

MASG

Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

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1. Unofficial Minutes: MASG-Meeting 5 July 2005

1. After welcoming the participants, the Chair (Ambassador Peter Maurer) introduced Ambassador Nellen, the Director of the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), as well as the two specialists from Japan: Professor Katsuhisa Furuta from Tokyo Denki University and Mr. Tayuka Mori from the Mitsubishi Research Institute.
2. After the adoption of the agenda, Ambassador Nellen spoke about the core activities of the GICHD and then presented its new strategy. The GICHD provides operational assistance, creates and shares knowledge, and supports instruments of international law. The new GICHD-Strategy for the period 2006 and beyond has been presented to the Council of Foundation, and is now being consulted with a series of stakeholders. The draft of the new strategy, which was made available to the MASG, has two objectives: First, remain evolutionary, but bring more coherence into the work of the Centre (center of excellence in the field of mine action in a broad sense of the term, its work should encompass the whole spectrum of mine action in emergency, reconstruction, peace-building and development situations). Second, it should set clear, measurable objectives and time frames. The Centre is working on the request of mine affected countries or donors, therefore, quality objectives have been set which can, at the end of the chosen time-frame, be measured retro-actively. The time-frame would be the three year period of the Strategy itself. Yearly work plans will also be developed, which will contain concrete measurable objectives and which will contribute to the achievement of the operational objectives of the Strategy.

Ambassador Nellen invited MASG-members to **provide written comments on the new Strategy** until the end of August to Ian Mansfield (i.mansfield@gichd.ch).

3. The Chair then moved to the thematic focus of the meeting: Technologies to improve humanitarian demining. Minister Yasushi Takase from the Permanent Mission of Japan introduced Japan's action on demining and detection technology. Japan launched the "Zero Victims Initiative" in December 1997, providing about 16 billion yen (US\$ 145 million) for mine clearance and victim assistance. In June 2002, following the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan, Japan started the first of two tracks of R&D for Demining and Detection Technology. In January 2003, the second R&D track was initiated. Field evaluation tests are being carried out in Afghanistan since May 2004. Overview of the two R&D tracks:

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)
<i>Implementing Organization:</i> Japan science and Technology Agency (JST)	<i>Implementing Organization:</i> New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO)
<i>Research Funds:</i> Universities and Companies	<i>Research Funds:</i> Japanese Companies
New technology	Existing technology

Mr. Takuya Mori then presented the METI project:

- Features: the project is based on existing civil use technology. The aim is to produce practical and cost-effective equipments as soon as possible.
- Progress: In 2003 3 types were selected (Mine Clearance Vehicle, Mine Detection Vehicle and Hand-Held Detector).

- Mine clearance: Yamanashi Hitachi Construction Machinery (flail hammer type or rotary cutter type); Komatsu (heavy duty type or light weight type); Kawasaki mine bull (with tiller)
- Mine Detection: Kawasaki mine dog (with GPR sensor for surface mine detection)
- Some machines ended the R&D phase.
- METI will support manufacturers to develop equipments for different areas and needs. METI will also share its data concerning mine action technology and test procedures.
- For further technical information please contact Mr. Mori: moritaku@mri.co.jp

As the next speaker, Professor Katsuhisa Furuta, research supervisor, introduced the MEXT-JST project:

- JST's mission is to promote science and technology in Japan by conducting a broad range of activities. In a report presented by a MEXT committee in 2002, it was pointed out that science and technology should be used as contribution of Japan to humanitarian mine action.
- JST selected 12 proposals for R&D in collaboration with GICHD and UNMACA. Afghanistan was chosen as a test ground because of many false alarms that happen there with metal detectors.
- Basic concept: diagnosis based on images (sensor and robotic technology) modeled on the computer tomography technology in medicine. The outcome is 3D underground images that easily distinguish manmade objects from metal scraps and thus reduce false alarms.
- The project combines new sensing technologies with new access and operation technologies to replace current manual operations.
- New sensing technologies include: ground-penetrating radar, sensor fusion combining metal detectors (short-term R&D); advanced sensing technology for explosive detection (mid-term R&D).
- New access and operation technologies include: remote-operated vehicles to carry sensors and manipulator technology that can make the best use of sensors (short-term R&D); integration of explosive sensors with improved access vehicles (mid-term R&D).
- Mine Hunter Vehicle: can be used on rough terrain; has a water and dust-proof sensor system; remotely-controlled vehicle; GPR system can be adapted according to conditions; sensor is being held by a robotic arm that makes very clear underground images.
- Advanced Mine Sweeper: for hilly conditions, steep slopes, canals and trenches; has a sensor boom of up to 20 meters long
- For further technical information please contact Prof. Furuta: furuta@k.dendai.ac.jp

