the GoS should include a mine action component in the interim PRSP at the earliest opportunity.

The UNMAO is planning to conduct local MASG meetings in Khartoum and Nairobi (on a quarterly basis) in order to improve coordination with donors.

The GoS and the SPLM have pledged contributions in Oslo. UNMAO expects these contributions to be in-kind (through personnel and land for offices).

1.6 *NGO Partners*

International Partners:

- Norwegian People's Aid (NPA): NPA established a mine action program based in Yei in Southern Sudan, which complements its existing aid and development work. Clearing roads is NPA's priority for mine action in the region.
- Mechem: Mechem's road survey work, which began in Southern Sudan in March 2004, includes clearance capacity. The approach to demining includes the use of vehicle-mounted detection systems, dog teams and manual deminers to remove ordnance found while surveying roads.
- Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD): The FSD currently has two projects in Sudan: the first is the FSD/UNOPS Survey Project (Rumbek and Kadugli), the second is the FSD/WFP Road Clearance Project (South Sudan). The FSD has partnerships with SIMAS (South) and the Khartoum based NGO Friends of Peace and Development (FPDO)
- Mines Advisory Group (MAG): MAG has partnerships with OSIL (in the South) and JASMAR (in the North). Currently MAG, in partnership with OSIL, is implementing a MRE and community liaison programme which covers the key refugee and IDP repatriation routes close to Kapoeta and Yei in Equatoria (South). In the Blue Nile region (North) a JASMAR team will conduct technical verification, community liaison and MRE.
- RONCO: Had in the past a quick reaction demining force in the Nuba Mountains for road clearance and support to JMC. Currently: road clearance in Western Nuba Mountains and clearance of Rumbek airfield. From May 2005 on, a combined RONCO-Mechem team will develop Sudanese demining and battle area clearance teams.
- DanChurchAid (DCA): The DCA project in Andulo was started 3 years ago, and it involves both sides through partnerships with JASMAR (GoS side) and OSIL (SPLM side). DCA trained technical staff from both sides aimed at creating integrated teams and thus contributing to peace and confidence-building efforts. DCA is currently training staff at management level with the goal of handing over the program. DCA would like to expand its program in Nuba, and also move to the Southern Blue Nile and the Kassala regions. The advantage of working in the Nuba Mountains is clearly the role that the JMC plays in allowing cross-line movements.

Local Partners include:

- The Sudan Campaign to Ban Landmines (SCBL): SCBL that was established in 1996 in Khartoum is the civil society network responsible for the coordination of mine action in government-controlled areas of Sudan. It has been an active partner of the Mine Action programme in Sudan since its inception.
- JASMAR: Formed in 2001 and based in Khartoum. Is involved in clearance and MRE, mainly in the Nuba Mountains. JASMAR and SCBL are said to be closely associated with the GoS.

- ABRAR: supports landmine survivors as part of its program to assist war victims. ABRAR provides physiotherapy, psychological support, vocational training, legal aid.
- Friends of Peace and Development Organization (FPDO): The FPDO was founded in 2003 and is mainly involved in MRE. FPDO is the coordinator of MRE inside the SCBL structure, but would also like to become active in demining through deminers from the engineers corps.
- Sudan Integrated Mine Action Service (SIMAS): SIMAS promotes mine awareness and assists victims of mines by rehabilitating and integrating them into society.
- Operation Save Innocent Lives (OSIL): Formed in 1996 and based in the South with strong links to SPLM. It is involved in clearance and MRE. Prior to 2002, OSIL was the main non-governmental agency involved in mine clearance in Sudan.
- Sudanese Landmine Response (SLR/SLIRI): SLR/SLIRI was created in 2001 with funds from the EC to initiate cross-line information gathering. Today there are 15 community-based information networks with local field offices (7 in the North, 8 in the South) for data collection and analysis. Activities also include community liaison, MRE and clearance.

2 *Nuba Mountains*

2.1. *Briefing by Simon Porter, Regional Technical Advisor, Central Region Mine Action Office (CRMAO)*

The CRMAO is coordinating the tasks of mine clearance organizations (DCA, Ronco, LMA, FSD, Mechem) throughout the central region. It collects and disseminates mine information and liaises with the GoS and SPLM. Other coordination mechanisms involve daily briefings with the JMC. Clearing assets in the central region are: manual deminers (still the most effective way to clear an area), dogs (heat and dry soil make working with dogs difficult; they are only being used for area reduction and certification) and route verification assets (VMEDS; it takes long to process the samples in Pretoria, but the successes are usually good). MRE is carried out in the central region by DCA (two teams) and the Save the Children (2 teams). In the Nuba mountains there are 80 mine affected areas. There were 440 victims since 2002 (mainly men injured by UXOs). Stray ammunition in unstable condition is the greatest threat. Artillery, mortars are typically found in subterranean earth bunkers.

The area covered by the CRMAO will be expanded shortly to an area of the size of France. The magnitude of the problem in the expanded area is not known, an emergency survey is needed. The demining assets of UNMIS (ideally 2-3 demining companies with mechanical flails and dogs) will be integrated into CRMAO. In section 3 a Egyptian company will be deployed. Progress in humanitarian demining will largely depend on their openness to cooperate with UNMAS and to work according to international standards.

The expanded CRMAO will open sub offices in Ed Damazin and Malakal. The main challenges are the lack of knowledge and planning data, the lack of survey assets and the limited lines of communication. It will be important to conduct an emergency survey, clear and verify the routes and deploy flexible clearance assets to prioritized communities. Teams have to be capable of both mine and battle-area clearance.

2.2. *Briefing by Brigadier General Jan Erik Wilhelmsen, Chairman JMC and Head of Mission JMM*

The Nuba Mountains Cease-Fire Agreement (CFA) came into effect 72 hours after it was signed in Switzerland on 19 January 2002 and, as such, has been effective on the ground for two and half years. In the Agreement the Parties agreed to an internationally monitored cease-fire among all their forces in the Nuba Mountains for a renewable period of six months.

The mandate has recently been renewed for the fifth time by both Parties. The CFA and a Status of Mission Agreement (SoMA) created the Joint Military Commission, a small conflict resolution body. It also created a larger body, under the JMC's direct command, which it titled the Joint Monitoring Mission (JMM). The whole, referred to just as the JMC, has remained under the political direction of the Friends of Nuba Mountain (FoNM), a group of 12 European and North American countries who have also funded the Mission and provided its (unarmed) international monitors. The legality of the mission is based in the CFA and SoMA and is enabled by Letters of Understanding (LoUs) between the FoNM participating nations, which regulates personnel contributions and funding, and the two Presidential Statements from the UN Security Council, 10 October 2003 and 25 May 2004. Since 24 March 2005, JMM/JMC is under operational control of the UNMIS Force Commander.

The JMC concept has been to draw the two sides closer together encouraging them to develop professional respect for each other. The General believes that the JMC has achieved considerable success in this mutually accepted extension of the Mission's role and that enduring bridges have been built between the Parties. The concept of shared responsibility and conflict resolution at the lowest possible level have been successful. There have, as yet, been no serious Cease-fire Violations. Through hard work and constant presence in the Area of Responsibility (AOR), JMC has established a reputation as mediators and solvers of problems. From early in the Mission, the General decided that monitoring and conflict resolution alone were insufficient. The JMC has also supported the extensive de-mining of routes and key areas. Some of the FONM nations have provided funds for JMC humanitarian activity – this has enabled JMC to conduct limited refurbishment of medical clinics, schools and establish some new water points and construction of safe roads and bridges. These small-scale humanitarian aid programs have clearly enhanced JMC's reputation with the people and, vitally, their trust in the Mission.

It is this trust, hard won through the professionalism and dedication of the monitoring teams, that is the foundation on which JMC's success has been built. On 20 June 2005, the UN observers will assume duty in the Nuba Mountains. The hope is that the Egyptian peacekeepers will build on the JMC foundation and continue building trust in the region.

