

**UN Coordination Aspects
(UNMAS / UNDP)
Mine Clearance & Related Technologies Standing Committee**

PRESENTATION TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS,
4-8 DECEMBER 2000

Coordination is a very wide but important subject and I would like to briefly cover some aspects of the way in which the UN attempts to coordinate support to mine action and some of the coordinating mechanisms that we have available to us.

Coordination is essential in any multi-disciplinary activity however, in this post, I have quickly found out that, in reality, one can only co-ordinate those who want to be coordinated - and not everybody does! This often explains some difficult situations and apparent duplication!

Introduction / Background:

- The UN recognises the importance of having an integrated response to the issue of landmines and the Mine Action Service has been identified as the focal point for all mine action activities within the UN system. As such, UNMAS tries to bring together all of the various UN elements that participate in the different aspects of the landmine problem, and there are some 10 agencies involved to varying degrees.
- We are responsible, among other things, for the development, maintenance and promotion of technical and safety standards. We are also responsible for the collection and analysis of mine-related information and for advocacy efforts in support of a global ban on APMs.
- In addition, and in consultation with other partners, we establish priorities for the selection of certain actions; we facilitate a dialogue with the donors and we attempt co-ordinate the mobilisation of resources.
- One of the first tools or mechanisms available to us is the Inter-Agency Co-ordination Group which meets to discuss future plans and operational issues, and to review the current involvement of the different agencies and projects. This group meets quite regularly and is an effective way of keeping all agencies informed. A meeting can be called by any member at any time. A similar mechanism, the Inter-Agency Steering Committee, exists which includes the ICBL and ICRC in addition to the UN agencies.
- Through the responses and reaction of the relevant agencies at these meetings, the UN system offers assistance to affected countries in dealing with their landmine and UXO problems by providing an overall monitoring and coordinating function among other specific activities.
- In order to get an initial impression of the problem in any one country UNMAS is responsible for leading Inter-Agency Assessment Missions which visit countries

and attempt to define the immediate problem of landmines and UXO. We plan to conduct several more in 2001 to bring the total to 20 of the most affected countries visited. The reports of such missions naturally end in conclusions and recommendations, but the problem comes in taking these mission reports to the next stage. Frequently the solution, or next step, requires donor support and it is a coordinating function of the UN to mobilise this support. All mission reports are presented to the donor community and are also available to anyone on request.

- One action we, as UNMAS, can frequently take is to offer the Information Management System for Mine Action as a means to provide a single consolidated source of mine action related information. The UN coordinates the deployment of IMSMA, in conjunction with the GICHD.
- It is, of course, important for the UN agencies to keep the international community informed as much as possible, and much of what has been discussed over the last two days has contributed to, or examined, this process. Donors naturally want to know what to do, where to do it, for how long and how to measure if they are being effective. In order to know how much is being spent by whom and where for instance, Canada, as a specific project donor, has produced the Data Base for Mine Action Investments, about which you will hear more about later. This system is maintained by UNMAS and helps us to analyse donated information. It does, however, require accurate input from the donors and I take this opportunity to make another soft plea for donors to provide information to the database and to keep it up to date.
- Another useful means of coordinating involvement and passing information to the donor community is through the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) in New York. This is a group that meets monthly and which receives briefings on related subjects in order to keep themselves up to date and aware of what is going on. The UN can use these opportunities to inform donors of mine action progress and it is hoped that this information is both relevant and can be used to inform capitals on a regular basis. It is, however, extremely important that donors receive the same information on both sides of the Atlantic and it must be our responsibility to ensure that the Geneva based donor community is also kept informed.
- One other tool we use to assist in the coordination of activities and involvement is the UN Portfolio of Mine Action Projects, produced by UNMAS every year from contributions from all the other agencies. This document or publication aims to gather all projects that are recommended for funding and completion. Donors can then select the projects, which are described in some detail and have a budget attached. This portfolio, however, must be aligned to the Consolidated Appeal Process and will be revised in the spring of next year.
- The Voluntary Trust Fund for activities in Mine Action was created to fund selected projects and to fund the overall coordinating function of the UN. It is available as a source of immediate funds. It cannot be used to support programmes on a routine basis but can be used to launch emergency programmes, such as Kosovo, and the early deployment of the UN missions to Eritrea and Ethiopia and South Lebanon. UNMAS has the responsibility to coordinate and allocate funds which are unearmarked within the fund.

- Ultimately, the United Nations is responsible for coordinating activity at the global level in order to avoid redundancy and duplication of effort. However, the primary responsibility for mine action within an affected country remains with the concerned government, who should assume overall responsibility for the co-ordination and management of the national mine action programme. UNDP will elaborate on the coordination mechanisms and procedures at a national level later.
- Past experiences have highlighted the importance of the UN having a clear perspective on the way in which it will help national authorities to acquire a capacity to deal with their landmine problem. In situations where the UN is calling on different parts of the system to provide specific inputs or to undertake particular tasks, there needs to be a strong, central and authoritative co-ordination structure that is accountable, and which is designed to ensure that a unified approach to the landmine problem is respected. It is hoped that the UNMAS can provide such a function.
- While not offering a simple template solution, the UN has hopefully provided a clear and unambiguous relationship between entities involved and has built upon lessons learnt from the establishment of many missions and projects.
- However, instead of deploying to the field as an implementer, the Mine Action Service works as a co-ordinating body, providing oversight of standards, accreditation concepts, guidelines, and the bringing together of donor support with projects in the field.
- This approach leaves the running of actual programmes to those at the field level and has, in turn, resulted in stronger working partnerships with such agencies as UNDP and UNOPS.