4. Ian Mansfield from the GICHD then presented his perspective. According to the GICHD, there is a negative and a positive view on technology:

- Negative view: nothing has changed since WWII; a lot of R&D money is being spent with no result; military security prohibits some technology; commercial market is too small to drive development of new products; impractical equipment is often being developed in isolation; promised new technology (NQR, Fast Neutron Methods, Trace Explosive Detection Systems) have not delivered the solution for all the problems; R&D community does not listen to the field; R&D is only focused on clearance technology (and not on VA, MRE, etc.).
- Positive view: progress is evolutionary, not revolutionary; existing clearance equipment has improved (metal detectors more sensitive, mechanical equipment adapted); significant advances in IT-equipment (IMSMA, EODIS); user needs better defined (GICHD Study of Operational Needs); some new equipment fielded; better understanding of use of scent detection; standard test procedures established and evaluations conducted (CEN, ITEP); R&D money is extra.

Ian Mansfield then mentioned criteria and conditions for the successful introduction of technology into mine action. Criteria are: Reliable, cost effective, appropriate, robust. Conditions are: need by the user (technology has to be appropriate to the situation and expertise has to be around for reparations); development of the technology must be complete (users can't make modifications); a competent manufacturer must be involved; sufficient quantities and sustained funding must be provided.

5. In the ensuing discussion, the delegate from the US commended the GICHD on its presentation. The Chair asked the question whether there were any indications that Japanese technology is speeding up clearance. Prof. Furuta answered that GPR systems are more reliable and faster than the traditionally used mine detection systems. John Flanagan from UNMAS stated that a one-size-fits-all approach in terms of technology was not possible. Much depends on the terrain and vegetation in each mine-affected area. Furthermore, in parallel with the development of technology, there has also to be development of know-how in the field. Prof. Furuta confirmed that Japanese technology was very good for dry terrain (GPR works very well in Afghanistan and Egypt). In the opinion of Ambassador Nellen (GICHD) both tracks (use of present technologies as well as new technologies) have to be explored. New technology can one day hopefully be added to the toolbox. The delegate from the US added that American technology has been tested by the Ministry of Defense and test results will be available very soon.
6. In the country presentation, Sayed Aqa (UNDP) presented the UNDP mine action program in Mozambique. The accomplishments that have been made in Mozambique so far are very substantial: For example, the LIS 2001 counted 791 affected villages, in 2004 this number was reduced to 204 villages. The Suspected Hazard Area (SHA) was reduced from 558,000,000 m² (in 2001) to 171,571.071 m² (in 2004). Sayed Aqa underlined that this was accomplished without technology, but with better management and good use of existing technology. Area reduction technologies are very useful. The operators involved in clearance are: NPA, Halo Trust, HI, Accelerated Demining Programme (ADP) and RONCO. Contributions to Mine Action in 2004 were roughly US\$ 22 million (34% of this amount being covered by the government of Mozambique). In 2005, the government will increase its contribution to 48%. The objectives of the government for 2005-2009 are: mine clearance and destruction; marking of areas suspected of mine/UXO contamination; survivor assistance and mine awareness programmes. For 2005, the government has the following objectives: Institutional capacity building in the National Demining Institute (IND); decentralisation of the programme implementation; clearance of areas for population resettlement; clearance of social and commercial infrastructures; clearance of areas around or within human settlements; clearance of areas of socio-economic interest. The remaining challenges are: Demining target 2009 (Ottawa Convention); mainstreaming mine action into major policy instruments of the government; establishment of the agency addressing all residual issues; transformation of the ADP into a viable non-government agency, and strengthening the coordination between all stakeholders. As for the loss of AAM-funds that has occurred in Mozambique, the three organizations that were responsible (UNDP, NPA and IND) have taken corrective actions against the staff involved and the funds were reimbursed. For further information on the programme, please contact the UNDP Country Office: lutful.kabir@undp.org
7. In the ensuing discussion, the delegate from Finland wanted to get more clarification on the role of UNDP in Mozambique. Sayed Aqa mentioned the following functions of UNDP: capacity-development of national government; management of ADP (so far); technical advice; legislative guidance; training. As soon as the legal framework is adopted, UNDP may scale down its operation. The exit strategy will be defined according to the upcoming GICHD evaluation. Ambassador Nellen from the GICHD stated that in Mozambique, a highly affected country in the past, the humanitarian phase is clearly over. Now it is a development issue. Mozambique also has to meet the obligations under the Ottawa Convention. Sayed Aqa replied that Mozambique is indeed a very good example for the mainstreaming of mine action