3 *Rumbek*

3.1.1 *Briefing by Steve Robinson, Regional Technical Advisor, Southern Region Mine Action Office (SRMAO)*

The conflict in the Sudan was a classic low level conflict: the GoS held the towns, while the SPLA and other rebel organizations were in the countryside. There were some major battles, especially in the towns such as Rumbek, Juba and Torit. Both sides used AP and AT mines for defensive purposes. There are minefields lying on top of each other. AT mines were often used to cover retreat or (as AP mines) for nuisance purposes. The problem is: low density but high impact! UXOs will be a bigger threat than mines. Mainly small calibre weapons were used, larger calibre were used especially in towns. Explosive ordnance is being stored badly leading to deterioration. Instead of proceeding to destruct them, some commanders still feel they need to have them.

There is not a large number of direct casualties, but with increasing numbers of returnees, this will change. Returnees are not used to living in contaminated areas, so the casualties will go up. The ERW contamination has an impact on roads (for aid delivery, access to markets, movements of returnees, deployment of UNMIS) and land use. The existing population, including aid workers are also at risk (un-safe farming practices such as burning of fields, mined water points, LRA ambushes etc.)

The New Sudan has responded by establishing two authorities: The New Sudan Authority on Landmines (NSAL) which is headed by Nyall Deng Nyall and integrates all ministries, as well as the New Sudan Mine Action Directorate (NSMAD), headed by Jurkuch Barach Jurkuch, who is currently Nairobi based.

Achievements of the SRMAO include: establishment of accreditation, coordination and QA procedures, establishment of IMSMA (there is a regional information management officer based in Rumbek), establishment of links with SPLM and cross-line modalities, deployment of MA assets, establishment of MRE steering committee and execution of MRE, capacity-development.

Currently, the following actors operate in the South: UNMAS; UNICEF, UNDP, SRSA, OSIL (indigenous partner to Mechem, NPA, MAG) , SIMAS (indigenous partner to FSD), SLR (victim survey and MRE), Mechem (route verification and clearance), FSD, NPA, MAG and ICRC (prosthetic center: to be closed soon).

The challenges are:

- weak coordination, UN does not always have a unified approach, there is no humanitarian focal location, nor a MA focal location: Many NGOs still operate out of Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia. UNMAS is the focal point for MA, but it is located in Rumbek and for many actors it is very expensive to get to Rumbek. Nairobi is still dominant in the UN/NGO/SPLM decision-making process
- Garrison towns and cross-line operations: free movement is a problem.
- IMSMA: due to sanctions, UNMAS cannot get the newest version of IMSMA.
- Lack of understanding of the impact of ERW and planning for it by NGOs and agencies.
- UNMIS planning and prioritization: SRMAO should be incorporated early in the planning process.
- Integration: NSMAD staff should be deployed to SRMAO, NSAL should delegate decision making powers to NSMAD.
- Huge area, difficult lines of communication and logistics.
- Expectation management: transparency and honesty are needed (set realistic time frames and costs: lack of assets for growing requests!)
- Lack of detailed information (survey can't be over-emphasized!)

IV Conclusions¹ of the MASG-Delegation

1. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) and the subsequent deployment of UNMIS are a great political opportunity for peace in Sudan, a country that has been engulfed in a civil conflict for over 20 years. We came here to show that we believe in the peace process and are willing to contribute to its success. We recognize that there is a substantial mine/ERW problem in Sudan that will impede humanitarian and recovery efforts in particular the repatriation of massive numbers of returnees and IDPs. Addressing it should not only be a priority for the international community, but even more for the authorities of the Sudan.
2. We strongly encourage a common approach by the North and the South that will help to enhance the unity of the country. As far as Mine Action is concerned, cross-line

¹ Agreed by all participants on the basis of the speech presented on 28 April 2005 in Khartoum by Ambassador Gérard Chesnel, head of the MASG-delegation.

demining activities should be allowed and facilitated. More particularly, regular cross-line meetings on at least a quarterly basis between the representatives from the North and the South should be held.

3. The relationships between the North and the South need to be nurtured and strengthened. Freedom of movement is of crucial importance, as well as the handing over of maps and information concerning the locations and descriptions of minefields, unexploded ordnance, etc. (as stipulated in the CPA). Visa requirements and customs formalities for UN staff, as well as NGOs and operators have to be eased in order to allow these actors to carry out their mine action activities on the ground.
4. We appreciate the work being done by the United Nations agencies in Sudan and underline at the same time that these agencies must have a unified approach. The coordination role of the UN Mine Action Office is therefore crucial in this regard.
5. An effectively coordinated UN programme will be particularly important once UNMIS assets are used for humanitarian demining. We commend the excellent work accomplished by the Joint Military Commission (JMC) in the Nuba Mountains and hope that future peacekeeping efforts in that region will ensure coherence and continuity with the successes of the JMC.
6. The Sudanese need to assume full responsibility for the management of the programme in the future and this will not be possible without comprehensive capacity development and institution building. We must help Sudanese authorities from the North and the South to assume leadership of the programme by immediately developing the institutional capacity of the National Mine Action Office and New Sudan Mine Action Directorate. This should involve developing capacity at all levels of the mine action structures in both the north and south through targeted and effective staff development programmes.
7. We are convinced that mine action is a development priority for Sudan. In planning relief and reconstruction programmes such as livelihood activities for the population, the UN, in a unified approach should always take into consideration mine action requirements. On the side of the Sudanese government, mine action should be mainstreamed in the development plans and budgets of all appropriate ministries in the north and the south to establish a sustainable mine action programme that addresses the development priorities of Sudan in the years to come.
8. The development of efficient local NGOs in a timely manner should be encouraged and international NGOs supporting local NGOs are encouraged to develop clear transition plans to programmes managed by local NGOs. The integration of former combatants from both sides in demining teams would be particularly helpful in the view of DDR and reconciliation efforts.
9. Until Sudan becomes mine free, it is urgent to make it mine-safe, and, to reach this aim, MRE (followed by mine clearance in a timely manner) is a top priority. Through increased survey capacities dangerous areas have to be marked and at the same time the risks to communities and vulnerable people need to be reduced through community based education programmes. The MRE efforts of UNHCR (for refugees) and UNICEF (for IDPs) are therefore particularly important.

10. In the spirit of the Ottawa Convention, the importance of effective stockpile destruction has been underlined. This is the responsibility of Sudanese authorities at all levels, national and regional.
11. We also recall that transparency is an important element of mine action and that it is necessary to fulfil the commitments under article 7 of the Convention. In terms of funding, effective mechanisms ensuring accountability for the received funds are needed.
12. We thank UNMAS Khartoum and the Sudanese authorities for the excellent preparation of the visit and the logistics that were put at our disposal.

New York, 6 May 2005
Natalie Kohli

MASG-Fieldtrip to Sudan

24-29 April 2005

Final list of participants:

	Country	Name	Title/Function	E-mail
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15	UNDP	Archie Law	Regional Mine Action Advisor	archie.law@undp.org

MASG Visit to Sudan 24-29 April 2005

Schedule (as of 23/04/05):

