

MASG

Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

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1. Unformal Minutes MASG Meeting 25 Oktober 2005

1. Welcome and adoption of the agenda.

The chair, ambassador Jeno Staehlin, informs that Mr. Jean Develin of Canada will make a short presentation on mainstreaming before lunch. He then underlines that an important part of today's discussion will be an exchange of view on the future format of MASG and the future chair. Time has come to re-examine the role of MASG, determining its usefulness to the participants and the governments they represent.

2. Address by Undersecretary for peace-keeping operations Jean-Marie Guéhenno

He underlines the importance of the forum and the fact that it has focused on a set of significant issues like mine action and development. It has provided an opportunity to share views among donors and the UN. He thanks the group as a whole, saying that he is aware of its ongoing deliberations on the future of the forum. Sharing some observations on its utility, he says that a donor forum in New York has the potential to support the UN in two essential ways : it provides an invaluable opportunity for sharing information and provides with a vehicle to communicate views to donors through the newsletter. Though funding decisions are not made by the group, this gives the possibility to communicate with capitals. He also mentions that the MASG is a forum to enlist support to integrate mine action in UN actions with informations that are shared with colleagues in other forums. When the security council takes up for example the issue of operations in Eritrea, the importance of mine action can be highlighted and break its isolation from other activities of the System. The general assembly takes up the humanitarian segment of its agenda and those informed of mine action can take up in the rest of the agenda all matters related to mine action. In addition, in the area of information sharing it can provide inputs on current issues of concern like development of mine action plans and budget or develop national strategic plans in compliance with treaty obligations. There is a tension between a cost-efficient approach and the fulfilment of the mine ban treaty obligations. This leads to asking how mine affected countries should organise their priorities. Another issue is the consent on the new UN mine action strategic plan after the mid 2003 revision. The UN mine action team has taken stock of the achievement of goals set in 2001. We are at a very important juncture of the evolution of the mine action sector, illustrated by the definition of end-state and exit strategy. Although the same donor support as five years ago is not expected, there has to be well-planned activities for reaching the defined goal - when assistance is no more needed - with the donors' partnership and guidance.

J-M. Guéhenno finally mentions that the name of the new UNMAS director, a very experienced person, will soon be announced, once the last administrative step is completed.

2.1. Brief discussion

Before USG Guéhenno leaves the room, the chair refers to the content of the lunch discussion, anticipating that there has been suggestions of UNMAS taking over a more important role in running the MASG, like taking over the secretarial responsibility. UNMAS would be happy to do it, but the only caveat is that the more frequent the meetings are, the more there is paperwork and cost and time implications. The group can look at an optimal frequency of meetings without overloading the system. According to the chair, a few delegations agree that the number of meetings should be reduced. Meetings should be arranged around important issues and not the other way around.

3. Presentation by Alistair Craib : measures of success leading to end – state.

A. Craib presents the issues currently under discussion in DIFID. Given that it is increasingly apparent that current resources are not going to be there forever, there should be a strategic objective by donors to strike the balance between what we are prepared to achieve and what can possibly be achieved. While responsibility rests with mine affected countries, once in full control they will need external support. The end-state is not a world free of landmines or impact-free and this cannot be a donor's strategic objective. It has to be articulated to the measures of success donors would like to see. They have to plot the right course and plan the exit early.

Proposals for the definition of an end-state are brought forward, like "the government of the mine-affected state has in place institutional mechanisms and operation capacity sufficient to continue by itself", the measures of success being "effective planning and coordination mechanisms are in place and authorised"; "realistic strategic vision and plan of action for short, medium and long term"; "national mine action resources are available"

The exit strategy is to encourage the creation of national capacities from the very beginning. Once the measures of success are in place, a plan of action will be defined and a provisional timetable for exit will be set. The other end-state possible is that if the first one is not achieved in reasonable time, "alternative end-states will be set, that will vary according to the situation", in which case the measures of success will be impact reduction, or confidence/building, peace support. For the exit, at least a twelve months notice would be given and discussed with implementing partners.

These proposals would have to be discussed among donors, hoping for a common approach or at least understanding of each others' position.

4. Presentation by Ian Mansfield of the GICHD : "trends and developments in mine action with a forward-looking view".

Ian Mansfield looks at the trends of mine action starting by how the scale and impact of the mine problem is being defined. The matter is no longer discussed in terms of numbers of mines. The trend is that there are less mines being laid and more mine action programmes being initiated. The impact is being calculated through victims numbers, but this is imprecise and the decrease. The landmine impact surveys give a snapshot in time but it is static. Countries have difficulties in defining the socio-economic impact. The sector tried to look at the impact from the community point of view. The mine action sector is still mainly focused on the humanitarian aspect, with short term funding, while mainstreaming and economic development becomes more and more relevant. Peacebuilding and mine action is a component that could be enlarged. Ownership by mine-affected states is an accepted principle. Mine action is mainly donor funded but the group of major donors is small. There is public and private partnerships that cover only 5 % of mine action funds. Stakeholders in mine action: a clearly designated focal point of mine action in the UN is one of the best achievements in mine action so far. There is no new trend on who the stakeholders are.

Trends and future of mine action : the interest is cyclic but declining. There is influence on processes like CCW. There are 40 countries with programmes and a record participation at intersessional and state parties meetings. The International law is catching up with reality (ERW, CCW). The sector will continue to broaden ERW but not small arms and light weapons, though some countries have joined it together. Concerning mainstreaming, there is a risk of mine action being lost in development while the humanitarian focus has given it an identity.

