

**Standing Committee on  
Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies<sup>1</sup>  
Geneva, 20-22 June 2011**

**Intervention on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team**

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair,

It gives me great pleasure to address you on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team, comprising 14 UN partners involved in mine action.<sup>2</sup>

First of all we welcome the announcement yesterday by Nigeria regarding the completion of their Article 5 obligations. We warmly congratulate Nigeria for this achievement and look forward to Nigeria's formal declaration of completion at the 11MSP.

**Article 5 extension requests**

Last year, States Parties granted Article 5 extension requests to six States Parties, including five currently receiving mine action assistance from the United Nations, namely Chad, Colombia, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania and Zimbabwe. The UN Mine Action Team is committed to continuing its support to these countries, as well to all other States Parties receiving UN support in mine action and have been granted extension requests, in the implementation of their national plans for the fulfilment of their Article 5 obligations.

This year four States Parties – Algeria, Chile, DRC and Eritrea, have submitted Article 5 extension requests so far. The UN Mine Action Team is assisting Algeria, DRC and Eritrea in this process, including in the preparation and implementation of their relevant national plans.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The United Nations has continued to provide support in all areas of mine action, including mine clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance to more than 30 countries and territories. This assistance has been provided primarily through partnerships with governments, mine action operators, as well as international and non-governmental organizations.

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<sup>1</sup> Co-Chairs: Colombia and Switzerland

<sup>2</sup> UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank.

UN assistance in mine action included support to the conduction of surveys, in particular technical and non-technical surveys (as part of land release), the development of national mine action standards, mine action plans and strategies, the implementation of Mine Risk Education (MRE) activities, the integration of gender in mine action, as well as in linking mine action and development.

The following are some examples of UN support in the above-mentioned areas:

### **National Technical and Non-Technical Surveys**

Since the 10 MSP, the United Nations Mine Action Team has continued to contribute to the increased knowledge and understanding of the size and, more importantly, the impact of the anti-personnel mine problem.

A large-scale technical survey was launched in Chad in 2010 by CND and UNDP, with funding from Japan, with the objective of defining the accuracy of the location and surface of contaminated areas and in support of Chad's compliance with the Article 5 extension granted by States Parties. A comprehensive report on the results of the technical survey and recommendations for the continuation of the operations is expected by mid-July this year. The outputs of the survey would be a visible and tangible result of Chad's efforts in mine action with the support of the UN and would serve for the preparation of the revised action plan to be submitted later this year to the States Parties.

In Guinea Bissau, UNDP is supporting the implementation, for the first time, of technical and non-technical surveys, as part of the National Mine Action Plan. In Angola a new national survey has been launched in February 2011 in the province of Malange.

### **National Mine Action Standards**

As of the development and implementation of national mine action standards, based on the IMAS, there has been progress in a number of UN-supported countries during this reporting period. UNDP supported, for example, the development of the Cambodian Mine Action Standards, including land release standards. In Iraq, UNDP assisted in the development of 13 national mine action standards and more would be developed soon. Three new land release-specific national standards are being developed in Mozambique, with quality assurance of all existing standards expected to conclude this year. Bosnia and Herzegovina's standard operating procedures are in line with the IMAS and relevant national standards are now in place in Tajikistan, where they are being implemented. The national standards completed for Chad are waiting for formal government approval and national standards were also formally submitted for approval in Guinea Bissau (end of 2010). With the support of UNMAS, the

Democratic Republic of Congo has also developed recently national mine action standards.

### **National Plans and Strategies**

Here are some examples of recent national mine action plans and mine action strategies. In Bosnia and Herzegovina a comprehensive national plan and a strategy are in place. In Cambodia, the national mine action strategy 2010-2019 was launched in April 1 and is already being implemented; it aims to contribute to the development and poverty reduction goals of the Cambodian National Strategic Development Plan as well as Cambodian Millennium Development Goals . A mine action work plan from July 2010 to December 2011, prepared with the support of UNDP, is being implemented in Ethiopia. The 2010-2012 Iraqi mine action strategy is also in place. Tajikistan has developed a new strategic plan for 2011-2015 also in the phase of implementation.