Day	Time	Activities	Venue	Remarks
23. Apr		Arrival	Khartoum	Transport to Hotel by UNMAS
24. Apr		Arrival	Khartoum	Transport to Hotel by UNMAS
25. Apr	0830	UN Mine Action Office Programme Brief	UNMAO	Pick up from Hotel at 0800hrs
	1100	NMAO Director/HAC Commissioner (Minister of Humanitarian Affairs)	UNMAO	
	1230	Lunch	UNMAO	Light snacks/pizzas
	1330	Departure UNMAO		
	1400	Meeting with SRSG	Mission HQ	Mr Jan Pronk
	1500	Meeting with DSRSG/RC/HC	Mission HQ	Mr Manuel Aranda da Silva
	1600	Meeting with UNICEF Representative	UNICEF	Ms JoAnna Van Gerpen
	1700	Meeting with Int'l/National NGOs	UNMAO	FSD, DCA, SLIRI, MAG, Abrar
	2000	Dinner	German Res.	Hosted by German Embassy
26. Apr	0600	Pick up from the Hotel		Time to be confirmed
	0700	Chartered flight to Nuba	Kadugli	
	1000	Arrival	Kadugli	
	1030	TA Brief / JMC Brief	Kadugli	
	1100	Fly/Drive to Andulo	Kadugli	
	1230	Arrival Andulo, Task site visit	Andullo	DCA task
	1600	Chartered flight to Rumbek	Rumbek	
	1900	Drinks with NSMAD Director, SPLM senior members	Rumbek	Around 10 SPLM members
	2000	Dinner	Rumbek	Overnight in AFEX
27. Apr	0800	Official meeting with NSMAD	Rumbek	Check-out before Breakfast
	0900	Fly to Yei		
	1030	Arrival Yei	Yei	
	1100	MAG CL project, FSD Road project NPA EOD and Demining Project		(Packed lunch by AFEX)
	1600	Chartered flight back to Khartoum	Khartoum	
		Transport back to Hotel		
	1930	Dinner	Khartoum	Hosted by the HAC/NMAO
28. Apr	0900	Mission Debrief with CTA	UNMAO	
	1030	Reception hosted by the Swiss Embassy	Swiss Emb.	Concluding speech by Head of MASG delegation, and Chair of MASG
		Meetings with individual missions		
		Donor Meetings		
		Departure		According to individual schedules. Airport transfer provided by UNMAS

For any inquiries, please call Jim Pansegrouw (0912 304 078) or Takuto Kubo (0912 396 829).

2. Unofficial Minutes MASG Meeting 17 May 2005

1. After welcoming the participants, the Chair introduced Elisabeth Reusse-Decrey, President and Founder of Geneva Call, an international organization created shortly after the adoption of the mine-ban treaty, that engages non-state actors in order to obtain from them a sustainable commitment toward the mine ban. The Chair also welcomed Gerard McHugh, who works as a consultant for OCHA and is involved in drafting a manual on humanitarian negotiations with non-state armed groups.
2. After the adoption of the agenda, the Chair moved to the thematic focus of the meeting. The role of non-state actors (NSA) in mine action has been broadly recognized and is contained in the Nairobi Action Plan, Action 46: "States Parties in a position to do will continue to support, as appropriate, mine action to assist affected populations in areas under the control of armed non-state actors, particularly in areas under the control of actors which have agreed to abide by the Convention's norms." The Chair then gave the floor to Mrs. Reusse-Decrey to present Geneva Call.

Geneva Call is an impartial and independent international humanitarian NGO dedicated to engage NSAs as well as governments not formally recognized by the international community in adhering to a total ban on AP mines and to other humanitarian norms. NSAs are directly involved in the landmine problem because many of them use, manufacture and stockpile AP mines. 60 NSAs are reported to have used landmines in 21 countries during 2003-2004 (35 of them are operating in Asia, 17 in Africa). There are significant region-specific variations in the use of mines: While NSAs in Africa only use factory-made mines, improvised (often homemade) explosive devices are more common in Asia. NSAs often operate in mined land or exercise de facto control over such land (for example the LTTE in the northeast of Sri Lanka). NSAs are known to influence the mine policy of the States in which they operate: some governments cite NSA mine use as a reason for not joining the mine-ban treaty. Others claim they are not in a position to fulfil their obligations under the mine-ban treaty because they are not in full control of the national territory. For all these reasons, the cooperation of NSAs is essential to an effective strategy for dealing with the problems posed by landmines. As NSAs are part of the problem, they must also be part of the solution. Geneva Call, in a bid to complement the State-centric process of the mine-ban treaty, proposes a unique mechanism, which enables NSAs to join the ban by committing to the terms of a document commonly referred to as the Deed of Commitment. With their signature, NSAs publicly agree to prohibit the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of AP mines, to destruct stockpiles, and to cooperate in mine action. Signatories include: SPLM/A, 3 rebel groups in the Philippines including the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), PUK and KDP-led Kurdistan Regional Governments in Iraq, most factions in Somalia, National Socialist Council of Nagaland in NE India, 2 ethnic armed groups in Myanmar/Burma, CNDD-FDD in Burundi. Geneva Call offers implementation support through its local partners on the ground. Challenges in the work of Geneva Call include: Definition of a Non-State Actor, reluctance from some NSAs, NSA loose control over fighters, split among NSAs, monitoring challenges, facilitation from the concerned government. NSA engagement cannot be done by States, but cannot be done without States. In Geneva Call's experience, engaging NSAs in the mine ban can also serve as a confidence building measure between parties to an armed conflict. Geneva Call is being financially supported by Switzerland, Italy, UK, the Canton of Geneva, Norway, Canada, as well as logistically and/or financially by UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF.

3. Gerard Mc Hugh then presented the OCHA project on "Humanitarian Negotiations with Armed Groups". The primary object of the project is to develop a practical guide for humanitarian, development and human rights workers to guide and enhance their negotiations with non-state armed groups. The project was initiated through a request to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) in the SG's report on Protection of Civilians. The trend towards more

integrated missions exacerbated the need for more formal clarity when dealing with NSAs. IASC set up an informal working group on this issue, the project is coordinated by OCHA. Primary project funding is provided by the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, additional support is provided by UNICEF (EMOPS). The current status of the project: the consultation process is completed, a first draft should be ready in the coming days. The project focuses on negotiation as one form of engagement with non-state armed groups. Definition of humanitarian negotiations: negotiations undertaken by civilians engaged in managing, coordinating and delivering humanitarian assistance and protection for the purpose of (i) ensuring the provision of protection and humanitarian assistance to vulnerable populations; (ii) preserving humanitarian space; and (iii) promoting better respect for international humanitarian- and human rights law. Definition of Non-State Armed Groups: those groups that have the potential to employ arms in the use of force to achieve political, ideological or economic objectives; are not within the formal military structures of states, state-alliances of intergovernmental organizations; and are not under the control of the state(s) in which they operate. The main body of the manual contains 6 sections, including motivations (reasons for negotiating, etc.), frameworks (humanitarian principles and relevant international law), a step-by-step guide (template), implications and enforcement of humanitarian negotiations.

MASG members are invited to contact the Project Manager, Manuel Bessler (bessler@un.org), or Gerard Mc Hugh (mchugh@un.org) at OCHA if they would like to receive a copy of the draft manual, once it is ready for distribution.

4. In the ensuing discussion, the representative of the **United States** stated that the US, as a sovereign State, only engages with sovereign States. The Deed of Commitment gives legitimacy to NSAs. Geneva Call replied that it worked in absolute transparency. Governments are important to reach the goal of engaging NSAs. In terms of legitimacy, NSAs are already mentioned in common article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. The signing of the Deed of Commitment does not change the status of the groups. Furthermore, when the groups come to Geneva they are not allowed to speak about politics, but have to focus on the mine problem. OCHA added that the negotiations with NSAs are being framed by humanitarian principles. They are not a form of legitimacy, because you are not engaging in political discussions. It is very important to separate the two tracks. Also, transparency is very important. The representative of **France** said that it was often difficult for governments to engage directly with NSAs. But there are countries, such as Somalia, where there is no official government. The EU has in the past modified the funding lines accordingly. The **Netherlands** were very surprised by the fact that in the African context mines come from regular production. Does Geneva Call trace these mines back? Geneva Call replied that there are clearly some dynamics in Africa, where governments support NSAs in neighbouring countries. For Geneva Call to make these links public, it needs solid proof. **Switzerland** reminded the MASG-members that during the June Intersessionals in Geneva, Switzerland will organize a follow-up event to the workshop that took place in October 2004 in Montreux entitled "non-state actors and mine-action". Switzerland will present a non-paper concerning the implementation of Action 46 of the Nairobi Program of Action. The delegate of Switzerland also asked what the trade-off is for NSAs when they are asked to give up using mines. Geneva Call replied that most NSAs are using mines for offensive purposes and not for defensive ones. NSAs often understand that mines have an effect on themselves, and that by refusing to use them, they can get support from the local populations. Mr. Mc Hugh added that the groups' interests have to be explored in order to find common ground. It was however not always possible to actually find common ground.
5. In the next presentation, Oren Schlein (UNDP) presented the UNDP mine action program in Somalia, which is executed by UNOPS. The UN is currently working in areas where for security reasons it is possible (Somaliland and Puntland). Hopefully the area can soon be expanded. The mine problem in Somalia is the result of over 30 years of conflict. Mines and UXOs were used extensively throughout the country and their impact on the Somali society is huge in terms of agricultural production, transportation, loss of life, disabilities, obstacles to repatriation and reintegration, etc. In **Somaliland** the national structure and policy were approved, and a Mine Action Commission as well as a Somaliland Mine Action Centre established. The Mine Action Commission (and underneath of it the Mine Action Centre) are under the Vice