The nature of the funding changes. Concerning the millennium goals, mine action will only play a small part in poverty reduction. The Ottawa convention provides a timeframe for many countries, but there is need for clarification of "mine free" or "impact free". Criteria are set for extension. There is a tension between humanitarian aspects and disarmament

Ccw, in turn, doesn't provide a framework but there is a trend to include humanitarian aspects. Concerning national ownership, while it exists in many cases, there is few transfer from the UN. Donors often overwhelm affected states. The end-state for donors is the exit. 2009 is not the closing date for mine action.

4.1. Q& A : some examples of mine action and peace-building are brought up : Afghanistan, Sudan, Cyprus. Gender question is also raised; within the UN there are gender guidelines. The US mentions residual capacity being left as the best exit strategy.

According to the UK, the indirect impact of landmines should also be taken into account in the analysis for funding, assuming that there will be an increasing trend towards development support and mainstream. There is the risk that donors would walk away in 2009 if the goal is not clearly set as leaving local capacity instead of clearing all landmines. The “flex in the graph” is pointed out by Bob Eaton as the transition state (example of Mozambique), where there has to be money for reconstruction and development, when victim numbers have dropped significantly. The end-state implies donor coordination at the national level, recognizing that national authorities are more and more on the front in mine action (example of Kosovo)

5. Country briefing of Nepal by Julian Temple of UNICEF.

It is an example where mine action is at an entry point, in the middle of an armed conflict in a country not signatory of the Convention, where a non-state actor is laying Improvised Explosive Devices. UNICEF had to work on MRE and information management, developing a MRE emergency kit. It had to start negotiating compliance with international norms by the government and the rebels, acknowledging that most of the territory is under the latter's control. In-country civilian mine-clearance capacity doesn't exist.

6. Technical presentation on pyrotechnic torch dragon and handheld dual technology mine detector/minehound (UK/DFID).

The mine action research programme (MAR) has developed a locally manufactured destruction device, a low-cost torch that consists of a cardboard tube with plaster of Paris and aluminium powder and igniter. A first factory unit is in Cambodia. The other device is a dual sensor mine detector for false alarm reduction called “minehound”.

7. AOB :

- Jean Develin of Canada presents the joint initiative led with GICHD on mainstreaming mine action into development. A first informal dialogue among donors has taken place in the margins of last June's Intersessional. There, it was decided to have a second dialogue to further deepen the discussion, that will take place on the 5th and 6th of December in Geneva, back to back with the 6th MSP. Mainstreaming started to make its way at the 5th MSP in Bangkok, then took momentum. Studies have been done by Norway, publications by UNDP. The Nairobi Action Plan mentions establishing a better link with development. The NAP has given a way forward to deal with MAP to find complementary ways to reach the objectives of the Convention. The right people (from development) should come to the meeting. An official invitation will follow. There is also thinking of an initiative at a development assistance committee.

- the not-so-encouraging developments of the 4th committee concerning the negotiation of a resolution on assistance in mine action are also commented, but there seems to be a commitment to reaching a consensus, though some warn of the risk of lowering the bar with the regard to the previous one of 2003. Discussion revolves around whether it would be better to go to a vote with substance or if this would contribute to paralysing the GA with a secondary issue. The European Commission wants to keep it as a consensus resolution.

8. Lunch discussions concerning the future of MASG :

The fact that nobody has volunteered to chair the MASG from 2006 onward and that few answers have been received to the questionnaire on this issue leads to the need of redefining the role of this forum. There are many views on what the MASG should be doing and this has developed through time from a disarmament perspective to a multidimensional one. There needs to be a clearer idea of the MASG content and objectives before deciding on its format. There is a consensus on the fact the frequency of the meetings should be reduced, that the group remains an informal one and that there is a need for a stronger involvement of UNMAS.

On the basis of the discussion, Switzerland is sending to all members a document on the future role and format of the MASG (see annex).

The next meeting will take place on the 13th of December

2. Provisional Agenda MASG Meeting 13 December 2005

MASG Meeting 13 December 2005

Provisional Agenda:

1. Welcome address by the Chair
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Thematic presentations on mine action in UN peacekeeping operations:
 - UNMEE Evaluation (Stephan Nellen, Director GICHD)
 - Update on Sudan (UNMAS)
4. Discussion
5. Country Presentation: Bosnia (UNDP)
6. Discussion
7. Final observations from the Swiss chairmanship; new concept for MASG; introduction of next chair
8. AOB
 - Presentation of the Mine Action Portfolio 2006 (UNMAS)
 - Victim assistance projects (UNMAS)
 - New Landmine and ERW Safety Handbook (UNMAS)

3. Updates

3.1 Update from UNMAS

POLICY, TREATY IMPLEMENTATION, INFORMATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Policy Coordination

On 10 October 2005, the Inter Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action met and approved the UN mine action communications strategy. The participants also decided to begin reviewing and revising the UN mine action strategy. The review of the mine action strategy for the period 2001-2005 will be finalized early next year, and the development of a new five-year strategy is expected to be finalized by May 2006. The new Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) was discussed, focusing on the need for a greater understanding of the information management policy implications associated with the new system. The question was raised whether there is a need for a coordinating body to ensure UN input on the policies and guidelines necessary for achieving the best possible roll-out of the new system.

Portfolio of Mine Action Projects

As a lead-up to preparations for the 2006 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects (Portfolio), the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) Resource Mobilization Officer, representing the Headquarters Portfolio team, participated in a four-day session in Nairobi, Kenya with Country Portfolio Coordinators (CPCs) from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Sudan. The participants engaged in regional discussions on the Portfolio, attended a meeting of the Sudan Portfolio Team, and conducted peer training of CPCs. The 2006 Portfolio is scheduled to be launched in New York on 22 November.