into development. It is crucial that funding for mine action is foreseen in health, education and other project funding. The representative from Japan was interested to learn where Mozambique was standing within the completion initiative. Sayed replied that in general, any country that feels it can meet the criteria can be included in the list.

8. Under AOB the following points were mentioned:
 - Portfolio update (UNMAS).
 - Lebanon (UNDP programme): Funding will run out on 19 July.
 - Brochures of Handicap International (Lessons Learned Workshop) are being made available to the MASG.

9. In conclusion, the Chair highlighted the following points from the meeting:
 - Management and policy issues are linked to the progress in technology.
 - There is no silver bullet and technology should not only be used for clearance.
 - Reliable/cost-effective/appropriate/robust are important criteria for technology. The ultimate test for technology will be whether we can speed up clearance.
 - Importance of having adapted technology. There is no one-size-fits-all solution.
 - In Mozambique it is important to sustain the success. We are now entering a different phase.

10. The next meeting takes place on 23 September in Geneva (GICHD) with the thematic focus Good Humanitarian Donorship and Burundi.

The meeting was closed at 1 pm.

2. Provisional Agenda MASG Meeting 23 September 2005

MASG Meeting 23 September 2005

3-5pm

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
7bis, avenue de la Paix
GENEVA

Provisional Agenda :

1. Welcome address by the Chair
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Thematic Presentations on Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD):
 - OCHA on GHD process (tbc)
 - USA and UK on donor perspective (tbc)
4. Discussion
5. Country Briefing: Burundi (UNMAS)
6. Discussion
7. AOB
 - Theme for November MASG-meeting
 - Next MASG-chairmanship, future format of MASG

3. Updates

3.1. Update from UNMAS

POLICY, TREATY IMPLEMENTATION, INFORMATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Policy Coordination

On 6 June 2005, the Principals of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) met and endorsed the document, "Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The United Nations Inter-Agency Policy."

On 23 June 2005, the Steering Committee on Mine Action (SCMA) held its biannual meeting in New York. Items on the agenda included: the recently revised "Mine Action and Effective Coordination: the United Nations Inter-Agency Policy", the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining Strategy 2006 and Beyond, the Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, and the mine action programme in Sudan. The UN Programme Manager from Sudan highlighted a shortfall of US\$ 40 million out of the total appeal of US\$ 82 million for 2005. Participants agreed that the programme's emphasis on national ownership and decision-making at the UN Country Team-level were an illustration of putting the revised policy into practice. They highlighted that the ultimate success of the programme depended on further factors, such as the division of labour, proper coordination and the designation of a capital for south Sudan.

Advocacy and Treaty Implementation

The Advocacy Working Group met on 3 June 2005 to review progress on the implementation of **'Eliminating the Threat of Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War: The United Nations Advocacy Strategy for 2004-2005'**, determine priorities for the rest of 2005, and start discussions on the need for an advocacy strategy for 2006-2010. It was agreed that guidelines should be developed for the implementation of the UN advocacy strategy.

The Intersessional Standing Committee meetings took place in Geneva from 13 to 17 June 2005. Presentations were made by UNDP, UNICEF and UNMAS on behalf of the UN mine action team on: the revised inter-agency policy and steps undertaken by the UN in support of the Nairobi Action Plan. A summary of outcomes from the intersessionals--which identifies required follow-up --was circulated to all UN Programme Managers and Chief Technical Advisors. The States Parties agreed that a report (called the 'Zagreb Progress Report') on the status of the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan and the priorities for 2005-2006 will be prepared in time for the Sixth Meeting of States Parties in Zagreb, Croatia, from 28 November to 2 December 2005. UNMAS is coordinating UN input to the consultative process led by Austria and Croatia.

