

## Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction




### TECHNOLOGIES

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### SUMMARY REPORT

Co-chairs :      Cambodia    Mr. Ieng MOULY, President, C-MAC  
                          France        Mr. Samuel de BEAUVAIS, Ambassador, Mine Action

Rapporteurs :    Germany    Mr. Ernst Joachim DÖRING, Auswärtiges Amt, Berlin  
                          Yemen        Major Mansour AL AZZI

In accordance with the relevant decisions of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, the Standing Committee of Experts on Technologies for Mine Action (SCETMA) held its first inter-sessional meeting on December 13-14, 1999 at the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD). More than 100 experts, including representatives of States Parties, international organizations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and other non-governmental organizations, national mine action centers or programs, universities, research centers and industries took part in open and in-depth discussions on all the issues relevant to the SCETMA.

In conformity with the mandate and guidelines agreed during the Maputo Conference, the SCETMA focussed, for its first intersessional meeting, on the analysis of the needs expressed by the end-users and, taking into account the constraints as they are perceived by both the deminers and the researchers, tried to draw practical conclusions in term of priorities.

In expressing their needs, the representatives of the demining community shed light on the role technology can play at different stages of mine clearance activity :

- > planning of the operation (level 1 study, integrated plan of national development priorities...)
- > preparation of the environment (deployment, removal of the vegetation and other obstacles...)
- > mine clearance (area reduction, detection, removal/destruction)
- > protection of deminers (individual equipment, mechanical devices)
- > post clearance activities (quality assurance, evaluation, feed-back to databases...)

They also made clear that there is a need for technologies both today and tomorrow :

Simple, end-user friendly technologies, based on improvements of existing material, are essential to ease the burden of deminers and speed-up ongoing programs. High-tech innovations will be critical to save lives, time and money in the longer term.

Given the various types of antipersonnel mines laid, different climates and nature of soils that mine action teams have to face, there cannot be a "silver bullet" solution. Meanwhile, some technologies that proved not to be effective in a particular context may give positive results in a different one : key elements are 1) adaptation of technology to the field, and 2) adaptability of this technology, so that it can be used on as many fields as possible. This can be achieved only if all actors are provided with appropriate information, notably through :

- > information sharing between users (e.g. between MACs)
- > more systematic testing of new technologies on the field, in order to provide scientists with a better view of the improvements needed and to increase deminers' awareness of new technologies.
- > fostering exchange of equipment through the implementation of "demining friendly regulations."
- > development of integrated databases such as the IMSMA. Compatibility/merging between the different existing databases shall be fostered.

- > development of software, using information contained in these databases, in order to assist mine action people in their decision to use technologies.

Participants discussed the differences and possible synergies between R&D for military procurement and humanitarian demining oriented R&D. Besides, and in order to engage in further R&D, industries need to have a clearer picture, not only of ongoing activities (through data collection), but also of the future developments of mine action, developments which will mainly depend on the long term commitment of donors. Donors therefore need to make their funding policy more rational and predictable in the long term. On the other hand, demining authorities in affected countries shall give more guarantees to the donors on the efficient use of resources : improved management, long term planification, better coordination of the different mine clearance activities at the country level.

Looking for ways to close the gaps between researchers and end-users, participants also tried to define common approaches for testing and evaluation of new technologies, in particular :

- > setting up international testing centers and/or networks of probing facilities.
- > defining common standards for testing in the field.
- > defining mechanisms and procedures in order to allocate new technologies to mine action teams for testing in the field.

At the conclusion of its deliberations, the SCETMA confirmed that its second meeting will be held on May 24-25, 2000 . In the meantime, a more comprehensive report, including operative conclusions, will be made available.

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