



THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION

**Standing Committee on
Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies
Geneva, 3-4 June 2008**

**Intervention on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team
Delivered by Gustavo Laurie (UNMAS)**

Thank you Co-Chair,

It gives me great pleasure to address you on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team.

(On Article 5 extension requests)

2008 is a significant milestone in the implementation of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty. The current process for the submission of Article 5 extension requests and their analysis has started already, and important decision will have to be taken soon. The UN Mine Action Team commends the leadership shown by the 8MSP President, His Royal Highness Prince Mired of Jordan, on this matter. It also attaches great importance to the process itself. In line with this focus, the UN invited the Director of the Implementation Support Unit to deliver a presentation on Article 5 extensions at the 11th International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers.

The UN is currently assisting in mine action various requesting countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Jordan, Mozambique, Senegal, Thailand and Yemen.

The UN Mine Action Teams remains available to provide its expert advice within this process if required.

Mister Co-Chair, during the reporting period the United Nations provided mine action support to more than 40 countries and territories¹, primarily through partnerships with governments, mine action operators, as well as international and non-governmental organizations. As in previous years, we would refer to our assistance in mine action by following the structure of and actions within the Nairobi Action Plan:

Action # 17: Intensify and accelerate efforts to ensure the most effective and most expeditious possible fulfilment of Article 5

The Completion Initiative aims to accelerate assistance to States Parties with a relatively modest anti-personnel mine problem to develop a national strategy to implement their Article 5 obligation within the deadline set by the Convention. While we are at different stages of implementation of

¹ Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kosovo, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Malawi, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nepal, Niger, occupied Palestinian territory, Russian Federation (Chechenya), Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, Viet Nam, Western Sahara, Yemen, Zambia.

this Initiative in a number of countries, we are have to report, as earlier communicated by the interested State Party, the completion by Malawi of its Article 5 obligations, as well as progress in Albania, Guinea Bissau and Jordan.

The United Nations stresses once again that, although it has an important role in encouraging and supporting governments, ultimately, it is up to affected countries to request assistance and come forward with the approach and the commitments that they wish to promote.

Action # 18: Urgently identify all areas

Since the Eight Meeting of States Parties (8MSP), the United Nations Mine Action Team has continued to contribute to the increased knowledge and understanding of the size and more importantly, the impact of the anti-personnel mine problem. Here are a few examples. Sudan's survey has been finalized last year, as well as the General Survey in Guinea Bissau.. Also, in Angola, a National LIS was completed last year in the three last provinces. A technical survey is going on in Tajikistan and in Mauritania In Afghanistan, a country-wide polygon survey will define minefields within suspected hazardous areas, effectively identifying the true extent of the actual mine problem.

Action # 19: Urgently develop and implement national plans

As part of our programmes, the UN Mine Action Team assists States Parties to develop national mine action plans and strategies. To date, such plans have been developed in a number of countries. These include, but are not limited to: Afghanistan, Mozambique, Senegal, Tajikistan, Uganda and Yemen. National legislation on mine action was adopted in Mauritania by its Parliament, and in Guinea Bissau, its Strategic Mine Action Plan will be finalized by July 2008.

Action #21 Ensuring that mine risk education programmes are made available in all communities at risk.

The United Nations supports a range of mine risk education (MRE) projects covering community liaison, public information, education and training and coordination activities in over 30 countries In 2007 new projects were developed in Nepal, while in Afghanistan mine risk education was effectively mainstreamed into school curricula and wider public information mechanisms.

Earlier today, UNICEF presented an update on the status of MRE, which included achievements and challenges in this field., as well as future plans, including the establishment of an International MRE Steering Committee, an emergency MRE toolkit and MRE best practices training modules.

Action #22: Make their problem, plans, progress and priorities for assistance known

The United Nations provided assistance to States Parties at the country-level to prepare their transparency reports as per Article 7 of the Convention, and close to (50) %² have already provided their report regarding the year 2007, including initial reports by Ethiopia, Sudan, Burundi and Iraq. Additionally, at the country level, the United Nations has supported the development of national monitoring mechanisms for progress in mine action, such as within the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board in Afghanistan.