The Co-Chairs (Norway and Nicaragua) of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance introduced a "victim assistance questionnaire" that had been sent out to assist 24 mine-affected states to articulate: (a) specific, measurable, and realistic victim assistance objectives to be achieved by 2009, (b) plans to achieve this objective, and (c) means to implement the plans. Angola, Colombia, El Salvador, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Sudan and Uganda presented on their responses to the questionnaire. UNMAS will be working with field-based Victim Assistance Officers to support the national authorities in developing victim assistance plans.

Technology

The Technology Coordinator represented UNMAS at the Board of Directors meeting of the International Test and Evaluation Programme (ITEP) in the Netherlands. The Chair of the Executive Committee of ITEP presented the report for 2004 which showed that of 100 projects over 80% of them are, or have been, collaborative; thereby confirming the successful development of the programme. Encouraging work is being conducted on the testing and evaluation of combined sensors and a number of tests conducted on mini-flail systems. The question of how non-ITEP members could cooperate with ITEP was extensively discussed.

The Technology Coordinator attended a Workshop of the International Advanced Robotics Programme in Tokyo, discussed developments within the Japan R&D programme, primarily in support of Afghanistan, and promoted the possibility of Japanese cooperation with ITEP.

NEW PLEDGES, EARMARKINGS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE VTF (in US\$)

Pledges

20/06/2005	UK	3,726,565	Sudan (P04-SU06, P04-SU10 P04-SU34, P04-SU08, P05-SU04)
24/06/2005	Liechtenstein	39,062.50	Unearmarked

Contributions/Earmarking

03/06/2005	UK	1,825,100	Coordination (P04-GL01)
01/06/2005	UNOCHA	1,027,033.54	Afghanistan (no further earmarking)
06/06/2005	Andorra	25,522	Unearmarked
16/06/2005	UK	451,525	Rapid response (P04-GL15)
16/06/2005	Japan	259,707.34	Coordination (P04-GL01)
26/06/2005	Finland	602,750	Unearmarked
29/06/2005	Foxcroft School	6,017.61	Victim assistance (To be earmarked)

DEVELOPMENTS IN UNMAS-MANAGED PROGRAMMES

UN Mission in Eritrea and Eritrea (UNMEE)

In mid-June, two incidents involving unexploded ordnance occurred in Sector West of the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ); one person was injured in each incident. The Mine Action Coordination Centre is recommending mine risk education in these areas to mitigate the threat. UNMEE's integrated demining operations continues to make progress in Sector West, combining manual demining elements from the Kenyan demining squadron and mechanical and dog elements from the commercial contractor MECHEM. As the Eritrean national programme continues to be on stand-down and RONCO has departed, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) instructed UNMEE to continue its current clearance operations to support the return of internally displaced persons (IDP) and respond to any humanitarian tasks as required.

The Regional Liaison Officer for Sector West conducted a 'training-of trainers' course on basic integrated demining operations at the International Mine Action Training Center (IMATC) in Nairobi, Kenya, for the new rotation of Kenyan deminers who will be deployed to UNMEE in October 2005.

Sudan (UNMIS)

A joint delegation of the Government of Sudan and Sudan Peoples Liberation Movement/Army, represented by the Commissioner-General of the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC) and the Director of the New Sudan Mine Action Directorate (NSMAD), participated in the Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings in Geneva in June. The delegation requested donors to continue

their generous support not only for meeting the treaty obligations but also to implement the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

The support activities for the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) deployment focused on verifying and clearing the Juba-Yei road. Due to heavy mine contamination and adverse soil conditions, activities are delayed by two weeks. The UNMAS Operations Officer participated in a "Pre-Deployment Visit" to Pakistan to assess the capability of the military demining company that will deploy to Sudan as part of UNMIS and will work under UNMAS coordination. Mine action sub-offices were opened in Juba, Wau, Malakal and Damazine and became operational. New explosive ordnance disposal and battle area clearance teams deployed to Rumbek and Malakal.