Technology

During the September 2005 National Director's and Technical Advisor's conference in Geneva, a technology workshop was held which confirmed the need for a more practical technical meeting of experts. With the assistance of the Government of Canada, a specialist technical workshop will be held in Geneva in February 2006.

The UNMAS Technology Coordinator visited Sri Lanka and has confirmed the recommendation that all programmes experiment with the rake system. The Technology Coordinator also visited the University of Montana, where considerable work has been conducted on the use of honey bees to detect mines and UXO. It has now been agreed that a field test of the system will take place at the Canadian Centre for Mine Action Technologies in the spring of 2006, and the Technology Coordinator will facilitate trials of the system in a mine-affected country.

Landmine & ERW Safety

In October, the UNMAS Mine Risk Education Officer facilitated a four-day trainer workshop on landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) safety in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A total of 13 participants, mainly Ethiopian nationals, from various UN agencies (UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, and UNDP), international and national non-governmental organizations (International Rescue Committee, Médecins Sans Frontières – Netherlands, Relief and Development Organization (Ethiopia)) and the Government of Ethiopia, were trained on delivering landmine safety briefings, preparing a plan of action and drafting a

country-specific curriculum. The workshop helped to raise awareness of the threat from landmines and ERW in Ethiopia, as well as to promote understanding of mine action in general. The majority of the participants traveled from field offices to Addis Ababa to participate in the training workshop.

The UN Security Management Team in Addis Ababa has made approval of travel clearances conditional on participation in a mandatory 45-minute landmine safety briefing. UN staff visiting Addis Ababa and other non-mine affected areas receive a standard introductory safety briefing, approximately 5 minutes of which will be on landmines and ERW.

II. NEW PLEDGES, EARMARKINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VOLUNTARY TRUST FUND (VTF)

VTF Pledges:

US\$ 2,530,100	Netherlands	Sudan (P04-SU10, P04-SU09, P04-SU06, P04-SU08)
US\$ 832,864	Denmark	UNMAS global activities in 2005

III. DEVELOPMENTS IN UNMAS-MANAGED PROGRAMMES

Afghanistan (UNMACA)

Field operations were maintained throughout October for most of the country. Additionally, UNMACA, working with the support of UNDP, has continued to work with the Government of Afghanistan on the issue of transition, with various supporting activities being undertaken, including internal analysis and planning. Ongoing capacity-building with implementing partners and counterparts also continued in areas including administration and finance. Some operations were suspended for a short time during the election day process in late September, but were resumed immediately after its conclusion. A number of attacks on mine action personnel also occurred, including a direct targeting of HALO Trust personnel working on munitions destruction in the South West. Sadly, a number of HALO personnel were also killed during a separate road traffic accident on their way to work near Bagram.

Sudan (UNMIS)

On 31 October 2005, a Fondation Suisse de Deminage (FSD) mine clearance team working in support of the World Food Program's road reconstruction and rehabilitation program was ambushed on Juba–Nimule road in South Sudan, resulting in the deaths of two FSD colleagues (one international, one national staff) and injuries to two Sudanese Government soldiers. The UN has suspended all operations around the area and is evaluating the security situation.

The UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) has dispatched an Operations Officer to Yei to set up a subsidiary office in order to enhance coordination of various agencies working in the area. UNMAO concluded a pre-deployment visit to the Kenyan military demining company to be deployed to Sector 2 (Wau). UNMAO concluded that the Kenyan company will be able to conduct manual demining activities in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and can be deployed immediately. UNMAO conducted a training visit for the Egyptian military company to be deployed to Sector 4 (Kadugli), and the Egyptian company was successfully trained and accredited according to IMAS.

The final consultation of the UN and Partners Work Plan 2006 for the mine action sector was held with the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General/Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator in Khartoum, and the sector plan and supporting projects were approved. The Work Plan team is working on the finalization of the document.

Cyprus (UNFICYP)

The clearance program in the buffer zone continued in October, with additional funding from the European Union that will carry the program into 2006. Turkey's agreement to the demining program had allowed Phase II of the program, focusing on minefields of Turkish and unknown origin in the buffer zone, to commence in August 2005, with clearance teams operating in three Turkish minefields. In October, the teams completed clearance of two of those minefields. Since the start of Phase II of operations, a total of 57,296 m² of land has been cleared and handed over.

Eritrea/Ethiopia (UNMEE)

On 5 October, the Eritrean Government issued a ban on all UNMEE helicopter flights in Eritrean airspace. This required mine clearance operations to be suspended due to a lack of adequate casualty evacuation (CASEVAC) coverage. Survey, marking, mine risk education and training activities continued. Mine Action Coordination Center (MACC) staff initiated a review of alternate CASEVAC procedures that would allow operations to restart in the near future. The suspension of UNMEE demining brought to a halt the only demining taking place in Eritrea, as the national program was suspended in April due to the government's confiscation of mine action program vehicles and a subsequent request by the Eritrean Demining Authority for UNDP to terminate the contracts of most UNDP Technical Advisors. The last UNDP Technical Advisor departed the country at the end of September.

Prior to the ban on helicopter flights in Eritrea, on 1 October, a civilian bus in Sector West hit a newly laid anti-tank mine. One passenger was killed, and nineteen others were injured. After conducting an investigation into the accident, the MACC instructed the route clearance contractor to conduct checks on all roads in the area, just prior to the suspension of operations. The MACC also issued a revised Mine/UXO Threat Assessment for the Mission area, as well as a new Travel Advisory.

