

This is a joint statement of ICBL and UNICEF as co-convenors of the international MRE Working Group. We have been invited to provide an update on the developments in the field of mine risk education (MRE), in particular in relation to the integration of MRE with other mine action activities. As you know, among priorities for the period leading to the Seventh Meeting of States Parties, the Zagreb Progress Report calls on States Parties to ensure "that all clearance operations have a community liaison component."

In the Nairobi Action Plan States Parties that have reported mined areas under their jurisdiction or control accepted that they will prioritize clearance of areas with highest human impact, provide mine risk education and increase efforts to perimeter-mark, monitor and protect mined areas awaiting clearance in order to ensure the effective exclusion of civilians, as required by Article 5 (2); and, "ensure that mine risk education programs are made available in all communities at risk."

In this regard, we encourage you to give a look at the fact sheet on MRE that is available at the back of the room. This fact sheet is based on *Landmine Monitor Report 2005* and on subsequent research which is still in progress. If you have comments on this fact sheet, you can speak to the Landmine Monitor Editorial Team, sitting at the back of this room.

We would like to focus on two main findings that are developed in this fact sheet:

- A growing number of mine clearance programs include Community Liaison (CL) but more efforts are needed.
- No MRE was recorded in 11 countries, while communities may be at risk in these countries

CL means different things to different organizations. For some organizations, community liaison is a process of exchanging information between mine-affected communities and mine action and development providers; for other organizations, CL is a process to place mine-affected communities at the centre of decision making processes. Both interpretations are correct & programs which incorporate both are often more effective in the longer term. You may be interested to know that guidelines and standards have been developed to support the implementation of CL projects. These guidelines help clarify and standardize our understanding and application of what CL is. We encourage organizations to make reference to the guidelines to ensure that programs are developed more consistently & predictably in different contexts, keeping in mind that mine action must be appropriate to the local context and the nature of the threat populations are faced with. Any CL project must be based on an assessment, and mine action assessments should include gender considerations.

At this time, CL is increasingly integrated by clearance operators as a standard component of their programs in 3 States Parties: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Mauritania, as well as in one non State Party: Sri Lanka. In addition, some CL is recorded in 10 State Parties (Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Burundi, Cambodia, Croatia, DR Congo, Mozambique, Sudan, Thailand) and in 5 non signatories (Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Vietnam), as well as in Somaliland. Encouragingly, a few States Parties have made concrete efforts to develop CL projects as part of peace-building and development programs, for example Cambodia and Senegal.

On Tuesday, during the victim assistance session, first aid training was highlighted as an important part of comprehensive MRE programs. While first aid often is a feature of MRE

programs, more needs to be done to see that it is consistently undertaken as part of CL projects if an assessment determines that it is required.

In other news, we would like to note some of our findings regarding the coverage of MRE. Presently, no MRE (and no surveillance system) is recorded in 11 affected countries where communities may be at risk: this includes 5 States Parties (Algeria, Bangladesh, Malawi, Niger, Zambia) and 6 non signatories (Egypt, Kuwait, Libya, Myanmar, Somalia, Uzbekistan), as well as in Western Sahara. In addition, no information on MRE is available in 2 States Parties (Bhutan and Republic of Congo) and 1 non signatory (North Korea).

In the last few years, we have encouraged states to report their MRE activities in their Article 7 Reports, under Form I. But information is often insufficient and some countries with a significant number of casualties reported in recent years did not include this information in their Article 7 report.

In conclusion, we would like to note that progress has been made to ensure the integration of MRE in clearance and development programs. But more efforts are required to ensure that these programs respond to the needs of mine-affected communities. Sustained commitment for resources is also necessary

This is a brief overview of the state of MRE. A more complete overview will be provided in the next Landmine Monitor Report, that is going to be released on 13 September. In the meantime, we encourage you to provide us with more information if needed, to ensure that our report is accurate.

Thank you.