Mine Action Cell in Cyprus

The UN Mine Action Cell (UNMAC) coordinated clearance of National Guards minefields in the UN buffer zone with more than 300 mines destroyed in June. UNMAC also hosted visits from Ms. Collette Tacquet, the Ambassador of Belgium and Mr. Eric Sanson, from the French Embassy. Ambassador Tacquet emphasized Belgium's interest to support the programme, and the French delegation commended the EU involvement in the demining programme in Cyprus.

The programme faces questions on the availability of future funding and access to minefields. On funding, the EU delegation anticipates an additional contribution of EURO 1.5 million starting in September when previous EU funding will be exhausted. The European Commission's Directorate General of Budget will submit the proposal to the European Parliament (EP) on 14 July. On access to minefields, the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) continued negotiations with the Turkish Forces to gain access to their minefields in the UN buffer zone for the next phase of the project. Without access to the minefields of Turkish and unknown origin, the programme will exhaust available tasks before the end of funding in September leaving 38 minefields uncleared in the UN buffer zone.

3.2 Update from UNDP

The following is a summary of key achievements, challenges, objectives, and funding issues for UNDP-supported country programmes, presented by region:

NEW YORK

- The Mine Action Unit of the UNDP Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) would like to take this opportunity to thank Earl Turcotte and Oren Schlein for their exemplary support and service. As some of you already know, they have left New York and the Mine Action Team to take up new assignments. Earl Turcotte recently accepted a position at the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, covering Mine Action and Small Arms and Light Weapons. Oren Schlein will be joining the UNDP Maldives office in August as part of the tsunami recovery effort in that country. They will be missed.

EUROPE & THE CIS REGION

Azerbaijan

Key Achievements

- In June, 825,110 square meters of mined area was cleared, and 25 mines and UXOs were found and destroyed. Of these, 111,084 square meters have been reclaimed using the BOZENA-4 and new BOZENA-5 mechanical demining machines.
- During June, the Training and Quality Assurance Team (TQA) of the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) conducted a general survey in the village of Horadiz (Fizuli district), resulting in the survey of 180,000 square meters.
- On 13-17 June5, Ms. Debora Netland of the US Department of States (DoS) and Mr. Perry Baltimor, President of the US Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI), visited Azerbaijan to participate in a donor recognition ceremony with ANAMA representatives as well as to view landmine clearance in Fizuli district and the training of six new mine detection dogs (MDDs) recently donated by MLI. During their visit, Ms. Netland and Mr. Baltimor met with Mr. Abid Sharifov, Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan. Mr. Sharifov expressed his deep appreciation for the efforts of the US Government in the development of a mine-action strategy for 2006-2008.
- On 16 June 2005 a press conference was held at ANAMA headquarters with the participation of Ms. Netland and Mr. Baltimor as well as Ms. Hanaa Singer, UNICEF Representative in Azerbaijan. The press conference addressed the signing of a Memorandum between UNICEF and ANAMA to continue the integration of mine-risk education (MRE) into school curriculum and the arrival of the six new MDDs kindly contributed by MLI.
- During 12-25 June, Mr. Vagif Sadigov, ANAMA MRE Officer, participated in the training workshop held in Sarajevo and organized by the US Centre for Disease Control (CDC) together with UNICEF (for details please see www.anama.baku.az/).
- During 13-15, Mrs. Shirin Rzayeva, ANAMA Public Relations Officer, attended a week of standing committee meetings dedicated to the Ottawa Convention, which was organized by the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in Geneva, Switzerland. During the course of these meetings, ANAMA produced the official statement of the Government of Azerbaijan regarding the Ottawa Convention (for details please see www.anama.baku.az/).

- From 13 June to 9 July, Mr. Aziz Aliyev, ANAMA Information Manager, participated in the Training Course on Evaluation of Mine Action Programmes in Ottawa, Canada. On 4 July the last workshop week on the International Programme for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET) began at Carleton University. Eighty-six attendees from 44 countries participated in 18 workshops.
- In June, at the request of UNICEF, ANAMA provided data on child victims of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXOs) for participation in a UNICEF “Summer Camp” project.
- On 28-29 June, a 2-day workshop was conducted within the UNICEF Summer Camp project for a group of personnel and volunteers from the Children Organization of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Right to Play nongovernmental organization, and the Ministry of Youth, Sport, and Tourism. MRE was a key aspect of the project; and participants were briefed on ANAMA MRE activity, including its objectives and the number of mine/UXO victims in Azerbaijan as per the ANAMA database.