3.2 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

Angola

Key Achievements

- UNDP hosted a preparatory assistance mission from the UNDP Regional Mine Action Advisor to conduct a situation analysis and prepare a project document to provide support to the governmental operator, INAD (National Demining Institute). Two rounds of consultation have been conducted (August and October) and it is proposed that a three-year project be formulated with technical assistance at the Headquarters and Training School, to be established as soon as possible using UNDP Core Funds. The project will have three main outputs:
 - Increased management and technical capacity of INAD at Headquarters level.
 - A dynamic and well supported training school that has renovated premises, enhanced management systems, and an updated curriculum based on international and national mine-action standards.
 - Seven trained and equipped INAD demining brigades responding to development needs in Angola in a safe and effective way.
- UNDP has engaged an international consultant to advance the strategic planning process with the National Commission Governing Mine Action (CNIDAH). It is intended that the process will be conducted in three phases:
 - **Phase 1.** Prepare an outline draft with the consultant by 15 November, with the document to be completed by CNIDAH by year-end.
 - **Phase 2.** Conduct broad consultation in the coming year, to be completed by the end of March 2006.
 - Phase 3. Submit for final revision and approval by the Government of Angola.

Key Challenges

- Operations have been suspended since 31 May 2005 on the landmine impact survey (LIS) due to a lack of funding from the Survey Action Centre (SAC). CNIDAH has since assumed responsibility for the ongoing management and completion of the LIS in consultation with SAC. Eleven of 18 provinces have now been completed. Three further provinces are scheduled to be completed by year-end with the cooperation of the Mine Advisory Group (MAG) and HALO Trust. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) has just started a project to complete two further provinces by October 2006. The completion of the remaining two provinces is being developed under proposals by the Santa Barbara Foundation and INAD.

Chad

Key Achievements

- Mine-risk education (MRE) activities were carried out by two High Commission for National Demining (HCND) MRE teams in the north (Faya Largeau and Fada) and in the east (in the refugee camps) from mid-September to mid-October.

- Operations in Fada finally started at the beginning of October after being postponed for one month due to financial difficulties and to a mine accident in September.
- From 22 to 30 October the HCND Programme Administrator and the Chief Technical Advisor held successful meetings in Yaoundé, Cameroon, in a resource mobilisation effort.

Key Challenges

- On 22 September, Mr. Hassan Kalibou, a former HCND Deputy Coordinator, was nominated as the new Coordinator of HCND by presidential decree, replacing Mr. Saleh Hisseine Haliki.
- The consultant responsible for MRE activities left Chad at the end of her contract in September. New funding is necessary to replace this consultant in 2006 (see Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2006).
- The post of Advisor in Information Systems and Technology and Databases remains vacant. No new in-kind contributions are foreseen for the near future. This post is of strategic importance now that the results of the technical survey are available and the MAG-US Department of State programme is generating significant data.

Key Objectives

- In the short term, resource mobilisation in terms of obtaining the rest of the Government's contribution and engaging other external donors for the implementation of the National Mine Action Plan for 2006.
- The setting up of a donor conference and the launching of a donor coordination mechanism.

Funding Update

The Government of Chad is expected to honour its funding commitments throughout the year. Additional external funding is still required to pursue operations in Fada and the development of victim assistance plans.

Mauritania

Key Achievements

- Last year Mauritania destroyed its last stockpile of 5000 anti-personnel (AP) mines and has retained 728 AP mines for training purposes. This project was financed by the Government of Canada. The destruction of the stockpile received widespread coverage in the media and was supported by the international community.
- The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) has been installed in the National Humanitarian Demining Office (NHDO) in Nouakchott, and it is currently being used to record mine-victim information and information on minefields that have been cleared by the NHDO.
- The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) has been effectively implementing a mine-risk education (MRE) project in partnership with the NHDO and national NGOs. The project's activities include a Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) survey, minefield marking, and training of community-based organisations (100 in Zoueratt and Nouadhibou). This project was funded by the Government of Canada.

Key Objectives

- UNDP has recently recruited a Chief Technical Advisor, Mr. James Sawatzky, who will arrive in Mauritania in mid-November. His main tasks will be to support the NHDO's efforts to strengthen its capacities, to advise the United Nations systems on all issues related to humanitarian demining, and to coordinate mine-action efforts with the international donor community.
- In accordance with Mauritania's National Completion Plan and the Ottawa Convention, the overall objective for the mine-action programme is for Mauritania to be mine-free by 2011.

Key Challenges

- It is vital to support the NHDO in its demining efforts—particularly to fund technical survey efforts, including a landmine impact survey in the affected areas.
- The capacity of the NHDO to plan and coordinate mine-action efforts in support of the national development priorities must be strengthened.
- The Mine Action Portfolio country team's strategy is to jointly execute the NHDO's action plan. All activities and projects support this work-plan, which originally covered 2003-2004 but is continuously re-phased due to lack of adequate funding.
- This strategy is based on an assessment, which revealed an absence of real demining or MRE activities and a lack of national mine-action capacity. Generally, the assessment found limited human resources, an absence of decentralized regional institutions, no reliable mine mapping, insufficient logistical resources, low levels of MRE, and insufficient social and medical coverage for victims.

Funding Update

To enable Mauritania to achieve the objectives of its completion plan, an investment of US\$ 4,150,000 is required between 2006 and 2010. The programme requires an investment of US\$ 1,600,000 in 2006.

