

**19th International Meeting of
Mine Action National Programme Directors and UN Advisers**

**Plenary Session 4: Strategies for Reducing Vulnerability – Cooperation between
Humanitarian, Development and Peacebuilding Actors**

Feedback Session: Thursday, 18 Feb. 2016, 11:20 to 11:30

Presented by Hans Risser, UNDP Regional Specialist for Development and Mine Action

Following the introductory presentations provided in Plenary Session on Wednesday, participants were invited to join one of the three following break-out discussion groups:

Resilient Institutions: Room XXII
Facilitator: Miljenko Vahtaric, Assistant Director, CROMAC
Rapporteur: Hans Risser

Resilient Communities: Room XXIII
Facilitator: H.E. Mr. Prum Sophakmonkol, Secretary General, CMAVAA
Rapporteur: Sara Sekkenes

Resilient Individuals: Room XXIV
Facilitator: Mr. Arben Braha, Director, AMMCO
Rapporteur: Oksana Leshchenko

Each group received the same four questions, but with a specific focus on one of the levels of beneficiaries highlighted in the plenary presentations:

Q1: How do needs of mine action beneficiaries change over time, particularly transitioning from a humanitarian post-conflict setting, to early recovery to sustainable development?

Q2: How do humanitarian and development actors work and plan together to achieve resilient, sustainable results? Or how and why do they not work together?

Q3: How do projects, ensure the results and benefits are sustainable and resilient?

Q4: What are 3 key challenges to provide mine action support and ensure resilience in beneficiaries?

Despite the focus on different levels of beneficiaries, common issues and lessons learnt emerged in the discussion groups. In particular, the discussion groups highlighted the need to take a long-term approach in order to build resilience. There was a recognition that the needs and priorities of mine action beneficiaries change over time. Across all levels of beneficiaries, transparent and participatory decision-making involving the beneficiaries was highlighted as a necessary means of instilling resilience. Examples were provided in the discussion groups by Afghanistan, Croatia and Cambodia, where mine action priorities during the immediate post-conflict era focused on housing, road clearance and the resettlement of returnees. Mine fields closest to populated areas were the high priority, but as these areas were cleared and the country moved into an early recovery stage and later a sustainable development phase, the priorities for mine clearance changed. In a more sustainable development phase, the areas remaining for mine clearance are often located away from populated areas, in more

remote areas with less population density. While these areas may not present a humanitarian concern due to their remoteness, these areas may have more ecological and development concerns. In Croatia, for example mine clearance is today taking place in remote forested areas or biological reserves where environmental conservation has a high priority in sensitive ecological areas. Participants in the group discussions recognized that the priorities for mine clearance therefore shift and the indicators should be adjusted accordingly.

Participants recognized that, in order to instill resilience in beneficiaries, the long-term nature of the interventions required coordination and transition among actors. Participants stated that it is not enough to clear a house so that a refugee or IDP can return to live in it. But agricultural fields around the house, roads, industry and market places in the community need to be cleared as well to ensure the returnee is able to have a livelihood. If the returnee is not able to find employment or work, then their return will not be sustainable. In a similar manner, participants stated that it is not enough to just provide a landmine survivor with a prosthesis. Instead the survivor also needs physical rehabilitation, reintegration and empowerment to take charge of their own recovery in order for it to be sustainable. The group discussions therefore recommended a cross-sectorial approach and the interventions of various actors including but not limited to multiple ministries (e.g. Ministries for Agriculture and Forestry), local government, NGOs, development actors and humanitarians. The groups also recommended that these transitions and involvement of various actors also required that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms needed to adjust over time as well.

Key elements for resilient institutions highlighted by the group discussions included inclusion of the institutions into national government budgets and legal frameworks that integrate the institutions into the state system. Sustainable core funding was seen as key element to ensure the resilience of institutions.

Key challenges to ensuring resilience that were identified by the group discussions included Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Frameworks. Participants stated that M&E frameworks should always ask the following questions: what to monitor? What to evaluate? How to monitor it? And who is it being monitored for? The participants in the group discussions suggested that donors should understand that priorities change over time and indicators on casualty rates and humanitarian impact may not be so relevant in more mature mine action projects.

Identifying funding opportunities was also highlighted as a key challenge. To illustrate the point, Croatia provided the example of when they were first admitted as a full member of the EU and there was no funding mechanism established for mine clearance in a member state, because prior to their accession there were no mine affected countries within the borders of the EU. Working closely with Brussels, the Croatia government was eventually able to identify funding that could be allocated to mine action as part of rural development funding and for the preservation of environment.

Participants also recognized that open and transparent mine action institutes are more resilient, but that they face a growing concern about the classification of sensitive information related to minefields

and UXO in politically sensitive areas. Clear communications was also identified as key to the credibility of institutions and thus enabling them to overcome and survive difficult situations.

And as a final conclusion, all three of the groups stated that context matters and that there is 'no one size fits all' approach to mine action. Programmes and mine action interventions should therefore be context specific regardless of whether the beneficiary is at the institutional, community or individual level.