President's Office. The Somaliland Mine Action Centre (SMAC) was re-established in February 2000, its objectives are coordination, planning and quality assurance of mine actions operations, maintenance of records and databases, accreditation and licensing of mine action organizations. Institutional support is funded by DFID through UNDP BCPR. UNDP is since 1999 involved in capacity development. Phase 1 of a Landmine Impact Survey was completed in Somaliland. As a result, 73 high impact areas could be reclassified as medium and low impact. The Somaliland Police has a EOD capacity. *Priority needs for 2005-2006:* The SMAC requires long-term funding to ensure continuity. **Puntland** follows the model of Somaliland: Puntland Mine Action Centre, Landmine Impact Survey (Phase 2) was completed in May 2005. A demining capacity has yet to be developed. It would be best to link this to demobilisation efforts by using militia and military forces. International NGOs are currently not present in Puntland. UNDP is seeking an international NGO to provide technical advice and training to militia and military. In **Central Somalia** there is a police EOD team, the engagement with the Transitional Federal Government started at the Nairobi summit. There is no international NGO activity in Central Somalia. *Priority needs for 2005-2006:* expansion of police EOD with mine clearance capacity in Jowhar. For **Southern Somalia** immediate needs include: EOD capacity to deal with UXO and stray ammunition that hinder recovery and reconstruction efforts, establish links with line ministry, opening of mine action office within line ministry in Mogadishu. *Priority needs for 2005-2006:* Funding for Police EOD Teams. UNDP plans to engage the **Transitional Federal Government** (TFG) on mine action: National mine legislation is planned, the Ottawa Convention should be signed by the end of 2005 (as committed at the Nairobi Summit), and a national mine action institution with HQ in Mogadishu and five regional offices, as well as a national clearance capacity should be established. *Priority needs for 2005-2006:* Funding to establish mine action institution within the TFG.

For further information please contact john.dingley@undp.org.

6. Under AOB the Chair first mentioned that the June meeting is taking place on 22 June (new date!) – a revised Calendar was circulated at the meeting.

Secondly, the Secretary of MASG informed members on the Sudan fieldtrip: A MASG Delegation composed of Canada, the EC, France, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Switzerland and the US visited Sudan between 24 and 28 of April. The delegation went to Khartoum, the Nuba Mountains, Rumbek and Yei. The donors had the opportunity to: (i) See how difficult the conditions are (size of the country, division North-South, problems of access, limited freedom of movement, climate, etc.); (ii) Assess the ongoing mine action activities and needs for the future (need for survey activities!); (iii) Look at the activities of different UN agencies and other actors on the ground and the future use of demining assets of UNMIS for humanitarian demining; (iv) Appreciate the commitment of the people working under difficult conditions. A complete report of the visit is contained in this Newsletter. As a follow-up measure, it was agreed that UNMAS will be reporting on the implementation of the MASG-recommendations in the upcoming meeting.

Thirdly, Martin Barber thanked the Swiss chairmanship for the report and Ambassador Chesnel of France for his leadership during the visit. Martin Barber then presented the recently finalized Gender Guidelines for Mine Action (brochures were handed out during the meeting). The Gender Guidelines were piloted in Afghanistan. Martin Barber invited donors to give their feedback on these guidelines. As for the Portfolio Update, not all the data had been received. A more comprehensive update will be given in June. Martin Barber also invited donors to update the Donor Investment Database (until now, only one donor, Austria, had provided the necessary information).

The US then thanked UNMAS warmly for the organization of the fieldtrip to Sudan, which had direct consequences on re-drafting US funding priorities.

7. The next meeting takes place on **22 June (new date!)** with the thematic focus Victims Assistance and the country focus Cambodia.

The meeting was closed at 12.15 pm.

3. Provisional Agenda MASG-Meeting 22 June 2005

MASG Meeting 22 June 2005

**10am-12pm at the Swiss Mission
633 Third Avenue, 29th Floor**

Provisional Agenda :

1. Welcome address by the Chair
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Thematic Presentations on Victims Assistance:
 - Rehabilitation (tbd)
 - Socio-economic recovery (World Rehabilitation Fund)
 - Surveillance (tbd)
4. Discussion
5. Country Briefing: Cambodia (Sayed Aqa, UNDP)
6. Discussion
7. AOB

4. Updates

4.1. Update from UNMAS

POLICY, TREATY IMPLEMENTATION, INFORMATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

POLICY COORDINATION

On 21 April 2005, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) met to: discuss the endorsement of *Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The United Nations Inter-Agency Policy* and its proposed roll-out plan; monitor the mine/ERW threat in various countries; and agreed on next steps towards a common UN position on cluster munitions.

Visit to the Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex

The UNMAS Policy Coordination Officer met with representatives of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) from 14-16 April to discuss possible ways of cooperation. IDS is considering a new research and evaluation focus on the interlinkage between development and security. IDS offered to promote UNMAS Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to their media contacts and to let UNMAS profit from their participatory programming training.

TECHNOLOGY

The Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) once again hosted a Symposium on the use of machines in mine action. The Symposium was held between 25 and 29 April and was attended by representatives from 32 countries. As up to 90% of affected areas in Croatia are dealt with through the use of machines, this Symposium gave excellent advice and demonstrated practical experience. It is an ideal forum in which to promote the use of machines in order to make demining safer and more efficient. It is hoped that CROMAC will host a further Symposium in 2006.

NEW PLEDGES/EARMARKINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS IN THE VTF

No Pledges/earmarkings.

Contributions Received: 04/04/05 Canada \$8,179,290 Afghanistan.

DEVELOPMENTS IN UNMAS-MANAGED PROGRAMMES

Cyprus

The Mine Action Cell hosted visits by the UNMAS Planning Officer and UNOPS Senior Technical Advisor to review project performance. The clearance project continues to make good progress with the Zodia crossing point at Camp Brown set to be handed over by the end of April as the first official hand over of previously mined land. The crossing point will be rehabilitated and opened for civilian traffic between the south and north of the island. A decision on funding by the European Commission is expected in the coming months. The project is seeking funding to bridge any potential funding gap between the end of current EC funding in September and expected new funds or to finance an expansion in capacity should access to Turkish minefields in the buffer zone be granted. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continues to work on

the guidelines for Turkish Forces minefields and is hopeful access will be granted in the near future.

UNMEE- Eritrea and Ethiopia

The programme hosted visits by the UNMAS Planning Officer and UNOPS Senior Portfolio Manager as well as MECHEM and Way industries. A member of the British Peace Support Team from the International Mine Action Training Centre in Nairobi also accompanied the field visit to Shilalo in Sector West. Integration of the mechanical and Mine Detection Dog (MDD) assets of Mechem with the Kenyan Demining Company is progressing well with training of Kenyan contingent members on mechanical and MDD detection and clearance methods underway. This marks the first time a peacekeeping contingent has been successfully integrated with a commercial capacity. The clearance continues to focus on areas in Sector West where return of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) is taking place. In addition to civilian UXO accidents, a spate of Anti-Tank (AT) mine accidents has taken place on roads in the area adjacent to the southern boundary of the temporary security zone (TSZ) in Ethiopia.