Uganda

Key Achievements

- Two clearance teams are starting operations in identified areas in western Uganda (Kasese district) no later than the end of November 2005, supervised by NGO technical experts from Mines Awareness Trust (MAT) and supported by the Office of the Prime Minister (vehicles and drivers), UNDP (funds for operational costs for two months), Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF, communication and medical support), and district authorities (prioritization of clearance tasks)
- Forty police officers are undergoing a United Kingdom-funded training and equipment humanitarian-demining programme in the International Mine Action Training Centre, Nairobi, in November – December 2005. In early 2006 combined clearance teams (army engineers, police officers, district community liaison officer, and paramedics) will begin clearance operations in mine/explosive remnants of war (ERW)-affected areas in northern Uganda.
- Needs assessments will be conducted in two northern districts (Lira and Soroti) from November 2005 to February 2006, funded by UNDP County Office (CO) Uganda.

Key Objectives

- Establishment of an integrated Mine Action Program, including a Mine Action Center and regional center.
- Needs assessments in five more mine/ERW-affected areas in northern Uganda.
- Humanitarian demining training of up to 80 more UPDF, police, and eventually ex-Lord's Resistance Army staff in the Nairobi International Mine Action Training Center, funded by the United Kingdom till April 2006.
- Formulation of Uganda's Completion Initiative by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNDP.
- Formulation of the National Mine Action Strategy and its approval by the National Mine Action Steering Committee.
- Formulation and implementation of a combined OPM/UNDP fund-raising strategy.

Key Challenges

- Ongoing insurgent activities in parts of northern and northeastern Uganda are endangering mine-risk education, victim assistance activities, and clearance and needs assessment operations in this part of the country as well as the timely return/resettlement of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Funding Update

- An additional US\$ 750,000 is needed to make six survey/clearance/battle area teams fully operational (vehicles, GPS, radios, large-loop detectors, medical and team equipment) in Kasese and in northern districts. If funding needs are not met by December 2005 the clearance operations could be delayed, which might result in the delayed return and resettlement of IDPs in northern Uganda.
- UNDP CO Uganda provided US\$ 200,000 to conduct needs assessments in two mine/ERW-affected districts in northern Uganda.
- The Swiss Ministry of Defense has pledged funds for the provision of SM-explosive ordnance disposal technology, including in-country training. Training is planned to take place in early 2006.
- Funding shortfall for targeted needs assessments in five more northern districts amounts to US\$ 300,000, required in April 2006.
- Funding shortfall for two Quality Assurance Teams (equipment and operations) amounts to US\$ 175,000 for 2006

EUROPE & CIS REGION

Tajikistan

Key Achievements

- On the Tajik-Afghan border and in central areas of Tajikistan, 89,949 square meters of land have been manually cleared. Since the beginning of the programme in 2003, the total amount of cleared area is 144,386 square meters.
- Russian Border Forces vacated the Tajik-Afghan border earlier this year, allowing mine-action operations to begin in that region. Survey operations reveal that there are 27 mined areas on the border.
- Subject to government approval, a landmine impact survey (LIS) will be undertaken by the Survey Action Centre (SAC) during 2006. Information from the LIS will be used as a guide

- for mine-marking and clearing efforts, public education campaigns, and victim assistance (VA) projects.
- UNICEF has now joined the national mine-risk education (MRE) program, and the International Committee of the Red Cross/Red Crescent MRE and VA projects continue to run successfully.

Key Objectives

- The overarching objective is to ensure that the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme is able to meet its strategic commitments, including government compliance with implementation and reporting requirements under the Ottawa Convention.
- Reduce impact of landmines on poor communities by reducing the numbers of mine victims and by making the country safe from mines to increase agriculture, trade, and commerce.
- Increase MRE and VA activities, including an orthopaedic clinic and income-generation programs for mine survivors and their families.
- Mine-detection dogs are urgently needed as part of the 2006 National Mine Action Programme. Productivity and cost-effectiveness will both be increased, job-related security will improve for deminers, and mine accidents should decline.
- Move towards competent, trained national management of the Tajik Mine Action Cell (TMAC) and National Mine Action Program by 2007. This includes the phasing out of the expatriate adviser and progress towards national responsibility for the programme, in accordance with the Ottawa Convention.
- By 30 December 2006 the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) survey and clearance project will become a nationalised entity. An FSD transition plan for activities associated with this aim will be completed by 30 December 2005.
- The Country Office is also taking part in UNDP's Mine Action Completion Project beginning in 2006, which will aim to assist Tajikistan in meeting its Ottawa obligations by making the country mine-safe before 30 April 2010.

Key Challenges

- Although some 100,000 square meters will have been manually cleared by the end of 2005, about 25 million square meters remain.
- Although there is still no liaison between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan regarding landmine issues, and mine action is still not permitted from the Tajik side of the border, a recent press report stated that Uzbekistan has begun clearing their landmines from the Tajik-Uzbek border. Observation from the Tajik Border Committee reports no evidence of such mine clearance so far. As soon as border clearance documentation has been received, TMAC observers will seek to confirm whether or not there is any local knowledge in this area regarding Uzbek mine clearance.
- FSD's expatriate project manager, who originally gave notice of his resignation to FSD Geneva in September, will depart FSD Tajikistan on 12 November. As no replacement has been appointed, FSD will have no project manager in the country, which creates difficulties for the national program. To date, there has been no response from FSD Geneva to inquiries about this crisis.

Funding Update

The Government of Canada donated US\$ 468,000 for capacity building. This contribution is expected to expire 30 March 2006, but funds for TMAC expenses (including salaries, car, fuel) will last only until 30 January 2006. This leaves TMAC with a serious shortfall. Therefore, full funding is required from 1 January 2006 if the programme is to continue without interruption.

