



THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION

Statement of the United Nations Mine Action Team to the 9th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (Geneva, 24-28 November 2008)

Clearing mined-areas (Actions #17-28 of the Nairobi Action Plan)

This year a special focus has been placed upon the Article 5 extension requests submitted by 15 States Parties. We acknowledge and thank the President of the 8MSP for his leadership and tireless efforts as chair of the analysing group. The advice of UNDP was sought to assist with the analysis, and the 9MSP will have to take important decisions with regard to each of the extension requests.

UNDP has also provided support to States Parties in the preparation of extension requests by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Chad, Croatia, Jordan, Mozambique, Senegal, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

The United Nations Mine Action Team is working together with governments and mine action organizations to advance demining by assisting national programmes to adopt approaches that ensure the effective use of resources and the release of more land in a more efficient manner. In this regard, land release was an extensively discussed issue during the 8MSP. Since then, the United Nations Mine Action Team and the GICHD have worked to critically and constructively review the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) relating to general and technical survey. These revised IMAS, to be adopted by the next meeting of the IMAS Review Board, will assist affected States Parties comply with Article 5 by clarifying how to reduce and cancel large areas of suspicion that do not actually contain explosive hazards. This will enable scarce demining resources to be targeted more effectively and effectively in contaminated areas.

With regards to the identification of affected areas, during the past year the United Nations has cooperated with others to provide assistance in survey activities in Angola, Guinea Bissau, Malawi, Mauritania, Nepal, Senegal, Sudan, Tajikistan, Zambia and Uganda.

UNDP continues to implement its Completion Initiative to assist States Parties with a relatively modest anti-personnel mine problem to develop a national strategy to meet their Article 5 obligations in collaboration with donors and implementing partners. With the operational assistance of Norwegian Peoples Aid, Malawi has completed its obligations and excellent progress has been made in Albania, Mauritania and Zambia. States Parties that could also successfully adopt this approach are Burundi, Guinea Bissau, Rwanda and Senegal, all of which now have a comparatively small problem that could be easily solved.

Also during this reporting period, the United Nations has contributed to the development of a comprehensive mine action plan in Afghanistan for the year 2009-2010, mapping out the

requirements for compliance with the APMBT, and the Afghanistan Compact. In addition, Iraq is developing a comprehensive strategy for mine action, as well as relevant national legislation, consistent with its obligations under the APMBT.

Chad has revised its national strategy and action plan, after the restructuring of the National Authority. It now comprises a steering committee, a national demining centre (Centre National de Déminage, CND) and four operational regional centres. Additional operational support is being coordinated by UNMAS through the MINURCAT Peacekeeping Mission.

Mine Risk Education (in relation to Actions #20 and #21 of the Nairobi Action Plan)

The UN continued its support to a range of mine risk education projects covering community liaison, victim surveillance, public information, education and training in some 30 countries across different regions.

UNICEF, in collaboration with GICHD, has developed a Training Manual in support of existing MRE IMAS Best Practices Guidebook. The manual, which is being finalized, consists of several modules and will provide mine action practitioners with an easy and user-friendly tool to develop and implement effective MRE projects and activities.

UNICEF also finalized the development of an Emergency MRE Toolkit designed to guide MRE project managers in a step-by-step manner through the first six weeks of an emergency MRE campaign, in a post-conflict situation. A set of guidelines on national capacity development and integration of MRE into national institutions such as schools was also developed by UNICEF.

Together with GICHD and other partners, UNICEF is also working to establish an international MRE Advisory Group, which will provide overall guidance to the sector and identify ways to improve effectiveness and efficiency of MRE within the broader mine action sector.