



Update on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies

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Ottawa Convention Obligations

- Afghanistan joined the Ottawa Convention in March 2003.
- As a State Party, Afghanistan must destroy all emplaced AP landmines by March 2013.



The Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan, also known as the MAPA, has the distinction of being the oldest indigenous mine action programme in the world. The program employed about 400 Afghans in September 1990, while today some 8,000 Afghans work for the programme across the country. The dedication of these Afghan mine-action personnel over the past 18 years has enabled Afghanistan to make substantial progress toward the Convention deadline of clearance of all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 2013.

Mine Clearance in Afghanistan



- Clearance of almost 1.2 billion m² of contaminated land since 1989
- Equal to about 60% of known contaminated land in Afghanistan
- More than 323,000 anti-personnel mines destroyed during clearance

The deminers have cleared almost 1.2 billion square meters of land since 1989. That represents approximately 60 percent of all the contaminated land estimated to exist in Afghanistan. More than 323,000 anti-personnel mines have been detected and destroyed across the country during that time period. This does not include the stockpiled anti-personnel mines that have been identified and destroyed. This number breaks down to an average of 50 anti-personnel mines destroyed each day in Afghanistan during the past 18 years. In addition to the vast quantity of anti-personnel mines, more than 18,500 anti-tank mines and more than 6.9 million pieces of unexploded ordnance have also been destroyed.

Not only have deminers cleared contaminated communities and returned land to the people, they have cleared the way for reconstruction projects, including the removal of mines and UXO from primary and secondary roads, the Kabul International Airport and provincial airfields, and the corridor for a new power line that will bring much needed electricity to millions of Afghans.

Mine Risk Education in Afghanistan

- Millions of Afghans have been provided with MRE
- Number of victims has dropped to an average of 63 per month, a 55% decrease from levels five years ago



The MAPA has provided millions of Afghans with mine risk education since its inception. Through a combination of clearance and mine risk education, the MAPA has reduced the number of Afghans falling victim to mines and UXO to an average of 63 Afghans each month during 2006. Although this number is still too large, it is the lowest level of casualties in Afghanistan's history and a remarkable 55 percent drop from levels just five years ago.

Capacity Development



- UNMACA working toward national ownership
- Key ministries to take responsibility for MRE and victim assistance
- UNMACA is building capacity to monitor progress, ensure Treaty adherence and create public policies

The United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA) currently coordinates MAPA activities on behalf of the Government of Afghanistan. Work is underway to transition the programme to national ownership. Furthering this process, UNMACA is increasing coordination among relevant ministries of the Government to build capacities and deliver sustainable assistance to mine victims and other people with disabilities.

Three key ministries – the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled; Ministry of Education; and Ministry of Public Health – have been identified as logical implementers of activities within the disability sectors. These ministries are stakeholders in the rights, health and safety of Afghan citizens and are well positioned to work together towards greater cooperation and strategic planning. UNMACA is building technical capacities to monitor progress of disability and MRE activities, to ensure adherence to Treaty obligations and to create public policies to enhance the rights for all people.

Changing Concept of Operations



- Manual clearance teams will be trained in survey activities as well as the use of dogs and mechanical assets in support of clearance operations
- The MAPA is changing clearance methods from “two-man one lane to one-man-one lane clearance drill”

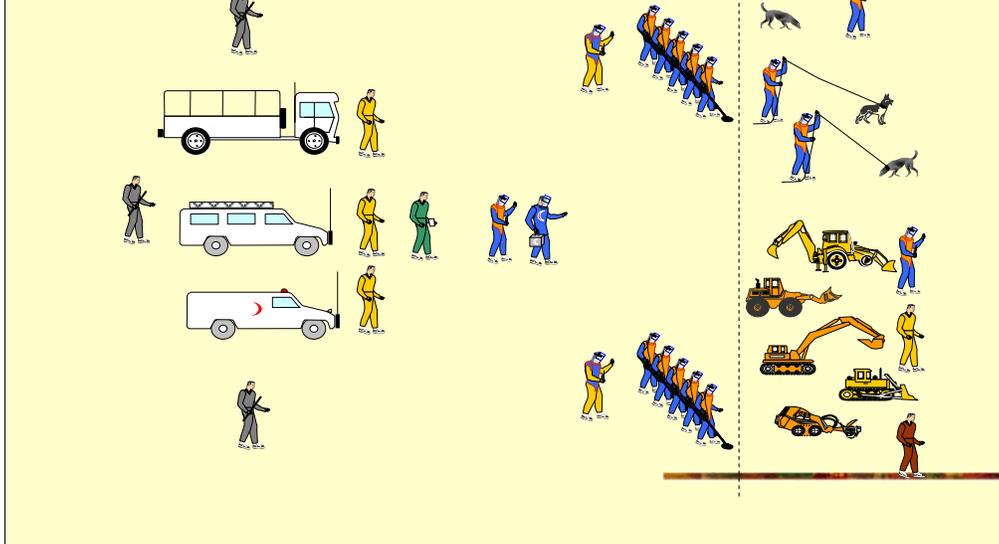
The MAPA is also being proactive in the review and restructure of its clearance methodologies. The MAPA is working to improve productivity rates, efficiently prioritize tasks and remain cost considerate.