3.3 Update from UNICEF

Afghanistan

UNICEF is the coordinating agency of Mine Risk Education (MRE) for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA). The UNICEF programme is part of the long term Mine Action strategy under the umbrella of the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA) and the Government of Afghanistan. This strategy has included the standardisation of MRE activities throughout the country and the integration of MRE programmes into health, education, social and government infrastructures and networks.

MRE activities have been integrated into Ministry of Education teacher training programmes that have to date trained and provided materials for some 63,000 formal and non-formal primary school teachers.

The community-based MRE programme began implementation in 2003 continues to grow through implementation by NGO partners and the Afghan Red Crescent Society. Use of Landmine Impact Survey data is helping target resources to the most highly mine/ERW impacted communities and direct resources more effectively and efficiently. Integrating MRE into clearance and survey activities continues to be an important part of the Mine Action strategy and will continue to be so for the years to come. This programme has been strengthened during the past year through training, capacity building and materials distribution among the demining partner agencies.

Mass media programmes are one of the most important methods of communication throughout Afghanistan. Radio reaches some 70% of the population and is a very popular media. Print and video media materials augment the community-based programmes and are currently presented through a mobile cinema project being piloted this year.

Standardisation of all programmes began in 2002. All partners use MAPA approved standardised methodologies and materials for both the school and community-based programmes. The development of new training methodologies for community-based activities have included peer education activities, police training, and direct implementation of MRE in IDP camps, at border crossing points and encashment centres. New teaching methods will continue to be developed in the coming year to ensure that activities remain fresh and interesting. New materials that are being produced for these programmes will include teaching tools, video, and print materials targeting the non-literate populations within this target group.

The Landmine Safety Programme targeting those working for the reconstruction and development of the country has been redeveloped to provide country specific information and materials for international and national aid workers and government partners. This programme has been nationalised through the development of country specific materials that include new posters, country specific presentation and training materials. The programme is currently being implemented through a national NGO.

UNICEF, through an implementing partner, has developed self-advocacy and rights awareness training for landmine survivors and people with disability. The training programme was piloted in early 2005 and provided training to over 180 people. Currently, and due to the demand for additional training opportunities in other regions, this programme has been expanded to four other regions and hopes to target at least 400 people in 15 provinces.

UNICEF is providing support to the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) to set up an injury surveillance system within their Health Information Section. This project will integrate mine victim data into a greater injury surveillance network that will allow the MOPH to analyze data and better plan for health services including rehabilitative services to mine/ERW survivors.

Transition planning and strategies have begun for the nationalisation of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan. National mine action legislation is with the Government for approval and with that a new national mine action authority will be created. UNICEF is the focal point for the transition process in both the MRE and Victim Assistance programmes.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

(May – August)

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

From 13 to 24 June in Sarajevo, UNICEF in collaboration with the Centres for Diseases Control and Prevention (Atlanta, USA) held the regional training course on Field Epidemiology for Mine Action (FEMAC) for Central Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. The training provided MRE and other national mine action programme specialists with basic epidemiological skills, which will allow them to better undertake surveys and data analysis from a public health perspective for mine action planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes.

In May, the BHMAC ran the MRE Management Course for 25 participants from different NGOs, governmental organisations and the BHMAC. Participants were introduced to and equipped with skills to apply the system of MRE planning at community level. Also, the BHMAC supported the Federal Civil Protection of BiH in preparing the MRE Basic Course to be held in July.

In May and June, the BHMAC conducted MRE presentations for UN security staff in five municipalities in BiH.

The BHMAC also provided assistance to local mine action NGOs with analyses, recommendations and technical recommendations on the project proposal for creating MRE plans for local communities.

In July, the BHMAC ran the MRE Implementation Committee and Policy Board meetings. The group provided suggestions and recommendations on projects of local NGOs. Further in July, the BHMAC organised the LMVA Policy Board Meeting, discussing the questionnaire made by the LMVA Standing Commission. BHMAC representatives conducted visits to the NGO "AMI" in Maglaj municipality, to monitor and analyze the documentation of MRE plans for the local community.

In August, a coordination meeting was held with representatives of the ICRC, Entity Red Crosses in BiH, UNICEF and the BHMAC, regarding the transfer of the ICRC Mine Victim Database to the BHMAC and defining the future role and tasks of the BiH Red Cross Association.

Further in August, the BHMAC collected data on the number of needed mine signs and data from demining organisations regarding the estimated number of activists to participate in MRE trainings. The BHMAC continued with daily activities related to management, quality assurance of MRE, collecting MRE reports and preparing the documentation needed for making MRE plans as well as updating the MRE database.

During May, UNICEF supported the local NGO "Genesis Project" in conducting 40 workshops on the topic "Integration of peer education activities and support to peer-educators" in 20 primary schools in Republika Srpska, BiH. In the same month, Genesis has conducted 80 workshops in 20 primary schools of Republika Srpska BiH, on topics "Promotion and affirmation of peer-education activities and use of the MRE kit for teachers/peer educators" as well as analysis and making recommendations for future practice in this field.

In June, as part of the regular monitoring activities, Genesis representatives visited local schools which were included in their MRE project for 2003/2004 and 2004/2005. Several public media outlets published articles and broadcasted radio show dedicated to results of implementation of the

Genesis project "From puppets to empowerment" and the problem of mines in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In May, the Italian NGO "INTERSOS" carried out activities of the "MRE and Community Liaison in 6 municipalities in BIH" project, conducting MRE training courses for local Civil Protection departments, selected community representatives and security managers of private and public companies in targeted municipalities. The course curriculum approved by the BHMAC is aiming at the improvement of participants' knowledge on mine risk and development of their capacities in planning and implementing simple informative campaigns and educational activities for endangered groups in rural areas. The course also includes liaison activities with LMVA institutions and organisations, as well as preparing a plan of urgent action which includes priorities for dissemination of information, education and emergency marking.