Key Objectives

- Complete training for newly recruited local mine-detection dog handlers.
- Conduct training for local Section Leaders and Team Leaders within the ANAMA capacity-building strategy.

Key Challenges

- Making arrangements for a RHINO earth tiller to arrive soon.
- Maintaining a high rate of mine clearance even in hot weather conditions.
- Coordinating, monitoring, and evaluating mine-victim assistance projects already ongoing or to start soon.

Funding Update

- The European Commission (EC) is expected to contribute 1 million EURO in 2005 for mine-victim assistance (MVA), MRE, and marking and fencing activities. The project, however, has not yet been approved. Since the EC committee meeting has been postponed, it is hoped the contribution will be considered by mid-July 2005.

Mine Incidents

- On 5 June, 18-year old Salmanov Namiq, an internally displaced person (IDP) from Kalbajar district (the district occupied by Armenian military troops) who was living in the village of Shikharkh (Terter district), was the victim of an anti-personnel mine. He died as a result of bleeding. The incident took place while he was grazing cattle near military positions.
- On 12 June a citizen of the village of Arayatli (Fizuli district), 37-year old Safarov Gabil, drove over an anti-tank mine with a combine while gathering a harvest. As a result of explosion, his left foot was burned and combine destroyed.

ASIA PACIFIC REGION

Cambodia

Key Achievements

- Cambodian Mine Action Center (CMAC) productivity figure for mine clearance in the first five months of 2005 is 80 percent over target (9.1 million square meters), thanks to a number of management and operational reforms leading to better cost-efficiency. CMAC is now functioning with minimal technical assistance and is able to compete with international mine-action operators.
- In addition to the increase in government funding to the sector (US\$ 800,000 announced in May), the Royal Government of Cambodia has also reshuffled the composition of the board of the Cambodian Mine Action Authority (CMAA) to include additional government agencies and to strengthen the links between mine action and the activities line ministries. A second vice-president has been nominated to supervise directly the activities of the CMAA Secretariat and act as the main focal point on mine action for the donor community.

Key Objectives

- In line with the December 2004 Joint Donor Review of the Mine Action Sector, the Royal Government of Cambodia has recently requested donors to work on a pooled funding mechanism that will allocate mine-clearance funds to national and provincial priority mine-clearance tasks (defined through a decentralized, bottom-up planning process), on the basis of competitive bidding. UNDP has initiated work on this concept, in consultation with government and donor partners. If approved, this new funding modality could be operational in early 2006. Anticipated advantages include: better alignment and linkages with national development plans and programmes, economies of scale on project management and quality assurance costs, better cost transparency (standard costing method), and stronger focus on results (rather than inputs).

Funding Update

- Funding for CMAC operations has recently been received from Australia (A\$ 1 million) and France (120,000 EUROS, earmarked for clearance of archeological sites/ Khmer temples with a high potential for tourism).
- In spite of CMAC's good progress with regard to management and cost-efficiency over the past year, the UNDP Trust Fund in support to CMAC operations is still facing a US\$ 700,000 shortfall. Some activities will have to be suspended in the second half of 2005 if this shortfall cannot be addressed in the coming two months.

AFRICAN REGION

Eritrea

Key Achievements

- Conducted a quarterly review of all storage facilities and equipment issued from UNDP/MACBP to the Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) and Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO). This activity will also be conducted in July now that all facilities and equipment are located in Asmara.

- MRE teams are conducting MRE activities in six areas of Eritrea. Victim support activities are also continuing.
- Manual mine clearance and MDD operations continued by RONCO in Shilalo, Gash Barka, where 19,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) repatriated to their villages of origin in early February 2005. RONCO cleared about 334,000 square meters and destroyed 2 anti-tank mines, 9 anti-personnel mines, and 1,072 UXOs.