The Project received a contribution from the Government of Germany of US\$250,000 to cover operations and coordination costs in both sectors. With contributions to date, the estimated shortfall for the MACC in 2005 is US\$100,000.

SUDAN

Sudan Donor Conference

On 11 and 12 April 2005, the Director of UNMAS attended the Oslo Donors' Conference, which was convened by the Norwegian Government to raise funds for both humanitarian and recovery activities in Sudan. The Oslo Donors' Conference attracted over 400 participants including the Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of Norway and several Foreign Ministers, as well as Vice-President Taha and Chairman Garang from Sudan. Against requirements of \$2.6 billion for the JAM programme and \$1 billion for the 2005 humanitarian work plan, a total of \$4.5 billion was pledged. However, many pledges lacked details and it is still unclear whether the 2005 humanitarian needs will be met. Pledges for the JAM also appeared to fall short by about \$600 million. Tracking pledges and converting them into cash will be an extremely complex task. In the panel discussions on urgent humanitarian needs, DDR and basic social services, the importance of mine action was repeatedly stressed.

MASG Field Trip

From 25-29 April, a MASG delegation consisting of representatives from Canada, the European Commission, France, Italy, Japan, Portugal, Switzerland and the US, conducted a field visit to Sudan. The Group was led by Ambassador Gérard Chesnel of France on behalf of Ambassador Jenö Staehelin of Switzerland, the MASG Chair. In Khartoum, the delegation had meetings with the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, the National Mine Action Office, the UN Mine Action Office, Heads of UN agencies (the SRSG, the Deputy SRSG (DRSG)/Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, and UNICEF), NGOs and local donor representatives. In Kadugli, the delegation was briefed by staff of the Regional Mine Action Office and JMC, and observed demining operations in Andulo and Yei. In Rumbek the delegation had an opportunity to meet senior SPLM representatives and the director of the New Sudan Mine Action Directorate (NSMAD).

Sudan Update

In light of the expansion of humanitarian aid activities in Sudan and the imminent deployment of peacekeeping troops, the programme is gearing up to meet the rapidly increasing demands for survey, MRE and clearance activities. Thanks to recent generous contributions (including nearly US\$ 7 million from Japan) and to support from the UNMIS budget, additional assets are being contracted, and new staff deployed. However, additional pledges are still required to ensure the

availability of adequate capacity. Logistic difficulties and the arrival of the rainy season are adding to the challenge!

The new UNICEF MRE Coordinator arrived in Khartoum in late April. He will be seconded to the UN Mine Action Office to expand MRE activities. In addition, the World Food Programme (WFP) has seconded a staff member to the UN Mine Action Office.

4.2. Update from UNDP

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

AFRICAN REGION

Eritrea

Key Achievements

- The Eritrean Demining Organization (EDA) is planning mine-action tasks using the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) information, and is continuing to improve the execution of clearance and other mine-action activities.
- Training for 120 manual deminers is currently being planned, to take place in June. This capacity will give Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO) an additional six teams.
- The Consolidated Appeal Process (CAP) review inputs to the Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) are being finalized and include only three high-priority emergency projects: emergency demining for the return of internally displaced people (IDP), mine-risk education (MRE), and revitalization of the prosthetic centers.
- The National Mine Action Strategic Plan is under review while the EDA is struggling to maintain current capacity.
- A proposal for US\$ 500,000 through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is currently being pursued to provide an “integrated demining capacity” for EDA.
- The Mine Action Capacity Building Project (MACBP) is now conducting a 100 percent quarterly inventory check of all assets and equipment handed to EDA/EDO for the right of use.

Key Objectives

- To produce a programme/schedule to train and equip 120 additional manual deminers (six teams) during June/July 2005.

Key Challenges

- To continue to assist EDA/EDO to mobilize transportation to commence mine-clearance operations. Currently all EDA/EDO vehicles have been impounded by the government due to a pending fuel crisis. All mine-clearance operations have been suspended until the vehicles are returned.

Funding Update

- MACBP has received a pledge from Norway in the amount of 50 million Norwegian krona, to be disbursed over the five-year period of the National Mine Action Strategic Plan. This equates to approximately US\$ 7.5 million, or about US\$ 1.5 million per year.

ASIA PACIFIC REGION

Cambodia

Key Achievements

- On 28 April the Prime Minister presided over a national conference on mine action achievement. The Cambodian Mine Action Authority (CMAA) presented a comprehensive

review of achievements from 1992 to 2004 and an updated atlas of mine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) contamination in Cambodia. Both documents are available upon request from the CMAA.

- The government has initiated reform measures to strengthen the capacities of CMAA. In the first phase of this reform, the Prime Minister announced that the annual contribution of the national budget to CMAA would increase from 300 million riels to 800 million riels (US\$ 200,000). Further government decisions on the reform of CMAA management and structures are expected in the next 2-3 months.
- The Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) productivity figure for mine clearance in the first three months of 2004 is 75 percent over target (5.3 million square meters), thanks to a number of management reforms towards better cost-efficiency. CMAC is now functioning with minimal technical assistance and is able to compete with international mine-action operators.

Key Objectives

- In line with the December 2004 Joint Donor Review of the Mine Action Sector, the Royal Government of Cambodia has recently requested donors to work on a pooled funding mechanism that will allocate mine-clearance funds to national and provincial priority mine-clearance tasks (defined through a decentralized, bottom-up planning process) on the basis of competitive bidding. UNDP has initiated work on this concept, in consultation with government and donor partners. If approved, this new funding modality could be operational by early 2006. Anticipated advantages include better alignment and linkages with national development plans and programmes, economies of scale on project management and quality assurance costs, better-cost transparency (standard costing method), and stronger focus on results (rather than inputs).
- The CMAA is currently developing a national mine-action website, including information on national strategies and plans, status of mine-action activities, landmine/UXO contamination, and the legal framework for mine action. The website should be online within the next two months.

Funding Update

- In spite of CMAC's good progress with regard to management and cost-efficiency over the past year, the UNDP Trust Fund in support of CMAC operations is still facing a US\$ 1.5 million shortfall. Some activities will have to be suspended in the second half of 2005 if this shortfall cannot be addressed in a timely manner.

ARAB STATES REGION

Iraq

Key Achievements

- The five Technical Advisors (TAs) based in Iraq, funded by UNDP and UNICEF through the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA), completed the training and development assessment of the NMAA staff. Based on this assessment, a development plan has been prepared and training programmes and opportunities will be tailored to meet the needs of the NMAA.
- The UNDP-supported LIS in Iraq continued in the northern and southern governorates of the country. The survey has been completed in Dahuk and Erbil governorates in the north and Basrah, Al Samawah, and Thi-Qar governorates in the south. Data collection continues in Sulaymaniya governorate in the north and Muthanna governorate in the south. An LIS is planned for the central parts of the country in the coming few months. To date the LIS data collector has visited 5,735 communities in Iraq, documenting 967 with various levels of landmine/UXO contamination.

- During March six national explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams completed formal training and joined the already trained four national EOD teams. At the request of local farmers, in April all 10 EOD teams, managed by the Danish Demining Group (DDG), continued clearance of grazing and agricultural land in Safwan and Rafdhya neighborhoods. Several fatal accidents have occurred on these contaminated lands due to the presence of cluster bombs, including the recent death of a child. Approximately 362,600 square meters were cleared and a total of 199 cluster bombs were destroyed. As a result, the area is now being safely used for pasture and agricultural purposes. DDG has also started preparations for the development of the management structure of a local mine-action NGO to which all demining assets will be handed over towards the end of this one-year project.
- Fifteen national EOD teams, supported by the UN and managed by MineTech International (MTI), have continued EOD clearance operations in the Basrah city neighborhoods. These teams cleared a total of 320,387 square meters of contaminated land, recovering and destroying 3,397 explosive ordnance items. The cleared sites directly affect more than 150 people who are dependent on the land for grazing purposes and indirectly more than 800 people who regularly travel through the area.
- UNICEF, together with the NMAA, organized a Workshop on Needs Assessment and Operational Planning for Mine Risk Education in Iraq, from 18 to 20 April in Amman. As a result, an MRE operational plan has been developed for central and southern Iraq in which the responsibility for implementation of each participatory agency has been identified.
- Several meetings were arranged with potential donors and stakeholders, including the European Commission (EC), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), to try to secure bi-lateral funding for the mine-action programme in Iraq. The EC Office in Amman has been approached with a proposal for an extension of funding for the LIS team leader, currently funded by the EC through UNDP until the end of May 2005.

