IMAS Framework

EO Categorization

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Talking points for the thematic discussion on the use of AP mines of an improvised nature at the Intersessional meeting of the APMBC, 01st July 2020.

[As we have just heard] The use of AP mines of an improvised nature on a large scale raises a number of challenges, [as we have also just heard] the mine action community, is rising to meet these challenges. This is true at the normative level as well as at the operational level.

The series of decisions that states have made in recent years, also triggered detailed and intense discussions at the technical level on how these decisions can be effectively implemented in the field. I am pleased to be able to say that this process led to the development of considerable additional guidance that has already been incorporated into International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). I will be providing a short overview of this process, and will also highlight some of the main improvements, including in relation to reporting.

In February 2018, at its annual meeting in Geneva, the IMAS Review Board, which is Chaired by UNMAS, recognised the requirement to provide affected States with improved guidance on how to deal with contamination from mines of an improvised nature as well as other improvised explosive devices (IED) while continuing to meet their reporting obligations, including under Article 7 of the APMBC.

To this end seven (7) thematic technical working groups were established to deliberate on improvements that were required across the IMAS framework. In an effort to benefit from the considerable technical expertise that exists across the mine action sector, these technical working groups were open to relevant stakeholders that do not sit on the IMAS Review Board, and to ensure that the deliberations were as inclusive as possible, the majority of the discussions were facilitated remotely.

As a result of this considerable collaborative effort, comprehensive and standardized guidance now exists to support efforts in addressing AP mines of an improvised nature in
line with the humanitarian principles. [As the other panellists have shown they are already being used with positive results].

This process led to the incorporation of additional guidance across the IMAS framework.

[Start PowerPoint slide 1: show framework, highlight new standards/editions (IM, RM, BC, IEDD/TEP) as well as those updated - Green ones have also all been approved by the IMAS SG and IACG-MA].

I would like to highlight specifically the approval of a new edition of IMAS 05.10 on Information Management, as well as the recent inclusion in this standard of a new normative annex specifying minimum data requirements for mine action.

The proper reporting of the contamination that is encountered is essential, not only because it is a legal obligation under Article 7 of the Convention; but also because it is prerequisite for accurately understanding the scale and nature of recent AP contamination so that appropriate responses can be developed.

From an operational perspective it is essential to recognize the importance of gathering the necessary technical data in support of field operations. In order to ensure that survey and clearance can be conducted safely and efficiently there is a requirement for detailed, evidence-based analysis of the threats posed by this contamination. This analysis will inform and dictate the clearance procedures that are used to ensure operations are implemented in line with IMAS quality requirements, thereby ensuring confidence in the outputs produced.

The minimum data requirements represent standardised guidance that clarifies what data needs to be collected by operators on all mine action programmes globally. They have been designed to ensure that information can always be collected in such a way that reporting obligations under APMBC, CCM and CCW can be met – without impeding
operators’ ability to determine any additional context specific requirements that they may also have.

As an example I have prepared a slide that demonstrates how individual items of explosive contamination that is found should be categorised in line with IMAS.

[Start PowerPoint slide 2: outline EO categorisation]

Operators in charge of survey and clearance operations as well as national authorities will need to be equipped with effective information management tools. These tools will need to be designed based on a proper understanding of stakeholder requirements, including any operational and convention/legal obligations.

Such tools also exist. The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) is furnished with the capacity to display straightforward and universal reporting formats. Now that standardised IMAS guidance is ready, it will form the foundation of any IMSMA databases that are established or updated globally. These systems will of course be bespoke tools which also capture any other technical information that may be required in the given context.

In summary, considerable efforts have been made to ensure that the tools which are needed to address this new AP contamination are available to states and other stakeholders, as a consequence they exist today and are readily accessible to the whole sector.