

MAWG comments on co-ordination, ISCE, Geneva May 2001

NGOs ~ MAG, HI and NPA have co-ordinated on implementation and policy matters for many years. We have published portfolio in the past and are preparing a full compendium of activities including a list of mechanical technologies used for the 3MSP in Managua. While we have doubts as to how useful the compendium has been for our fundraising, it is a useful information and co-ordination tool. Similarly the NGOs of MAWG have continued to co-ordinate on the ground, nationally and regionally, and we believe this co-ordination has been beneficial for the affected populations.

The following MAWG comments should be seen as an effort to create better understanding and appreciation of NGO and UN roles in the work to eliminate landmines.

Following the range of UN co-ordination issues and funding tools presented by UN speakers during this ISCE, the MAWG has a number of matters to raise/comments/queries to make:

- We would like to hear more about what host nations are doing, and how better to integrate into national and regional development priorities and how the UNMAC is doing this. NGOs always try to integrate their activities with a region's wider development priorities. This is discussed and co-ordinated through a variety of channels and forums, some of which do not involve UN representation where the UN is not present in a country or region.
- We believe there should be greater co-ordination with other development activities, health, agriculture, infrastructure engineering works etc, that Mine Action plays a role in this broader development spectrum. De-mining NGOs often work alongside development NGOs and national development and health actors. We believe that this aspect of Mine Action should be promoted and highlighted.
- In presence of National Authorities, what is the coordination role of the UNMACs. Is there a clear global understanding and exit strategy describing how UN plans at the outset for empowerment and handover of national MACs created? In a number of countries the UNMACs have continued to be in existence for many years in one or other form. Can examples of other UN and government cooperations such as agriculture, health, etc. be used?
- We might usefully examine the question of effectiveness and sustainability of some of the MAC structures that are set up. For example, CMAC and Afghan programme have experienced serious funding difficulties. What about using other mechanisms such as existing government departments rather than creating external structures and entities? MAC initiatives should not necessarily be external to the national government or representative body – a number of governments and regional entities have begun setting up their own structures in this way and pay the salaries of local staff through existing state budgets. These local structures already co-ordinate activity in their own areas.
- The MAWG appeals for funding of mine action in countries that are not states parties or where some continuing level of conflict has been experienced. The

NGO programme in northern Iraq is an example that shows that a large-scale NGO-based local capacity co-exists very productively alongside a UN/UNOPS programme. For political reasons, these actors may not co-ordinate. The UN programme depends on specific renewable UNSC resolution which raises questions about sustainability.

- Donors should not forget that both NGOs and UN play a co-ordination role. That it is not purely a UN role, as illustrated by the northern Iraq example. NGOs need to be supported for this as well as for their implementation and capacity building roles. In some cases, NGOs can be more flexible and respond more swiftly in crisis. This flexibility should also be supported.

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