

## **MINUTES**

### **MINE ACTION SUPPORT GROUP MEETING**

**FRIDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2015**

**JAPANESE PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK**

#### **1. WELCOMING REMARKS BY CHAIR**

The meeting was opened at 10,00am by the Chair of the MASG, Ambassador Yoshifumi Okamura, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan. The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting and noted that the agenda had been shortened and that it was now planned to finish by 13.00 hours. This was due to a meeting for the Informal Consultations on the UN Resolution on Assistance in Mine Action being held later in the day. Ambassador Okamura also mentioned that Under-Secretary-General Hervé Ladsous of DPKO would be joining the meeting for a working lunch.

The Chair reminded members that Japan's tenure as Chair of the MASG (2014 -2015) was coming to an end and he provided a short review of the past two years work. In July 2014 Japan hosted an emergency meeting on the situation in Gaza for UNMAS. Over 20 participants had discussed the issue of UXO removal in Gaza and Japan also pledged US\$3 million to the Gaza appeal. Japan had also contributed an additional US\$15 million to Afghanistan, DRC, South Sudan and Sudan in 2014. In March 2015 the MASG arranged a successful field visit to Colombia, and the Chair thanked the Government of Colombia and UNMAS for their assistance with the conduct of the visit. This was the first MASG field visit in over seven years, and the Chair proposed that this should become a regular activity for the MASG. The Chair noted that Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and Oman had recently become members of the MASG. Ambassador Okamura then announced that Italy had agreed to take over as the next Chair of the MASG. In conclusion, the Chair thanked all the MASG members and the Secretariat for their support during Japans two year tenure as Chair.

#### **2. OPENING REMARKS BY UNITED NATIONS**

The UNMAS Director and the Chair of the IACG-MA, Ms Agnès Marcaillou, thanked the Chair and Japan for their support over the past two years, and said that the work of the MASG helped the United Nations and the overall mine action effort. Ms Marcaillou explained that the full details of the work of the United Nations were contained in the Report of the Secretary-General issued in September, so she would only give a brief overview of the highlights.

Ms Marcaillou noted that the Secretary-General includes mine action in his agenda, and in particular in response to emergencies e.g. Gaza and Iraq. The main focus has been on the safety of refugees moving through dangerous areas like Syria and Yemen. However, the issue of mines and UXO are still relevant in some parts of peaceful countries like Croatia. Ms Marcaillou thanked Japan and the MASG for their active engagement in supporting UNMAS in these situations.

Ms Marcaillou noted that since February the services of UNMAS have been in great demand in Syria, Yemen and the Ukraine. In Iraq, the SRSR had requested UNMAS support with IED issues and general stabilization, and the DSRSG had requested UNMAS support in the Kurdish area of the country. The

Humanitarian Coordinator and UNHCR had requested UNMAS to take the lead in mine clearance and coordination in southern Turkey.

In concluding her opening remarks, Ms Marcaillou said that the IACG-MA, under the chair of UNMAS, had been continually monitoring the emerging landmine, ERW and IED threats around the world throughout the year. She thanked the MASG members for supporting the UN system during this busy period.

### **3. UPDATES – KEY AGENCY POLICIES, PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMMES**

#### **3.1 Update from the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group – Mine Action (IACG-MA)**

**3.1.1 General Assembly Resolution on Mine Action – Poland.** Mr Mateusz Sakowicz, 1st Secretary at the Polish Mission to the UN, explained that every two years a Resolution on Assistance in Mine Action was prepared for the 4th Committee. This was the third time in a row that Poland had introduced the draft Resolution (and Mr Sakowicz's second time). In terms of the process Mr Sakowicz explained that a side-event meeting had been held in June and over the summer he had held over 30 bi-lateral meetings. Consultations on the draft text had been held on 15 September and 7 October, another meeting was scheduled for today and then the last was planned for 12 October. The Resolution will be presented for adoption to the 4th Committee on 16 October 2015.

Mr Sakowicz said the resolution features new language on a variety of issues, such as the United Nations monitoring and evaluation; mine risk education, south-south cooperation, peacekeeping and humanitarian aspects, refugees and IDPs. He is also hoping for a greater emphasis on the role of the United Nations to be added in the text, as this has been missing in the past. The issue of IEDs is still open. He thanked the EU and the Netherlands for their support, and noted that more States needed to speak up to ensure that the majority view on issues was heard and prevailed.

**3.1.2 Update from the Chair of the IACG-MA – including new programmes and priorities (UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF).** Ms Marcaillou introduced her UN colleagues and explained that the full details of the update she was about to give are contained in the Power Point presentation which are attached to these minutes. Ms Marcaillou thanked Poland for their work so far in drafting the UN Resolution on Mine Action.