Key Objectives

- Continue assisting EDA in preparing the National Training Center (NTC) and de-miner courses.
- Hold a tripartite review meeting with the government to try to resolve the current vehicle situation and review present agreements and project documents. Back in April, the vehicles were impounded.
- Coordinate with the US State Department to confirm the phasing-out of RONCO mine-clearance operations in Eritrea.

Key Challenges

- No mine-clearance operations were conducted during June 2005 due to the confiscation of project vehicles by government authorities due to a pending fuel crisis. All mine-clearance operation are currently suspended.

Funding Update

- On 29 June a donor meeting was convened in the UNDP Country Office to inform donors of the current status of the Mine Action Capacity Building Programme (MACBP), EDA, EDO, and Ministry of Labor and Human Welfare activities, and also to receive feed-back from donors regarding their future intentions should the present vehicle situation fail to be resolved. Donors from the Netherlands, Norway, European Commission, Sweden, and Italy presented their perspectives on the situation. Discussion was followed by conclusions and recommendations. All parties agreed that there should be a meeting with the Government of Eritrea to give a further opportunity to resolve the current situation. Donors also clearly indicated that if no meeting were conducted, they would take such an action as to discontinue support to the MACBP.

Uganda

Key Achievements

- The Mine Action Programme of Uganda was officially launched by the Rt. Honorable First Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees on 6 July 2005 at Kampala.
- A UK-funded train and equip program for up to 140 Army engineers will start on 1 August in the International Mine Action Training Centre (IMATC) in Nairobi. The first group of 20 Army engineers will undergo humanitarian demining training from 1 August to 16 September 2005.

Key Objectives

- Establish an integrated mine-action programme in the shortest possible time.
- Following completion of the Nairobi training, conduct a three-to-six-month pilot test of mine clearance/explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams in Kasese district to clear the 57 identified dangerous areas and to declare the first affected district in Uganda as mine free.
- Begin a targeted needs assessments in the main mine/UXO-affected districts in northern Uganda (Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, Lira) prior to the deployment of clearance/EOD teams. The majority of IDPs are situated in these districts.
- Meet the vision: "The Republic of Uganda is free from the most severe humanitarian and economic effects of landmines and unexploded ordnance by 2009."

Key Challenges

- Lack of required funds to conduct targeted needs assessments in mine/UXO-affected districts. The lack of reliable data severely hampers our ability to prioritize, plan, and implement remedial mine-action activities, particularly in the potential areas of returning IDPs.
- Due to current manpower constraints in the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) Field Engineer Regiment, only 20 Army engineers can undergo humanitarian demining training as opposed to the previously planned 60.
- Ongoing insurgent activities in northern and northeastern Uganda could endanger mine-action activities and targeted needs assessments in those parts of the country.

Funding Update

- Mine-clearance/EOD operations are short US\$ 350,000. This amount will fund required additional equipment to make two clearance/EOD teams fully operational, which would then conduct clearance operations in western and northern districts during the last quarter of 2005 and during 2006. If funding requirements are not met by September 2005, planned clearance/EOD operations will be delayed, which might result in delaying the return and resettlement of IDPs, particularly in the north.
- The EU has pledged 1 Million EURO for mine-risk education and victim assistance/reintegration of landmine survivor activities in western and northern Uganda. UNDP CO will act as lead agency/applicant in a consortium of five national and international mine-action NGOs and the Office of the Prime Minister will work as an associate.
- Funding shortfall for targeted needs assessments in Gulu, Kitgum, Pader, and Lira amounts to US\$ 300,000. UNDP CO will support these surveys with seed money of US\$ 50,000.

3.3. Update from UNICEF

Afghanistan

UNICEF continues to coordinate, provide capacity building initiatives, develop new teaching and training methodologies and provide technical support for mine risk education (MRE) activities for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan.

During the first half 2005, UNICEF provided MRE materials to over 8,000 non-formal school teachers in 17 provinces throughout the country. This training focused on MRE and accelerated learning activities and assisted youth who have fallen behind in their academic studies to advance more quickly in their classes to catch up with their peers.

UNICEF is currently supporting capacity development for monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for MRE implementing agencies to maintain high quality programmes and monitor activities throughout the country. Partner agencies have been trained in internal monitoring and evaluation techniques and practices while an external capacity of four external quality assurance (QA) teams for each of the major regional areas has been deployed and are providing field personnel with vital feed back. New reporting formats have been developed and input into the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database system used by the UN Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA). This has allows for greater accountability of MRE activities and enhanced reporting capacities.