² As of 12 May 2008, the following states parties currently receiving support from the UN in mine action have provided Article 7 reports in 2008: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, Cyprus, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Serbia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand and Zambia.

Action #24 Ensure and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their efforts

In Afghanistan, the Mine Action Centre is increasing its emphasis on community based mine action activities in an effort to ensure the most effective, efficient and appropriate delivery of support in areas where assistance is otherwise limited. Targeted largely at areas in the south, south-east and east of the country, these low cost activities produce dividends beyond just clearance of mines, providing much needed economic stimulus in otherwise marginalised areas, employment within locations where opportunities are limited, and a sense of local ownership of the problem and the solution.

The United Nations MAT strongly believes that the inclusion of a **gender perspective** in all aspects of our work will increase effectiveness of policies and programmes. There are some noteworthy experiences in this area. In Tajikistan, for example, training on gender awareness in mine action was held and gender is currently being mainstreamed into Tajikistan's mine risk education policy.

UNDP established a Gender Window within the Thematic Trust Fund for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (CPR TTF). The CPR TTF is already well known within the mine action donor community as many contributions to UNDP activities are channelled through this trust fund. This new mechanism is allowing us to better monitor and report back on financial contributions that focus on gender considerations.

UNMAS devoted a new section in the UN Mine Action Team's website (E_MINE at www.mineaction.org) to gender equality in mine action to serve as a source of information and inspirations for mine action practitioners.

Action #25: Strengthen efforts to enable mine-affected States Parties to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, material and scientific and technological information

Last April, the 11th International Meeting of National Mine Action Directors and UN Advisors, was organized for the first time in a mine-affected country (Croatia). This meeting brought together national and international mine action practitioners and stakeholders. In addition to the subjects already mentioned, the agenda focused on the different models of UN assistance to mine-affected countries, capacity building, transition to full national ownership, and sustainability. It was suggested that the future meetings could also be held in affected countries.

UNDP facilitates the national mine action staff exchange programme (MAX). With the support of UNDP, a delegation from the Tajikistan Mine Action Center visited the Mine Action Center in Afghanistan (UNMACA) for training and exposure for all aspects of mine action.

Action #26: Share information on – and further develop and advance – mine clearance techniques, technologies and procedures

Means and methods of land release can be an important element in achieving deadlines for clearance operations. In addition to recent activities undertaken by the GICHD and the Survey Action Centre (SAC) on the issue of land release, UNMAS, together with the GICHD, has initiated a review of the relevant IMAS. Currently, a draft revision of a new IMAS on Land Release and another on General Survey have been produced and are available for comment. A third draft IMAS, on Technical Survey will be produced shortly. A full session was devoted to this issue at the above mentioned Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers. Also yesterday UNMAS briefed the Standing Committee on this same matter.

In May 2008, UNMAS and GICHD published the 8th edition of the Mine Action Technology newsletter. The newsletter is dedicated to promote and develop related mine action technology, as well as an update on relevant matters. The newsletter is accessed through the UNMAS and GICHD websites and is sent to a wide cross section of UNMAS personnel in mine action.

Following the success of the 2006 workshop, UNMAS and GICHD will organize another workshop on new technologies and procedures for technical staff from mine action programmes in Geneva from 8 to 10 September, 2008.

Action # 40-50: Cooperation and assistance (Mine Action and Development)

The United Nations Mine Action Team substantially emphasizes mainstreaming mine action into broader development plans, budgets and programmes, both at a global level and at a country level. In fact, this is a core part of the inter-agency mine action strategy for 2006-2010. Enquires made by UNDP among countries currently receiving UN support in mine action, revealed that at least 18 of them have included mine action in either their national poverty reduction plans or in their development strategies.

Finally, Mister Co-Chair, the United Nations provides resources to support mine action programmes through its core funds or Trust Funds. Contributions from 24 donors to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action in 2007 years amounted for more 92 million US\$.

Thank you.