By the end of August, the Italian NGO "INTERSOS" conducted field visits to support trained community representatives in the realisation of activities foreseen in the plans of urgent action created during the MRE training courses held in May. As well, INTERSOS started preparing guidelines and a series of short videos about mine risk and good or bad practices in private and public companies.

In June, the local NGO "AMI" started implementation of the project "Developing MRE plans for 15 Community Integrated Mine Action Plan - CIMAP". In the preparation phase, AMI established and developed contacts with municipal Civil Protection departments and presidents of 15 mine impacted communities, as well as with regional offices of the BHMAC. During this period, AMI representatives organised informative meetings and collected main data about mine impacted communities and inhabitants.

As well in June, AMI held one MRE multimedia presentation for employees of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP), informing them about dangerous devices (mines, UXO, and military gear) which they could find in mass graves and how to behave in that situation, or in mined areas. On the meeting with the BHMAC Banja Luka, AMI representatives informed them about the permanent marking project in Doboj municipality and the needs of the local community regarding MRE.

In July and August, AMI prepared MRE plans for 6 local communities. Plans were prepared in cooperation with local actors, using information collected through interviews, questionnaires, workshops and information collected from authorised institutions. Through this process the needs related to mine problems of the community were identified and elaborated in the community MRE plans. Finalised plans were presented and approved by municipal Civil Protection Departments, presidents of local communities, BHMAC and Entity Army de-mining teams.

During August, AMI started preparing realisation of MRE plans for two local communities. In that regard, AMI held several coordination meetings with representatives of two Entity Armies who were identified as implementing agencies.

The UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Programme is currently supported by contributions from the Government of Italy, DfID, Canada, and the UNICEF national committees of Ireland and Austria. The focus of the programme on local capacity building for integrated mine action requires long term planning and multi annual funding. The current financial situation of the programme is of serious concern as no funding is available for 2006. UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina urgently requires 800,000 USD for 2006.

Cambodia

UNICEF continues to provide financial and technical support to the mine action sector for national MRE coordination through the Cambodian Mine Action/Victim Assistance Authority, Community Based Mine Risk Reduction, the mass media campaign through the Cambodia Mine Action Centre and school MRE for children through the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport. MRE materials

are also provided to different MRE operators. Prostheses, wheelchairs and other mobility devices as well as assistances for rehabilitation to children and women victims of landmines/UXO and other causes of disabilities continued also with the support of UNICEF.

Mine/UXO Victim Information:

In August 2005, 36 new casualties were reported by the Cambodia Mine/UXO Victim Information System. This shows a decreased of 27%, compared with the 49 casualties reported in August 2004. From the total of 36 casualties, 75% were men, 23% were children under 18 years of age and 2% were women. 42% of the casualties were injured or killed by UXO and 58% by mines. 34% of the victims were injured or killed while tampering with UXO and 19% were injured or killed at the time of farming. For the last 12 months, the number of casualties reached 905.

Russian Federation

Mine Risk Education (MRE) in Chechnya

According to information gathered by the 15 'letter-boxes' established by UNICEF in 2005 in each district of Chechnya, no new mine/UXO-related incidents involving civilians have been reported in August. The total of mine/UXO civilian victims recorded by UNICEF since 1995 stands at 3,031 (2,340 wounded and 641 killed), including 737 children (612 wounded and 125 killed). Meanwhile, with the support of its main implementing partners – Voice of the Mountains (VoM), Let's Save the Generation (LSG), the State Chechen Drama Theatre – UNICEF has continued to disseminate MRE messages aimed at changing the population's behaviours. In particular, some 450 children from Grozny secondary schools, numbers 25 and 35, participated in MRE drama presentations jointly organised by LSG and the State Chechen Drama Theatre. Two drama circles have also been established (and some 28 children trained in staging techniques) in two secondary schools – numbers 10 and 25 – in Grozny, with financial support from the British and Dutch National Committees for UNICEF.

Mine/UXO Survivor Assistance

UNICEF continued to provide assistance to disabled children through its main governmental and NGO partners. During the reporting period, the Republican Clinical Hospital completed the treatment of 27 mine/UXO-affected children. The quality of the services provided has been improved through the provision of additional medical equipment. The treatment is mainly provided by the orthopaedic ward of the hospital, which has been supported by UNICEF since 2003. Needs for additional training for the medical staff involved have been further assessed by UNICEF during its recent monitoring mission to Grozny (19 August). All additional training will be delivered by specialised staff from Medical Centres of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Meanwhile, some 18 mine/UXO-affected children started a new academic year with new prosthetic appliances provided by Grozny's Prosthetic Workshop. Children with more severe cases will still be referred to Vladikavkaz's Prosthetic Workshop, where the technical capacity remains higher.

Sri Lanka

(July – August)

National Mine action weeks:

The third quarter of the year is the most dangerous period in Sri Lanka for landmine/UXO injuries. Each year at this time, people return to their fields to begin planting and harvesting their crops and some of them get injured or killed by the deadly weapons. To help raise awareness of the dangers, the first week of July and August have been designated "National Mine Action" weeks across Sri Lanka by the National Steering Committee on Mine Action.

