

OAS Update

MASG Meeting, Geneva – February 2015

The Organization of American States (OAS) is a regional organization established in 1948 with the goal of encouraging sustainable peace, justice, solidarity, collaboration, integrity, and independence among the nations of the Americas. OAS advances this goal through activities related to the central themes of democracy, human rights, security, and development.

In the context of OAS General Assembly Resolution 2735, “Advancing Hemispheric Security: A Multidimensional Approach,” the OAS General Secretariat’s Program of Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines, known as AICMA, channels international donor assistance in order to provide financial, technical, logistical and administrative support to OAS Member States in a wide range of mine action activities. AICMA has played a key role in enabling the governments of Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Suriname to declare their national territories free of the threat of antipersonnel landmines.

Since the completion of all humanitarian demining activities in Central America in 2010, the AICMA program has continued its support of various activities mainly in Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. By the end of 2013, Ecuador and Peru assumed full national ownership for management and financing of their mine clearance efforts, while Colombia continues to receive significant material and financial support through AICMA.

During 2014, AICMA provided direct assistance to the Colombian government in humanitarian demining, resulting in the release of 1,641,634 square meters. In addition to its supporting role in demining processes, AICMA carries out complementary actions including liaison with affected communities, mine-risk education and landmine survivor identification and assistance, as well as micro-financing for community projects aimed at economic reactivation of cleared areas. Within Colombia’s program, AICMA also carries out critical functions in applying the quality management system on behalf of the national mine action authority. Specifically, AICMA monitors all mine clearance operations to ensure compliance with national and international standards and provides quality control by inspecting all cleared areas. AICMA mission also reviews the structure, procedures and operational capacity of humanitarian demining organizations, whether government or civilian, and provides technical comments and recommendations on accreditation. These efforts have been ongoing throughout the current year, thanks to the generous support of the governments of the United States and Italy and funding arrangements with the European Commission and the UN Mine Action Service.

AICMA continued to support physical and psychological rehabilitation for landmine survivors in Peru throughout 2014. Under the current project supported by the Kingdom of Belgium, some 85 Peruvian survivors will have received assistance by mid-2015, as the Program transitions to full national responsibility for these services.