Key Challenges

- The security situation continues to be a challenge to conducting effective mine-action activities in the greater part of Iraq. All Cluster 7 operational activities inside Iraq are continuing, although it is not always possible to work in the high-priority areas.

Key Objectives

- To continue to provide management and technical advice to the NMAA and other stakeholders
- To conduct a mine-action coordination meeting with NMAA and US Department of State (DoS) in early June 2005.
- To attend the Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery Workshop for Arab states, 13-15 June 2005, Nairobi, Kenya.
- To review the requirement of the provision of technical advisors to the NMAA.
- To secure funds for the extension of the MineTech contract for the second half of 2005.
- To extend the contract for the LIS team leader.
- To conduct a monthly cluster meeting around 22-23 May.

Funding Update

- The Mine Action Cluster is negotiating with DFID to obtain the necessary funding for the extension of the MineTech contract for the second half of 2005. The existing contract expires end of May 2005.
- UNDP is in the process of reshuffling about US\$ 300,000 from other UNDP projects to extend the contract for the team leader of the Iraq LIS.
- About US\$ 2.5 million is also being sought to fund institutional support to the NMAA for the period mid-2005 to mid-2006.

EUROPE & CIS REGION

Azerbaijan

Key Achievements

- On 4 April the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) started a basic demining course for 28 newly recruited personnel.
- The operational accreditation licensing of mine-detection dogs (MDDs) has begun in accordance with International Mine Action Standards. MDDs were tested and allowed to operate in the minefields.
- On 7 April, ANAMA and UNDP Azerbaijan hosted a donors briefing on the mine-action situation in Azerbaijan, which shared achievements and future plans with the donor community, relevant government agencies, and NGOs. Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Abid Sharifov, UN Resident Representative Mr. Marco Borsotti, UNDP Mine Action Team Leader Mr. Sayed Aqa, and ANAMA Director Mr. Nazim Ismaylov co-chaired the meeting. (For details, please see www.anama.baku.az.)
- On 7 April, UNDP New York Mine Action Team Leader Mr. Sayed Aqa, Director of the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) Mr. Dorijan Marsich, and ITF Project Manager Mr. Iztok Hocevar, accompanied by ANAMA representatives, visited the north-west region of Azerbaijan to observe mine-action operations. During the trip the guests attended MRE classes in Seyidimli village school (Terter district) and had a chance to communicate with school children and participate in an interactive school programme.
- A meeting of the Mine Victim Assistance Working Group was held at ANAMA Headquarters on 19 April to discuss the results of the Countrywide Mine Victims' Needs Assessment Survey, conducted June-October 2004 and financially supported by the EC. Representatives of the Ministries of Health, Labor and Social Protection, Education and Sport, Youth and Tourism, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Azerbaijan Red Crescent Society, UNDP, UNICEF, and NGOs attended the meeting, which was chaired by the ANAMA Director. (For details, please see www.anama.baku.az.)
- On 27 April an ANAMA MRE Officer visited 6 villages in Tovuz district, located close to the border with Armenia, to observe MRE lessons that started in schools in January 2005, as per the Memorandum of Understanding signed between ANAMA and the Ministry of Education.
- On 28 April, ANAMA received an additional 7 MDDs donated by the US DoS through RONCO Consulting Corporation. The dogs have been brought from Holland and delivered to Horadiz settlement, where they will be put into operation. Training for local dog handlers is scheduled under the supervision of RONCO specialists.
- On 27-29 April, the ANAMA Director visited the Way Industry Company, producer of BOZENA mechanical demining machines in Slovakia. Discussions were held regarding delivery of a BOZENA-5 medium flail machine to Azerbaijan, which is expected to arrive by end of May 2005. Specialists from Way Industry will also arrive to conduct a 30-day on-field training. Procurement of the BOZENA-5 is funded by the EC and UNDP.

Key Objectives

- By mid-May 2005 the training for the third demining team will be completed and certificates delivered to new deminers.
- Training for the newly arrived MDDs and local handlers will start this month in Horadiz settlement of Fizuli district.
- By mid-May 2005 the mission from the Night Vision Laboratory is expected to conduct the final coordination of the Rhino heavy machine that is arriving in Azerbaijan by early summer.

Key Challenges

- Development of the final drafts and promotion of Mine Victim Assistance (MVA) projects.
- A final review on the use of Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) in mine action in Azerbaijan.

Funding Update

- The EC is expected to contribute EURO 1 million in 2005 for MRE, MVA, and marking and fencing activities. However, the project is not yet approved, and hopefully will be considered at the Standing Committee meeting in June 2005.

4.3. Update from UNICEF

Angola

In February, the National Inter-Sectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian Assistance (CNIDAH) held the national mine risk education (MRE) workshop in Luanda, with the participation of provincial government partners from 15 provinces, and representation from 10 national organisations and 6 international NGOs, UNICEF and the ICRC.

The meeting was an opportunity to give an orientation to partners on the new procedures for data collection on mine accidents and reporting of MRE activities, for the data which will be channelled to the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. It was at this workshop that orientations from CNIDAH of the national standards for MRE were distributed to partners.

Since the beginning of the year, UNICEF has continued to support the provincial vice governors and local authorities by providing support to national NGOs in the creation of community-based mine committees in the most mine contaminated communes of Angola. So far this year, 37 mine committees have been formed. The active engagement of the local community is a fundamental component of the national strategy to make the Angola population conscious of the threat of landmines and to learn to live safely. Campaign activities continue alongside this more long-term initiative. In March, the same NGOs operating simultaneously across 8 provinces, held a total of 252 MRE sessions, reaching 16,587 beneficiaries.

In April, the national teacher training programme, PLANCARD, again included MRE training to 29,000 new teachers, inspectors and supervisors. New educational materials, games and handbooks for teachers have been produced which actively encourage participation of school children to make informed decisions about how to live and play in a mine contaminated environment.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continues to provide technical, financial and logistical support to the BiH Mine Action Centre (BHMIC) and to implementing agencies involved in MRE and Landmine Victim Assistance (LMVA).

In April 2005, the research team completed the development and field test of the system of planning for MRE at community level. The developed systematic planning process will complement the already developed process for Community Integrated Mine Action Plan (CIMAP) and allow for a comprehensive mine action response in order to lower landmine risk at community level. A set of guidelines have been developed and are being translated into English for publishing.

In the second part of April, 22 mine action managers from government institutions, Civil Protection, Armies, the BHMIC, and local and international NGOs were introduced and equipped with skills to apply the system of planning for MRE at community level. During April, the local NGO 'AMI', in collaboration with the MAC, has prepared the eight-month project through which 15 of these MRE plans are going to be developed to complete 15 of the 30 already existing CIMAP.

Also in April, the BHMIC in Sarajevo convened the Landmine Victim Assistance Implementation Committee and Policy Board. The Committee and Policy Board includes ministries, government and non-governmental agency representatives. During the one-day meeting, LMVA agencies presented and discussed their plans for 2005 and reported about activities in the last year. Local NGOs and associations had the opportunity to present their projects; and the BHMIC provided an update on progress towards the development of the integration of landmine casualty and victims information management systems into a centrally coordinated database.

In addition, the BHMIC continued with daily activities related to management and quality assurance of MRE in the country.