MRE weeks have been held previously in the North East with support from UNICEF, but this time was the first time where all 5 pillars of mine action have been represented. This year demining organisations and NGOs working in the field of survivor assistance participated actively in the national event. Throughout these weeks, UNICEF' partners implemented several activities to raise the attention of the public.

Main activities included:

- Exhibition made by MRE 'UNICEF' partners and demining organisations,
- Cultural programme (dance, songs, street drama, TV show)
- Distribution of posters and leaflets with mine risk education/survivor assistance messages and about the importance of signing the Ottawa Treaty and the Geneva Call deed of commitment.
- Placing stickers on vehicles
- Children's programmes through the MRE children's clubs
- Newspaper and TV advertisement
- Display of banners in MRE centres and specific locations
- Children's rally (Batticaloa, Ampara and Trincomalee)
- Bicycle race with persons with disabilities (Jaffna)

The mine action weeks were well covered by the local and international media. As one of the stories was an Associated Press story, the press release developed by UNICEF got wide pick up and was repeated in many national and international papers and web sources.

MRE community based programme and external monitoring capacity:

Monitoring of the MRE activities is an important component of UNICEF's programme. In Sri Lanka, UNICEF staff have trained the Quality Assurance inspectors (QA) in MRE. These QA teams are based in the District Mine Action Offices (DMAOs) and allow us to benefit from an ongoing external monitoring capacity. This is also a joint collaboration between UNICEF and UNDP, which is supporting the DMAOs. As an example, from January to August 2005, 44 External MRE monitoring visits were carried out by the QA team of the DMAO Jaffna. The vast majority of the reports showed that the MRE activities were well conducted in the field.

Sudan

Within the framework of the UN Mine Action Office (UNMAO) for Sudan, UNICEF continues its support to MRE through coordinating and providing technical support to MRE partners, as well as ensuring delivery of MRE to at-risk population groups. A summary of UNICEF supported activities is as follows:

Delivery of MRE to at-risk population groups:

During the month of September, UNICEF signed project agreements with two local NGOs to deliver MRE to IDPs in four camps and four squatter areas in Khartoum. Through these projects, a total of 300,000 IDPs who are planned to return to mine/UXO-affected areas in the southern and central regions of Sudan will receive MRE in the current host locations, as well as while en route when passing through a major 'way station' set up by the UN in an area called Kosti.

UNICEF also supported Save the Children-US along with 3 local NGOs, the Ministry of Education and local radio in South Kordofan State in the Nuba Mountains to implement a community-based MRE project. The activities focus on high priority communities and population groups including IDPs and recent returnees.

Coordination and Technical Support:

Two new MRE/VA officers arrived to Sudan and assumed their duties in the Central Region Mine Action Office (CRMAO/Kadugli) and Southern Regional Mine Action Office (SRMAO/Rumbek) during September.

A monthly MRE coordination meeting was organised on 7 September at the UNMAO office. A range of MRE topics, including emergency response capacity, coverage, expansion and coordination of MRE activities, was discussed and decisions on action points were made.

MRE materials design and development:

UNICEF designed two new posters, one leaflet and one mine/UXO fact sheet for MRE. The materials went to press and will be produced/delivered in early October. These will be distributed to

different MRE partners for distribution and dissemination among at-risk groups. New MRE road signboards were designed to be used along a recently cleared road in South Sudan.

Tajikistan

Workshop

UNICEF, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education (MOE) held a workshop on MRE for the representatives of Rasht, Tavildara, Vanj and Darvoz districts. The six-day workshop was conducted from 15-20 August in Rasht district. The purpose of this workshop was to offer to teachers, representatives of district education departments and representatives of youth committees from areas contaminated by mines or other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) a specialisation in MRE. During one week the participants acquired a sound knowledge about the risk of mines and ERW and the ways to minimize these risks. The emphasis was placed on clarifying methods to teach MRE lessons, run MRE activities and train other teachers. The outcome was to allow each participant (teacher or representative) to become the MRE focal point for his/her area so as to mobilise his/her community in order to minimize mine and ERW risks. An extra two-day module, which focused on MRE planning and monitoring for the inspectors (monitors) was held from 22-23 August for inspectors.

Design of learning and teaching materials, flip chart.

A flip chart has been designed to help educators to transmit a sound knowledge about the risks of mines and other ERW and to teach the ways to minimize these risks. It has 43 slides; each slide brings a main message. The flip chart covers almost all of the information that is important to know about mine/UXO risk prevention in Tajikistan: cause of the problem, main type of mines or UXO in Tajikistan, effects, lethal radius; what to do in front of a suspect object; what to do in case of an incident; what demining is; the (respect of) warning signs; the issue of vigilance in dangerous areas; the indicators of dangerous areas; the geographic distribution of minefields; the issue of peace and the Ottawa Treaty; and finally the right to pass on the safety messages. It has been developed through close collaboration with partners (FSD, TMAC and the MOE); each of these organisations gave suggestions for the content. A 'users guide' for the flip chart has been produced. This 25-page document with a reproduction of 43 mini black and white slides provides all the necessary messages which are connected to each slide.

Design of the manual

An MRE manual has been designed for teachers and translated into Tajik. It includes around 30 illustrations for facilitating the understanding of messages and concepts and also to make it as attractive as possible. This manual has been designed to be a reference document on MRE for school teachers and other educators in Tajikistan. It should be used in conjunction with the MRE flip chart.

The objectives are:

- To provide a sound basic knowledge on MRE.
- To orient school teachers (or other educators) for promoting MRE "in school", "through school" and "out of school".

In this manual the emphasis has been placed on clarifying the concept of MRE, the other components of mine action, and a wide range of prevention messages.