



## 1. History of the Warfare

- Eritrea is a country which had been the field for so many conflicts in the last century since the start of the Italian colonization.
- The country has emerged from those prolonged conflicts which caused and led it to severe and immense Land Mines, Unexploded Ordnances (UXO) and ERW contaminations besides the other enormous nationwide devastations.
- The presence of Landmines and UXO continues to kill and maim people and are threatening them by denying their daily work for their lively hood.
- Mines have also been obstacle for agriculture, construction and general nationwide developments.

## 2. Scope of the problem

- The land mine and UXO contamination in Eritrea is massive and nation wide.
- From the six regions having 58 sub regions in Eritrea, 55 sub regions are contaminated by Landmines and UXO.
- Out of the 4,176 nation wide communities, 481 communities are Mine and UXO impacted and these encompass 655,000 people
- At the time the LIS was completed, the nationwide suspected and recorded contaminated areas were 914 which covered 129 sq.kms.

### **According to the LIS scoring protocols:**

- 7% = (33 communities) are highly impacted.
- 21% = (100 communities) medium impacted.
- 72% = (348 communities) low impacted.

## 3. Impact on Communities

The people of Eritrea are suffering from the dangerous remnants of the previously mentioned wars. Consequently some of the enormous Impacts affecting the people are the following :

- Huge number of people have died and maimed and still casualties are continuing as a result of which there are large number of people with disability which need protection and assistance.
- There is psychological burden of always living in fear as a result of being surrounded by mine fields
- The most likely landmine and UXO victims are children and adults. Consequently there is loss of future productivity where the impact on the quality of life and the disruption of family life is significant.
- Mines are found in all areas of the country and can be expected to cause problems for the expansion of transportation net work projects, tourism, agriculture and other infrastructure projects.

## 4. Response to the Impact

Eritrea interprets and implements the MA mission because it is about

- To feel people safe for free movement.
- To promote national development plans to ensure poverty reduction
- To ensure that victims are assisted, protected and integrated into the society.

## 4. Response to the Impact

Based on this vision:

- After the border conflict war was officially concluded with the **"agreement on the cessation of hostilities"** on December 2000, Mine Action activities started in Eritrea by One national and a Number of international organizations.
- Despite the big amount of fund invested by donors through these companies, the operational output witnessed in the Demining field was not gratifying.
- The national demand was for genuine handling of the program and its productive implementation.
- Proclamation 123, 2002 was issued and the inception of the Eritrean Demining Authority followed with the responsibilities of Mine Action coordination, regulations and monitoring.

## 5. National Mine Action Strategic plan

- The Land mine Impact Survey being essential for preparing the national mine action strategic plan had been conducted from March 2002 to June 2004.
- Based on references to the LIS data and discussions with the National Strategic Plan Working Group, EDA prepared the first phase national strategic plan (2005-2009).

In countries which have broad contamination of Mines and UXO like Eritrea, the absolute country wide clearance takes decades or long term process. For that reason the 2005-2009 strategic plan mainly focuses on the following objectives.

- Conduct Marking, Clearance and MRE to permit the return of the IDPs.
- Conduct Marking, Clearance and MRE in the High and Medium impacted communities where most of these priorities are accomplished at this stage.

## 6. Man Power Capacity and Status of Field Activities

### 6.1 Operations

- Currently there are 8 teams active in the Demining field under the EDA sponsorship
- There are also Survey, Quality assurance and EOD mine action sections, comprising of two teams each.
- The monthly salary and operational support of all these teams is covered by the government except for the two teams operational support covered by UNDP.

### 6.11 Overall clearance figures from 2001 to April 2008

Antipersonnel mines cleared	10,117
Anti tank mines cleared	943
UXOs cleared	54,552
Total Area cleared	54,076,707 m2





## 6.2 Mine Risk Education (MRE)

- MRE started in Eritrea in 2001, simultaneous to the Demining operations.
- There are 10 facilitator teams and around 70 community volunteers monitored by EDA deployed in all the regions of the country to teach or aware people from the danger of Mines, UXO and ERW.
- 57 community volunteers monitored by the Red Cross Society of Eritrea (RCSE)
- 2 teams of UN MACC also were in the TSZ

The expenses for all EDA/ MRE activities is covered by UNICEF.

### 6.21 MRE Outstanding Activities from 2001 until April 2008

- 468 elementary school teachers from Ministry of Education got training to give MRE to elementary school students in all regions of Eritrea
- 5 journalists from Ministry of Information got such training to broadcast MRE through the Radio Media
- 160 sub-regional, village and surrounding administrators from the five regions of the country were sensitized in MRE by conducting 3 day work shops in each region.
- 1,032,966 people got Mine Risk Education.
- April 4, which was declared by the UN general assembly to be the international Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action starting from 2006 was vigorously celebrated annually in Eritrea as well.





## 7. National Program Partners

- Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare cooperates in the Victim Assistance Pillar of Activity
- MOI broad casts MRE messages through the Mass Media (radio) in five different languages.
- Ministry of Education gives MRE to elementary school students through the teachers in all regions of the country..
- Red Cross Society of Eritrea conducts MRE through their community volunteers.
- Our funding partners from the UN system are mainly UNICEF in the Mine Risk Education and UNDP in the Mine Clearing and Capacity Building activities.

## 8. Challenges or Expectations

- The government of Eritrea is working with its utmost efforts to expedite Demining activities incorporating it with the national development plans.
- Since Mine Action is an expensive project which requires big financial and logistical supports, the burden of the program should not be left to the shoulders of the government of Eritrea alone.
- To enable our objectives and achieve our vision by completing landmine clearance within the initially planned time frame our demand for financial and logistical support is crucial.
- For the above reasons, we appeal and expect full positive response for cooperation and assistance from all mine action Mine Action Donor society.

**Thank you !!**