The local NGO 'Genesis Project' continues with the implementation of the comprehensive school-based landmines and small arms/light weapons (SALW) risk education project. In April, the project, implemented in the federation of BiH and the Republika Srpska, included 20 training workshops for 211 peer educators in 20 primary schools. The trained peer educators are then accompanied by the Genesis Project staff when they plan and initiate their peer education activities. Four hundred seventeen trained peer educators were supported by Genesis and are now confident to continue with peer education activities on their own.

Also in April, 119 schoolteachers from 15 schools that were targeted in 2003, 2004 and 2005, participated in monitoring, evaluation and exchanges of lessons learned through the project. Some findings of the review indicated that: (1) integration of MRE into regular classes is easy to implement and suits teachers, who also appraise the material developed and made available to support their MRE; (2) the peer education approach allows for real participation of children in addressing landmine risks, not only within the classroom but also as members of their community; (3) the volume of MRE activities, formal and un-formal implemented by teachers and peer educators is remarkable; and teachers also stress the importance of the small arms and light weapons (SALW) issue and requested that the SALW aspect of the project to be reinforced including the development of specific materials and training module as they feel unequipped to confront the widespread handling of small arms by their pupils. In addition to the implementation of the current project activities, the NGO Genesis is preparing for the next school year with the deans and experts of the Faculties of Pedagogy the development of modules on MRE, SALW and disability awareness for inclusion into the future schoolteachers' curricula.

The Italian NGO INTERSOS continues the implementation of MRE activities targeting men and women of working age in rural areas either belonging to vulnerable groups (shepherds, hunters, herbs and mushroom collectors, hikers, farmers etc.) or employed in private and public companies whose activities expose workers to mine/UXO risk (mainly in forestry, agriculture and construction).

From mid-January until mid-March, workshop activities were held in six target municipalities. After the presentation of an example of the integrated mine action plan, participants (community leaders and working sector leaders) had the chance to work in groups composed by those representing villages or operating in villages sharing a certain Suspected Hazardous Area (SHA), often the two sides of the front line, planning on their own territory an example of an intervention that includes all mine action components and indicates possible target groups.

After the BHMAL has approved the course curriculum by the second half of April, INTERSOS started the MRE training course for local civil protection, selected community leaders and security managers of private and public companies in the municipality of Bugojno and Srebrenica. The course is meant for the development of basic capacities in planning and implementing simple informative campaigns and educational activities for adults endangered groups in rural areas in coordination with the Local Civil Protection. A tool kit for the Community MRE Representative is developed with participants as one of the activities of the training.

Working groups composed by the leaders of the local communities sharing the same SHA prepared a plan of urgent actions in their territories. The urgent actions plans include priority for information, education and emergency marking as well as an indication of the most needed small survey/clearance operations (opening of corridors, houses of returnees etc.). Part of this will be implemented throughout the remaining project time. Concerning urgent marking, INTERSOS will facilitate the co-ordination among Local Civil Protection, Regional BHMAL and the MRE representatives. UNICEF and the BHMAL will provide for the marking materials. A written procedure and checklist of needed steps for implementing urgent marking, in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and BHMAL regulations, will be left to Local Civil protection and MRE Representatives for future needs.

Chad

In April 2005, UNICEF Chad reinforced its capacity in mine action with the arrival of an MRE officer for a period of six months. The main focus of work during the coming period will be toward:

- 1) Institutional capacity building within the MRE section of the Haut Commissariat National au Déminage (HCND)
- 2) Expanding MRE coverage to all the affected areas in the country
- 3) Integrating MRE in the school curricula package, especially in the most affected areas.

In May 2005, an MRE assessment took place in eastern Chad and another will take place in the north at the end of the month. The need for MRE activities in the field is extensive, as no MRE activities have taken place since July 2004. The assessment goals were primarily to understand the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of the Sudanese refugees in the camps in eastern Chad and of the local population that is more at risk (high and medium impacted areas); to collect information on MRE materials distributed through the 2004 MRE campaign; and to present to local and refugees representatives, local authorities and NGOs the mandate of the HCND and of the MRE section in particular; and to outline the scope of the assessment and the new MRE campaign foreseen. Most of the people interviewed were unaware of the dangers and especially women and children, the most at risk given the traditional division of labour. They often undertake risky behaviours, like moving UXO "to hide them in a safer place", playing with them or collecting spare parts to then be sold at the market.

UNICEF, in collaboration with the HCND, has also prepared an MRE National Plan for 2005 and is creating and producing new materials for the next campaign.

Eritrea

UNICEF continues to provide overall coordination, technical and capacity building support for MRE activities within the sphere of the Mine Action Programme in Eritrea. During the reporting period, UNICEF has continued its implementation of MRE activities with the Eritrea Demining Authority (EDA), the Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO), and with the UNMEE MACC.

Altogether 2,641 adults and 1,814 children have been targeted with MRE. It was noted that volunteers are more often targeting adults in their communities, while with the help of school teachers and MRE teams who are predominately focusing on children, a good balance of targeted groups is achieved.

Between January and March, the six EDO MRE teams targeted 13,812 people. The breakdown per gender and age is as follows: females + 18 (above eighteen years old) 3,256 and below eighteen 3,507; while the situation with males above eighteen is 1,932 and below is 5,117.

During the reporting period, the UNMEE MACC MRE teams targeted 2,336 persons, of whom 1,583 or 68% are children in the Sub Zoba Laelay Gash Zoba G. Barka in Sector West and Sub Zoba Tsorena Zoba Debub in sector Centre. Both teams distributed MRE games for the children in the IDPs camps, as well as in the other kebabis. As a part of ongoing activities, UNMACC MRE teams are collecting data about mine and UXO findings and are providing reports to the UNMEE MACC EOD cell, as well as to EDA EOD and RONCO for their action.

EDO and UNICEF MRE community volunteers have started establishing a reporting system. Out of 20 volunteers trained, 12 have submitted correct IMSMA reports to the EDO MRE Department. Refresher training in reporting methods for the volunteers will be organised at the end of May or in early June.

Moreover, the decision has been made for the setting up of a training programme for a referral system for landmine survivors within the network of orthopaedic workshops. The training will take place in Asmara at Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare on 16 and 17 May. Two EDA, 13 EDO, six UNMEE MACC and one National Red Cross MRE staff will be trained for a total of 22 trainees.

Also, the printing process for four different posters (in total 81,600) and 27,800 leaflets for EDO and UNMACC MRE teams has been initiated.

Ethiopia

In February, UNICEF requested the services of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to conduct an evaluation of the MRE programme in Ethiopia. At the end of March, GICHD presented the draft results of this evaluation to all the MRE stakeholders in Ethiopia and provided a draft copy of the results in the middle of April, again to all the MRE organisations. The MRE actors are expected to provide feedback on the draft document to UNICEF and GICHD by the middle of May. The final evaluation document will be released at the end of May. This document will be available to all interested parties, as UNICEF Ethiopia and local counterparts are happy to share both the success and weakness of the MRE programme to other MRE/ Mine action organisations.

At field level, the Ethiopian Mine Action Office is working with the Rehabilitation Task Forces (volunteer groups) at community level to hand over cleared land. On one visit by UNICEF in the North of the country (Tigray), it was a positive development to see the community using a previously mined watering point, which has been cleared of mines and UXO by the Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO). The community expressed appreciation at the efforts of EMAO especially the work of the Community Liaison staff who informed the communities of their clearance activities.

Democratic Republic of Congo

A community based MRE 'training of trainers' was conducted by the members of the NGO ADRA, trained by UNICEF as trainers in May – June 2004, in the most affected communities in Fizi and Ruzizi plane in South Kivu province. A total of 231 persons were trained in seven villages and five schools between December 2004 and March 2005.

The persons trained will work as sensitisers in these villages and schools. The training focused on basic techniques of direct presentation in MRE; questionnaire and discussion methods for needs assessments and on the dissemination of the correct messages.

