

**Standing Committee on  
Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies<sup>1</sup>  
Geneva, 22-23 June 2010**

**Intervention on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team**

Thank you Co-Chair,

It gives me great pleasure to address you on behalf of the UN Mine Action Team, comprising 14 UN partners involved in mine action.<sup>2</sup>

First of all, the UNMAT wishes to congratulate Nicaragua for fulfilling its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

**(On Article 5 extension requests)**

Last year, States Parties granted Article 5 extension requests to four States Parties, namely Argentina, Cambodia, Tajikistan and Uganda. The UN Mine Action Team is committed to continuing its support to the latter three countries in the implementation of their national plans for the fulfilment of their Article 5 obligations.

This year three States Parties – Colombia, Denmark and Mauritania, have submitted Article 5 extension requests. The UN Mine Action Team will assist Colombia and Mauritania in the preparation and implementation of their relevant national plans.

In addition, the entire UN Mine Action Team, with a wealth of experience in all aspects of mine action, remains available and ready to provide its expert technical advice to the Analysis Group for the extension requests, as needed and requested.

Mr./Madam Co-Chair,

Since the Second Review Conference the United Nations has continued to provide support in all areas of mine action, including mine clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance to nearly 30 countries and territories. This assistance has been provided primarily through partnerships with governments,

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<sup>2</sup> UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA), UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women (OSAGI), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank.

mine action operators, as well as international and non-governmental organizations.

### **(Surveys)**

Since the Second Review Conference, 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. The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, for example, initiated a post-clearance livelihood survey to examine the use of cleared land; this will be replicated and is expected to enhance the national prioritisation process.

### **(Mine Risk Education)**

The United Nations continued its support for a range of mine/ERW risk education (MRE) projects including support to emergency MRE, community-based activities, school-based activities and MRE through public information and media in over 30 countries. The primary aim of these activities was to enhance, along with demining and other mine action activities, the protection and safety of populations living in or near areas affected by landmines and ERW. UNICEF, as the lead UN agency for MRE provided technical, financial and operational support for national authorities as well as NGOs in developing and implementing MRE projects. MRE projects are also implemented in other UN-managed programmes.

While support for ongoing risk education programmes continued, since the last meeting of the standing committees, UNICEF in collaboration with other partners, initiated and provided emergency MRE to IDPs and other at-risk populations in at least three occasions where populations faced either new or increased risks from landmines and ERW. These included IDPs and local populations in north western areas of Pakistan, the southern region of Philippines, and the northern region of Yemen. In Afghanistan, the UN (UNMAS) has maintained its support for the Ministry of Education regarding its transition of responsibility for coordination of mine risk education to full national ownership.

In order to enhance national and local capacity in MRE, UNICEF together with GICHD organized two regional training courses on MRE using a recently developed Training Manual that is based on MRE IMAS. The two training courses benefited a total of 46 participants from national authorities, NGOs and UN organizations working in the field. The first, in French, focused on mine/ERW affected countries in the West and Central African regions and the second, in English, covered affected countries in Asia.

At the global level and in order to enhance the technical quality and standards for MRE, UNICEF, through the International MRE Advisory Group (IMRE-AG) and the IMAS Review Board, reviewed and revised the International Mine Action

Standards on MRE. The new Standards, which were issued in May this year is a significant improvement from the earlier version; it now contains all seven series of previous MRE IMAS in a single and concise document, reflecting the latest developments in an easy-to-use fashion.

Mister/Madam Co-Chair,

We would like to highlight that MRE as an integral part of mine action, continues to play an essential role in creating a safer and more protective environment for communities that are affected by landmines and ERW. On one hand, MRE enables girls, boys, women and men in those communities to have the required knowledge to make informed decisions about their safety as they go about their daily lives; and on the other hand, MRE, through its presence and networks at the community level, provides important information and data that is essential for planning and implementation of mine action activities. It is therefore important that national authorities, along with the UN, NGOs and other partners, remain committed to supporting risk education and other preventive measures as an integrated component of broader mine action activities.

The UN Mine Action Team considers it important to recognise the role of MRE upstream of mine clearance, to ensure the protection of communities and enable community participation in defining priorities. Moreover, land release and community liaison techniques support an increase in efficiency and effectiveness.

### **(Mine Action Technologies)**

#### **Technology**

Concerning technology, UNMAS continues following-up on the most recent developments in the field of mine action technologies. Also, UNMAS and the GICHD are currently preparing the biennial Mine Action Technology Workshop, which will take place here in Geneva in September this year.

#### **IMAS**

With regard to the International Mine Action Standards, and as explained above, the IMAS Review Board adopted, in May this year, the revised MRE IMAS. The revision was lead by UNICEF in its capacity as Chair of the MRE Advisory Group.

### **(Gender and Mine Action)**

The United Nations Mine Action Team continues to strongly believe that the inclusion of gender perspectives in all areas of our work will increase the effectiveness of policies and programmes, and strengthen the overall mine action programme.

We are glad the Cartagena Action Plan has incorporated significant and important language on gender and age perspectives through a number of actions.

In March 2010, the *Revised Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* were published, after their adoption by the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action. The guidelines have been upgraded and now represent a more practical tool, highlighting lessons learned and good practice. The new guidelines are aimed at helping mine action policymakers and programme personnel to include gender considerations in all aspects of their work.

### **(Mine Action and Development)**

The United Nations also works in support of further integrating mine action into national development or poverty reduction strategies. The UN stresses the role of national ownership in ensuring sustainable results. Efforts to eliminate cluster munitions and landmines have made the greatest headway when articulated by affected states with a view towards the economic and social impact on the countries' development, and when efforts have been integrated into the broader national development frameworks and associated budgets.

Demining priorities need to reflect national and community interests, and should be integrated in national and community development plans. Clearance is only the first – enabling – step and should be linked with further livelihood and community development. Clearance priorities should be based on community needs and be formulated in consultation with the communities themselves.

In Afghanistan, for example, development continues to be impeded by landmines and ERW, with 587 hazards in community centres, 101 blocking access to housing, 62 blocking access to water, 1,190 blocking access to 161 sq km of agricultural land and 205 blocking access to infrastructure. The UN (UNMAS) continues to support the Government work towards achievement of the Afghanistan Compact, which envisions a 70% reduction of mine/ERW contaminated areas by 2011, although it now appears that an up-scaling of funding will be required for this to happen.

Thank you.