Ms Marcaillou mentioned that the 1<sup>st</sup> review Conference for the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) had been held in Dubrovnik in September. Over 100 countries attended the meeting and the UN made a number of statements at the Conference. The next meeting of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) is scheduled for 9 -13 November in Geneva. UNMAS has coordinated statements and will lead a discussion on anti-vehicle mines. The CCW has also called on High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II to provide information and ideas on the issue of IED's. This issue is of concern to the UN indeed, as IEDs were mentioned seven times in the recent Secretary-Generals report.

The meeting was advised that the UN inter-agency tool for monitoring the implementation of the UN Strategy on Mine Action 2013 – 2018 is being successfully implemented. An increasing number of countries and territories are participating in the process and the findings contribution to several important UN initiatives. A number of findings and statistics were then presented, like the percentage of mine affected countries receiving UN support, the breakdown of mine victim data,

clearance progress, victim assistance and national ownership (see the Power Point presentation for details).

With regards to outreach and advocacy, it was advised that the UN Mine Action Portfolio had been re-vamped and information can be updated online by country or agency. The funding target for 2015 is US\$303 million which covers projects in 24 countries. To date US\$94 million has been received, leaving a shortfall of US\$211 million. The largest need is for Afghanistan which requires US\$40 million, but the good news is that over 80% of Afghanistan has been cleared to date. Urgent funding is currently required for work in Yemen and Syria.

Ms Marcaillou outlined some outreach activities, such as the 'Today's Mine Action News' segment on the UNMAS website and also the new research guide. The activities held on the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Day of Mine Awareness (4 April 2015) were mentioned and UNMAS thanked the Netherlands for their support. UNMAS also thanked Japan for their collaboration on the MASG field trip to Colombia.

Ms Marcaillou recalled that the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of National Mine Action Directors and UN Advisers, hosted by UNMAS and the GICHD, had been successfully held in Geneva from 16 to 20 February 2015. She noted that this was a very practical and relevant meeting for the mine action community. Ms Marcaillou then announced that next year's meeting would be held from 15 to 19 February 2016. The format would be the same as in previous years; however the venue would change to the Palais des Nations in order to take advantage of translation services, among other things.

To conclude this segment of the update, Ms Marcaillou reminded the meeting that as briefed at previous meetings, UNMAS was continuing to strengthen transparency, accountability and efficiency measures through implementing programmes like the International Public Sector Accounting System (IPSAS) and UMOJA.

Ms Sarah Marshall, the UNMAS representative in Syria then gave a brief overview of the current mine and ERW situation in Syria. Ms Marshall said that five staff had deployed under the UNMAS Rapid Response and Technical Support Capacity and that UNMAS had the lead for mine action under the UN Protection Cluster. Surveys had shown that mines and ERW were the main protection concern in over the half the Governates. Three international NGOs were working in the area of Kobani but the situation was extremely difficult due to the presence of IEDs from IS times, airstrikes and large amounts of rubble. Ms Marshall said that despite the difficulties and sensitivities, work can be done to reduce the threat to civilians and she welcomed donor support.

Mr Stan Nkwain gave a short update on the work of UNDP. In Yemen, UNDP had provided substantial support to the national mine action programme (YEMAC) in the past. New contamination and IEDs due to the current fighting were a big problem and UNDP will continue to support Yemen as the conditions allow. UNDP has cooperated with UNMAS in Iraq to help stabilize newly liberated areas before resettlement occurs and also to assist people with disabilities.

Ms Judy Grayson from UNICEF gave an update on their activities in a number of key countries, mainly involving mine risk education. UNICEF had good access throughout Yemen and although the needs were great, they are able to do some work. In Ukraine, UNICEF had been operational since the

start of the recent problems and in Myanmar they were finding new avenues of providing MRE services. In Colombia the Government had asked UNICEF to assist with certain peacebuilding activities and in Nigeria UNICEF is undertaking a needs assessment on behalf of the Un Country Team.

The OCHA representative, Ms Marlies Bull, then outlined the concerns about the use of explosive weapons in populated areas, particularly in countries like Syria, Iraq and Yemen. She noted that the Secretary-Generals report covered the humanitarian impact of explosives on civilians and OCHA is looking at ways to reduce their effects. OCHA is currently working on two reports on the impact of ERW on humanitarian access and recovery. The link to three OCHA policy update papers on Yemen, Ukraine and Libya will be posted on the MASG website.