From 1 to 10 March, a member of the UNICEF Landmines and Small Arms Team carried out a technical assistance mission to focus on assisting UNICEF DRC on the elaboration of programmatic and operational strategies to respond to the needs of the target population. Subsequent global funding will be provided to support the reinforcement of mine awareness capacities, the production of communication materials and coordination among key actors. It will also allow UNICEF DRC to provide direct support to selected national/international NGO partners involved in mine awareness activities, in collaboration with the MONUC Mine Action Centre. The project will significantly improve awareness for children and women in most at-risk areas and to reinforce capacities and boost implementation of field activities.

Russian – North Caucasus

Two LSP (Landmine and UXO Safety Project) trainings, developed by the UN Mine Action Service, were jointly organised by UNICEF and the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) during the reporting period. These trainings were aimed at providing safety instruction to UN and NGO staff working in a mine/UXO-contaminated environments. About 60 participants from the UNDSS, WFP, WHO, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDP, ACF and FAO attended the seminars.

In April, UNICEF held a sector coordination meeting with participation from the government, the ICRC and NGO partners working in the North Caucasus. Ongoing activities were reviewed and new initiatives were discussed. UNICEF reported on new developments related to its community-based approach to MRE component of its programme – a presentation on this approach was delivered by the Head of Achkhoy-Martanovskiy district administration. Meanwhile, the translation into Russian of the MRE International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) was shared with all relevant agencies.

Mine Risk Education (MRE) in Chechnya

With the support of its main implementing partner, the Voice of the Mountains (VoM), UNICEF completed the creation of 10 focus groups in the districts of Achkhoy-Martanovskiy, Urus-Martanovskiy, Shalinskiy and Gudermesskiy, as well as in Grozny. The Government of Chechnya confirmed its full support for this initiative and provided the necessary assistance. Each focus group includes an administration official, a hospital representative, a religious leader and a representative of the Chechen Youth Committee. The creation of these groups aims at ensuring the future sustainability of the MRE programme in the Republic and identifying appropriate ways to further reduce the impact of mine/UXO contamination. Some 15 'letter-boxes' have also been created in each district of Chechnya for ensuring the effective gathering of information related to mine/UXO incidents. With the support of the focus groups, UNICEF distributed 9,000 MRE leaflets, 300 posters, 90 note-books, 150 pens and 50 t-shirts. All of the above-mentioned activities have been supported with funds from the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) as well as from the British and Dutch National Committees for UNICEF.

With financial support from the British and Dutch National Committees for UNICEF, the State Chechen Drama Theatre and Let's Save the Generation (LSG) conducted MRE drama presentations for schoolchildren in Grozny's secondary schools numbers 1 and 44. A total of 470 children benefited from two presentations. In the same schools, LSG and the Theatre established 2 drama circles and trained 14 children. LSG also continued to monitor the work of 27 drama circles established in 2004 and distributed 150 posters, 150 leaflets and 25 T-shirts in Grozny.

Survivor Assistance

In April, the football team of mine/UXO amputees, which is supported by UNICEF and VoM, participated in the first round of the relevant Russian Football Championship in Volgograd. The UNICEF team performed well and three of its players were short-listed for inclusion in the Russian National Team of Disabled. Meanwhile, 20 disabled girls completed a 2.5 month tailoring course supported by UNICEF through the Society for the Disabled. The girls acquired skills for the production of basic overcoats and bed linen. A new group of 20 disabled girls started their course on 16 April. All students will be receiving a small allowance to cover their transport expenses.

A group of 36 disabled children is currently receiving psychosocial support at the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Centre in Grozny, which is managed by UNICEF, through LSG, with financial support from Germany and the British National Committee for UNICEF. Various therapies (including active listening, art, music and play therapies) are applied for the treatment of these children. These sessions are designed to improve the children's self-esteem as well as decrease their aggression and uncertainty. Children also spend time in the centre's gym and acquire knowledge in computer literacy. LSG psychologists are also providing out-reach counselling for these children's parents, whenever deemed necessary.

Sri Lanka

On 11 April 2005, UNICEF and the European Commission signed a 3-year grant agreement for an amount of 1,299,973 Euros to support UNICEF's MRE and Survivor Assistance programme in Sri Lanka.

On 6 and 7 April, the north central provincial Department of Education of Polonnaruwa organised a 2-day MRE training programme for 35 teachers with the assistance of UNICEF. This training session was part of a long series of trainings that aim to provide MRE skills to teachers of the districts close to mine/UXO affected districts.

A new MRE project has started at the end of April with support from UNICEF. Under the umbrella of the Government Agent's office, three local NGOs working with all communities (Tamil and Singhala) will implement child friendly MRE in 40 locations in the District of Trincomalee. Twenty-seven children's clubs will be established. One hundred child animators from the previous project developed by Save the Children, will undergo refresher trainings and be actively involved in implementing the MRE activities.

As part of the MRE technical working group meetings, on 20 and 21 April, 30 representatives from all MRE agencies working in Sri Lanka met in Batticaloa to discuss the followings points: community liaison, use of volunteers in MRE, IMSMA, and discussions concerning the preparation of MRE activities for the July 2005 mine action week.

Also at this time, and with support from UNICEF and Handicap International, representatives of all 4 orthopaedic centres from the North East province met together to better coordinate their work.

Sudan

During April, UNICEF in the South supported two mine action coordination meetings in Nairobi and Yei. The purpose of the meetings was to discuss and explore the role of key players in MRE and how they can help to prevent mine/UXO injuries, as well as to analyze the current capacity in south Sudan to implement MRE. The main focus was to review who is implementing activities and the locations so as to identify which gaps need to be filled, especially when targeting refugees, returnees and IDPs. There were 20 participants from mine action agencies as well as those who support MRE implementation i.e., the New Sudan Mine Action Directorate (NSMAD), the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Operation Save Innocent Lives (OSIL), Danish Church Aid, Handicap International, Sudan Landmine Response (SLR), UNHCR, UNMAS and UNICEF.

Six MRE sessions were carried out for 260 students in girl's primary school targeting students in primary grades one to five. Additional sessions were basic 'keep safe' messages to 42 casual workers involved in construction of new NGO compounds in Rumbek. Sessions were very important because some areas in Rumbek still have mines and UXO and explosions have often happened but no casualties have been registered to date.

Integration of MRE was also carried out in the presentations to 90 enumerators in Bahr El Ghazel, Equatoria and Upper Nile in the monitoring and tracking of returnees who are coming back to respective places in South Sudan. Enumerators were given basic information and posters to deliver to returnees at the entry point, as well as areas of final settlement, however there is still a limitation of MRE for communities along the return corridors. The current and immediate plan is the identification of the main stop over areas (major towns, water points etc) which will be considered as way-stations for delivery of MRE to returnees.

Other mine action agencies supported by UNICEF (MAG and SLR) activities are Community Liaison, collection of data and delivering of MRE in respective areas of Equatoria through the teams already trained.

Participants in the MASG field mission also had an opportunity to visit and hear a brief presentation from the MRE key player during their visit to Yei on 27 April.

Vietnam

Since February, UNICEF Vietnam has worked with its counterparts including the Committee for Population, Families and Children (CPFC), the Ministry of Defence (MOD), Youth Magazine, Provincial Youth Unions, and other international NGOs such as Catholic Relief Services, the Fund for Reconciliation and Development, and Peace Trees Vietnam to plan MRE activities at the central and provincial levels. Activities for this year will continue to focus on the Central Region provinces including Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thua Thien Hue. In addition, to complement the Luxembourg-supported poverty alleviation programme in the Central Highlands Region provinces, UNICEF Vietnam will conduct MRE in all five provinces of the Region including Gia Lai, Kon Tum, Dak Lak, Dak Nong and Lam Dong.

In April and May, UNICEF and its counterparts have been finalizing the detailed activity implementation plans which focus on MRE through:

- Communication including TV and radio programmes and distribution of IEC print materials
- Community-based MRE that covers child to child MRE activities

- School based MRE
- Advocacy to disseminate information
- Data on Vietnam's UXO/landmine situation to the wider public.

Initial activities are planned to commence in the middle of May.

UNICEF mine action activities for 2005 have received financial support from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Luxembourg Development Agency.