### **Mine Action and Development**

The United Nations also works in support of further integrating mine action into national development or poverty reduction strategies. The UN stresses the role of national ownership in ensuring sustainable results.

For example, in recent times mine action has been integrated in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) in Albania, Angola, Cambodia, Colombia, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Iraq, as well as in non-State Parties such as Sri Lanka and Lebanon. In Mozambique mine action is integrated within the national poverty reduction plan as a cross-cutting issue involving the majority of development sectors.

### **Gender and Mine Action**

The United Nations Mine Action Team supports the inclusion of gender perspectives in all areas of mine action work as a means to increase the effectiveness of policies and programmes, and strengthen the overall mine action programme.

Mine action programmes, including those not currently receiving direct support from the United Nations, are encouraged to implement the *Revised Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, adopted early last year*. Due to logistic constraints UNMAT was not able to organize either the Middle East Gender in Mine Action Workshop in early 2011 as initially planned but will look for new opportunities to implement gender-related outreach activities in the near future.

The inclusion of a gender and age-sensitive approach in assessing needs and planning activities has become an increasingly important in the development of proposals for funding, in particular in the context of preparing humanitarian

appeals, many of which including mine action project proposals and may become a more formal requirement for the inclusion of projects in flash and consolidated appeals.

### **Mine Risk Education**

The United Nations continued its support for a range of mine/ERW risk education (MRE) projects including support to emergency MRE, community-based activities, school-based activities and MRE through public information and media in some 30 countries. Many of those countries are States Parties to the Convention, and new use of antipersonnel mines has been reported in at least two of them during the reporting period: Colombia and Sudan. In Colombia, for example, a national mine action plan has been developed for MRE with the technical support of the UN.

The primary aim of these activities was to enhance, along with demining and other mine action activities, the protection and safety of populations living in or near areas affected by landmines and ERW. A key focus since the last intersessionals has been on providing emergency MRE to civilian populations affected by recent armed conflicts including in Libya and Cote d'Ivoire. In addition to emergency MRE UNICEF, as the lead UN agency for MRE provided technical and financial support to national authorities and NGOs in developing and implementing integrated and more sustainable MRE projects through schools and community based networks. MRE projects were also implemented in programmes that are directly managed by the United Nations. MRE remains an integral part of mine action and is particularly essential in emergency situations where demining is either not possible for security reasons or will take time to establish. It is therefore important that national authorities, along with the UN, NGOs and other partners, continue their commitment and support to MRE and other preventive measures as an integrated component of broader mine action activities.

Other interesting achievements during the reporting period, notably with the support of UNICEF, are as follows: (a) a new MRE Country Programme (2011-2015) in Cambodia; (b) training the trainers workshop in Yemen, based on the newly developed mine/UXOs emergency risk education toolkit; (c) support MRE quality assurance visits involving all relevant actors conducted by the National Mine Action Centre in Sudan.

As you are aware the MRE IMAS were recently updated and a revised version was endorsed by the IMAS Review Board in 2010. It will be interesting to hear from field programs and implementing partners if they are implementing the revised MRE International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and if they have questions or comments to share in this regard.

### **International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)**

Also with regard to the IMAS, the IMAS Review Board is currently considering an amendment to IMAS 09.50 on mechanical demining. Also an Evaluation of the IMAS is taking place now. The report would be submitted to UNMAS and GICHD by the end of August.

### **Completion Initiative**

Last but not least the UNDP Completion Initiative Programme continues to assist countries in finishing their article 5 obligations by promoting partnerships, such as with Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) or Danish Church Aid (DCA), that identifies both capacities and resources required by them. The most recent successful stories are Albania and Zambia. This programme is currently supporting, among others, (Guinea Bissau,) Mauritania and Uganda.

The UNMAT also supports South-South cooperation in the mine action sector and encourages States Parties to contribute to UNDP's efforts in this field.

Thank you.