### **3.2 Update from Donors**

**3.2.1 Germany.** The representative of Germany announced that Germany had recently approved a new strategy for mine action. One of the main changes was to significantly reduce the number of beneficiary countries, down from a previous high of 20. The budget for mine action support remained stable at EURO 15 million per year. Germany works through NGOs, but also supports the United Nations agencies, as they believe that the UN has an important role to play. Germany draws heavily on the information provided by UNMAS about the landmine situation in various countries, and Germany is currently working with UNMAS on a two year project in Western Sahara.

**3.2.2 Australia.** The Australian representative thanked the Chair for their work. He noted that in the period 2010 to 2014 Australia had contributed a total of AUD\$ 125 million to mine action (an average of almost AUD\$ 30 million per year). However, this has reduced significantly now to AUD\$ 4 million this year – with the main recipients being Cambodia and Palau, plus a small global programme. The Australian Defence Force provides Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) support in the Pacific region through Operation Render Safe (Bougainville in 2014 and another country in 2016). Australia hosted a counter-IED symposium in Canberra from 2 to 4 September. (See full statement on MASG website)

**3.2.3 Netherlands.** The Netherlands aims to contribute to a world free from the threat of Landmines, Cluster Munitions and other Explosive Remnants of War by; 1) an un-earmarked contribution to the VTF of UNMAS for global Mine Action coordination and 2) through direct funding of their NGO partners; MAG, Handicap International, The Halo Trust and Danish Church Aid. The Netherlands is currently evaluating the Dutch multi-year ‘Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme 2012-2016’ of EURO 45 million and looking at continuing with a new four year programme, starting mid-2016. The evaluation (which has not been completed yet) indicates some important points. Some preliminary findings are;

- Providing NGO’s with predictable, four-year funding allowed them to make more efficient use of resources that resulted in greater impact with less input, saving time and money and provide better job security for staff.
- The four year funding created opportunities to work on innovative approaches and improving internal processes, forge new relations and plan post-impact assessments.
- Four year funding provides flexibility to deal with changing situations in unexpected circumstances.

- The secure funding allowed NGO's to attract additional funds.

The Netherlands will use the best practices and learned lessons for the new Mine Action and Cluster Munitions Programme and is open to share these with other interested donors and actors

**3.2.4. Japan.** The total amount of Japan's assistance to Mine Action in the financial year 2014 (April 2014 - March 2015) amounted to US\$ 49.1 million for 35 projects in 19 countries and areas. The top recipients of mine action assistance in FY 2014 were Lao PDR, Cambodia, South Sudan, Iraq and Afghanistan. Japan contributed US\$ 15 million to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund (UN-VTF) for country programmes, and also to the UNMAS headquarters coordination costs. Japan provided a total of US\$ 1.99 million for UNICEF towards Mine Risk Education. Japan has also supported projects of triangular cooperation between Cambodia, Laos and Japan, and also hosted a workshop on south-south cooperation in New York in April this year. (See full statement on MASG website)

**3.2.5 United States of America.** The United States continues to provide significant financial support to mine action, with a focus on conventional weapons destruction. The main priorities are to protect lives and property of US citizens and its allies, clean up US weapons and to destroy/secure stockpiles of convention arms (especially man-portable air defence weapons - MANPADS). The humanitarian mine action (HMA) focus is on clearing land contaminated with US-caused explosive remnants of war (ERW) , such as countries affected during WWII and the Vietnam War. The US has an active humanitarian demining programme in Syria, and is using HMA to help advance the peace process in Colombia. The US funding level for humanitarian mine action remains constant at approximately US\$150 million per year.

**3.2.6 Canada.** The representative of Canada appreciated the important work of the Mine Action Support Group (MASG). Since 2006, Canada has contributed more than CA\$ 230 million to mine action. Canadian funding is used to support activities related to the humanitarian impact of all explosive munitions (be they mines, cluster munitions, unattended ordnance or other explosive remnants of war) to increase access to safe land for agriculture and other socio-economic purposes; and enable conditions for stabilization and reconstruction in affected states. The Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF), which is currently one of the main sources of funding for mine and cluster munitions action has committed CA\$ 10 million for mine action over the fiscal years 14/15 and 15/16. The majority of these projects are ongoing, with activities taking place in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, Iraq, PDR Lao, Sri Lanka, Ukraine, and Vietnam. Canada became a party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) on 1 September 2015. Canada has provided funding to cluster munitions decontamination projects in Lao PDR and Vietnam in the last two years. Since 2006, Canada has provided funding for other unexploded ordnance clearance activities in Mozambique, Uganda, South Sudan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Palau, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Chad. (See full statement on MASG website)

**3.2.7 Italy.** Ambassador Lambertini announced that Italy had recently increased its contribution to mine action from EURO 1 million per year up to EURO 3.5 million per year. Their main focus is Colombia, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Gaza and Afghanistan. Italy had also recently completed the destruction of all its stockpiles of cluster munitions under the provisions of the Convention of Cluster Munitions.