The comprehensive revision of the Afghanistan national mine action standards have been started since January this year. This revision will further improve the concept of operations and the appropriate and efficient application of demining tool box for clearing mine and UXO contaminated areas. All demining teams will be able to do technical survey, area reduction and land release. More systematic community liaison between mine action and the impacted communities will be implemented. Mine and UXO contaminated areas cleared will be subject to impact assessments after 3-6 months. In order to improve planning aspect of the program the suspected hazardous areas have been grouped into clusters on district level and writing the clearance plan for individual tasks has been enhanced. An improved process of final quality evaluation and handover of the cleared land has been introduced. Almost 95 % of the mine detection dogs have gone through the formal accreditation, test and licensing process.

The day of single technology and narrow expertise within demining is over. Demining teams in Afghanistan are being restructured to include a wide range of clearance means. Demining teams will be trained in survey activities as well as the use of dogs and mechanical assets in support of manual clearance operations. This will provide teams with a variety of technologies and tools for their use and give them the ability to respond to any task through an integrated, versatile approach to demining.

The MAPA has also begun a shift in manual clearance methods to boost the productivity and efficiency of clearance from “two-man drills” that unitize two men working to clear a lane through contaminated land to the “one man drill” methodology. This will increase the operational capacity of the MAPA and the associated outputs.

Demining Teams (10-Lane) supported by mine detection dogs and machines will be able to work on all types of minefields with enhanced efficiency and effectiveness



As a result of enhancing the capabilities of the demining teams who can now work on any types of mine and UXO contaminated areas resulted in the substantial reduction in the number of site offices of implementing partners in various parts of the country. The cost of the demining teams has been reduced and the number of teams including mechanical machines working on the ground will be increased.

Challenges Ahead

- More than 700 million m² remain to be cleared
- 32 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces are contaminated
- Some 4 million Afghans live in about 2,300 impacted communities



There is substantial progress being made in Afghanistan within all pillars of mine action. Unfortunately, Afghanistan remains one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world with over 700 square kilometers of land contaminated by 56 different types of landmines. Thirty-two out of 34 provinces have substantial areas littered with mines or UXO. Some 4 million Afghans in about 2,250 communities live with the fear and daily threat of mines simply by walking to school, collecting water for their families, tilling their land or grazing their animals.

Mine Action Requirements



- Afghanistan has six years to clear more than 700 million m² of contaminated land
- To do so, Afghanistan must clear at least 110 million m² of land each year
- This requires an annual budget of about \$90 million

Under the Ottawa Treaty, Afghanistan has until 2013 to remove all the mines throughout a geographically and politically challenging environment. That is only six short years to complete this monumental task. The MAPA must clear and release more than 110 square kilometers each year to achieve this benchmark. And this will require an average annual budget of approximately \$90 million.

Shortage in Required Funding

- The MAPA has only two-thirds of required budget
- Due to decrease in funding, MAPA was forced last year to cut operational capacity.
- The MAPA must have adequate, sustainable funding to fulfill Treaty obligations.



We wish to take this opportunity to thank our past, present and future donors for their contributions, but also wish to remind them that despite their generous contributions the present budget for mine action activities, including clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance, is only two-thirds met. The MAPA has been forced to discharge almost 1,000 deminers, downsize the mine risk education programme and delay the implementation of some victim assistance activities due to the decrease in multilateral and bilateral contributions.

With the crucial support of the international community and the continued dedication of the deminers, Afghanistan will be able to declare the country free of mines and Unexploded Ordnance by 2013.

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