## 4. UPDATE FROM OBSERVERS AND OTHER PRESENTATIONS

### 4.1 Update from observers

**4.1.1 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).** The Director of the GICHD, Ambassador Stefano Toscano, informed the meeting that the GICHD had moved office and was now located in the Maison de la Paix in Geneva. This is a new building complex close to the UN headquarters and which hosts a number of organizations working in the field of peace and security. The proximity to those organizations helps the GICHD design and implement joint initiatives, which command greater convening power and offer more comprehensive support packages. One concrete example was given about the GICHD working in the Ukraine with the OSCE and DCAF (the Geneva Centre for Democratic Control of Armed Forces), which contributes to making the GICHDs efforts on mine action part of broader efforts to improve good governance in the Ukrainian security sector. The GICHD now runs and supports language outreach programmes in French, Arabic, Farsi and Russian. The Russian programme is the latest and was launched earlier this year. Because of the importance of embedding mine action into the broader frame of human security, the GICHD is also developing a new tool called PriSMA. The tool, through its GIS component, will clarify the degree of proximity between hazards and vulnerable communities, and hazards and assets such as schools, hospitals and infrastructure. This will help national authorities in their priority-setting efforts. Finally, the GICHD is contributing - from an evidence-based perspective - to various policy debates on matters of human security, for example, by undertaking a study last year together with SIPRI, on the humanitarian and developmental impact of anti-vehicle mines (AVM). This work on AVM is currently being followed up by further research.

**4.1.2 International Trust Fund – Enhancing Human Security (ITF).** The Director of the ITF, Ambassador Damjan Bergant, stated that the ITF were pleased to continue to be an observer at the MASG meetings. He reminded the meeting that the ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) was established by the Slovenian Government in March 1998 as a non-profit and humanitarian organization, as an indispensable partner of various stakeholders carrying out mine action projects, mainly clearance and victim assistance, in post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina. Gradually, following the needs of other governments, the wishes of donor community, and its good reputation, ITF has expanded its activities to the rest of South East Europe as well as other conflict-affected regions and countries: Central Asia, South Caucasus, North Africa, and the Middle East. An expanded geographic area came hand in hand with a broadening thematic scope of activities; firstly dealing with demining and mine victim assistance, ITF now covers the entire spectrum of humanitarian mine action and beyond. The human security approach is reflected within two ITF Strategic Pillars as cornerstones of ITF operations. The scope of **Strategic Pillar I** is to reduce threats from mines, explosive remnants of war and other at-risk weapons and ammunition and **Strategic Pillar II** is facilitation of safe, long-term development and building resilience of conflict-affected communities. (The full statement by Ambassador Bergant is available on the MASG website)

**4.1.3 Organization of American States (OAS).** Mr Carl Case, the General Coordinator for the OAS mine action programme, reminded the meeting that the OAS had been involved with mine action for 25 years. Of the 11 mine or ERW affected countries in the region; seven are now free of mines. Of the remaining four, three are nationally run programmes and only Colombia is still reliant on external assistance. The OAS plays a key role of monitoring mine action work in Colombia and the

OAS has used demining as a pilot project for peacebuilding. (A copy of the OAS handout is on the MASG website)

#### **4.2 James Madison University / Center for International Stabilization and Recovery (JMU/CISR).**

Ms Lindsay Aldrich, Senior Project Manager from JMU/CISR, provided a brief update of their current work and also outlined changes to the Journal of ERW and Mine Action. The Journal has provided a primary resource to donors and practitioners for the past 20 years and it is the longest running journal dedicated to mine action issues. As from Issue 20.1 in spring 2016 the Journal will change its name to 'The Journal of Conventional Weapons Destruction'. This is to better reflect the nature of the explosive ordnance situation in the world today and the work being undertaken in the field. Ms Aldrich encourages members to submit articles along these lines for the spring edition next year. JMU/CISR also has the responsibility to publish the annual US State Department report titled 'To Walk the Earth in Safety' and the next edition is due out shortly. JMU/CISR is also in the process of developing an on-line GIS data and analysis repository that will be able to provide maps to donors, operators and the public for free.

**4.3 Nearing Completion – the Case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).** The Country Director of Norwegian People Aid (NPA) in DRC, Mr Pehr Lodhammar, provided an overview of the progress of mine clearance in the DRC. Using a Power Point presentation, Mr Lodhammar explained that a survey undertaken in 2013 showed that there were 130 'suspected hazardous areas' in DRC. Now, 18 months later there are 85 SHA's remaining. The deadline for DRC to meet its APMBC clearance obligation is 2021, but at current clearance rates it should be able to achieve this by 2017. The main donors to DRC are Germany, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, and the USA. The work in the country is a collaborative effort between the national authority (CCLAM), UNMAS and NGO operators. (The presentation by Mr Lodhammar is available on the MASG website).

## **5. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **5.1 Next Meeting of the MASG.**

It was agreed in principle that the next meeting of the MASG would be held in Geneva during the week of 15 – 19 February 2016, to coincide with the next annual meeting of National Mine Action Directors and UN Advisers. The new Chair of the MASG (Italy) would consult with partners and announce the exact date nearer to the time.

### **5.2 Next Chair of the MASG.**

As was announced by the Ambassador Okamura in his opening remarks, it had been agreed that Italy would be the next Chair of the MASG, and Ambassador Okamura invited Ambassador Lambertini of Italy to say a few words. Ambassador Lambertini said that Italy was proud to succeed Japan as the Chair of the MASG, and that Japan and Italy had always enjoyed a long standing cooperation. He said that it was a common goal of all MASG members for a world free of landmines and ERW and there was still a long way to go, despite some good achievements (such as Mozambique recently declaring itself mine free). Ambassador Lambertini said Italy will maintain the high standards of the Group and will encourage a consensual approach to common issues. He will strive to keep the

Group active and relevant and he confirmed that Italy is willing to be the Chair for two years and that he will maintain the frequency of two meetings per year.

### **5.3 Report of the MASG Secretariat.**

The report of the MASG secretariat for 2015 is available on the MASG website.

### **6. WORKING LUNCH – ADDRESS BY USG HERVE LADSOUS, DPKO**

During the lunch break the meeting was joined by the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr Hervé Ladsous and also Assistant Secretary-General Dmitry Titov of OLROSLI. Mr Ladsous said that it was a privilege to join this meeting of mine action donors, and he congratulated Japan on its role as Chair and welcomed Italy as the new Chair.

Mr Ladsous started by saying that in recent years there had been an increase in the number of requests for humanitarian assistance from countries like Iraq, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen. He said that the number of people affected by such crises had doubled in the past 10 years and also they required assistance for longer periods. Mr Ladsous said that the UN also had a pivotal role to play in new areas, such as preventing accidental explosions in ammunition dumps. He recalled that he visited Kinshasa two years shortly after a major explosion in an ammunition dump, and he was shocked by the level of destruction and loss of life. He then gave some examples where UNMAS had been able to assist countries to improve their ammunition storage facilities, such as in Bangui.

Mr Ladsous noted that the last major humanitarian discussion took place over 25 years ago so he welcomed the World Humanitarian Summit scheduled for May 2016 in Istanbul. He said that the IACG-MA is working with the meeting secretariat to address issues like the linkages between mine action and humanitarian assistance, access, protection and the use of explosives in populated areas. He noted that mine action is often a critical enabler for humanitarian relief.

At last week's leaders' summit on Peacekeeping Operations, Mr Ladsous said that many leaders expressed concern about combatting or defeating explosive hazards. He said that not a day goes by without a peacekeeping mission somewhere in the world being attacked by rockets or affected by landmines, ERW or IEDs.

In conclusion, Mr Ladsous said that dealing with explosive hazards was also relevant in the new Sustainable development Goals (SDG) particularly with regards to fighting poverty. Mr Ladsous said that in this period of protracted conflict there were growing expectations for the UN to respond. He urged donors to support the Mine Action Resolution in the 4<sup>th</sup> Committee and to also provide financial assistance to UNMAS and its partners. He was optimistic that the UN could continue to deliver with the support of UNMAS and the UN team.

In response to a question from the UK about prioritization and dealing with IED's, Mr Ladsous said that the UN response and priorities depending on the events on the ground. Obviously new threats mean having to find new ways to address problems and this often takes time. With regards to IEDs Mr Ladsous said that DPKO had undertaken three steps; raising the awareness of IEDs among DPKO

staff, training people in technical methods plus 'common sense' responses, and by providing better equipment like electronic jammers and 'mine proof' vehicles.

The Chair thanked Mr Ladsous and Mr Titov for their presence at the meeting and pledged to ongoing support of the MASG to the UNs mine action efforts.

## **7. MEETING CLOSE**

The meeting closed at 13.00 hours.

Final Version