UNICEF and implementing partners have piloted the first phase of a Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP) survey in the major regions of Afghanistan. The pilot survey has been assessed and recommendations are being implemented to augment the existing data. An analysis of the new data will be completed and the second round of the KAP will be implemented in the third quarter. Analysis tools have been developed and adjusted as per the assessment recommendations and are ready for the next phase.

UNICEF has completed the translations for the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) for MRE in both national languages and has also completed the translations of the first draft of the National Mine Action Standards (AMAS) for MRE. The finalisation of the AMAS is planned for August with a consultative workshop with relevant stakeholders and MRE experts.

UNICEF continues to develop mass media materials and programmes in both MRE and Victim/Disability Assistance (VA). The MRE print materials, radio, and TV are for school and community based activities. This programme aims to promote communication mechanisms for the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan providing vital safety information to assist communities and families to lead safe lives within their current environments. Victim/disability awareness and advocacy activities have been developed and implementation of community mobilisation activities are currently planned to begin in late July through implementing partners of the UNMACA. UNICEF also continues to advocate for the needs and abilities of those with disabilities and encourages inclusive attitudes and policy development.

UNICEF's ongoing efforts to develop new MRE training and community based initiatives through partnerships with government, Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan implementing agencies and other assistance agencies continues. UNICEF is the focal point within the MAPA for all MRE, VA, and gender related activities. UNICEF also participates with the Afghanistan Government and the UNMACA in the development and strategic planning for the nationalisation of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan.

Eritrea

UNICEF continues to provide overall coordination, technical support and capacity building initiatives for MRE activities for the Mine Action Programme in Eritrea.

UNICEF MRE programme activities continue in partnership with the Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO) MRE teams, as well as the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) MRE Teams. From a financial point of view, additional funding is still needed to meet existing programme requirements for 2005.

In June, the six EDO MRE teams targeted 8,695 people for mine risk education. Out of this number, 4,516 were children, 1,875 were girls and 2,641 were boys.

Moreover, UNICEF supported the issuance of a Children's magazine through the Orotta Junior School, the first of its kind in the Zoba Debub. This is a continuation of fruitful collaboration between the Ministry of Education, current primary school interventions and the Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA). In addition, the training-of-trainers for primary school teachers in MRE, initiated last year in February is continuing.

Due to the location of the schools in southern Debub, it is of vital importance that MRE messages are being disseminated among school children on the danger of mines and UXO. In the above context, students are expected to create/design MRE messages together with the trained teachers as input into the magazine, aiming at an increased understanding about the mines/UXO related matters that the region is currently facing. Ten thousand copies will be distributed to the children, not only in the Orotta Junior School, but also in several primary schools within the Debub region.

Furthermore, the National Union of Eritrean Youth and Students drafted an MRE project proposal, targeting students in schools and children living in mine-affected areas through the establishment of a mobile theatre that will present drama, puppetry and music in context with the danger of mines and UXO in those regions highly contaminated, such as Gash Barka, Anseba, Debub, Southern Red Sea and Northern Red Sea. The project proposal is currently being evaluated to consider the feasibility for funding.

A UNICEF National Officer, already working under the Child Protection section on emergency and other child protection related issues, has started to take over MRE project activities under the supervision of the Chief of Section.

UNICEF in collaboration with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention held a regional training course on **Field Epidemiology for Mine Action (FEMAC)** for countries in Central Europe, the Caucasus, Central Asia and the Middle East. The ten-day training was conducted from 13-24 June in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The main objective of the training was to provide mine risk education and other national mine action programme specialists with basic epidemiological skills, which will enable them to better undertake surveys and data analysis from a public health perspective for mine action planning, monitoring and evaluation purposes. The United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea MACC and CARE's MRE Coordinator from Eritrea successfully attended the training.

Ethiopia

In the last month, the Ethiopian Mine Action office (EMAO) has noted that there is an increase in the number of reports of suspected mined areas to the mine clearance camps. This is considered by MRE partners in Ethiopia as one of the indicators that people are aware of the mine problem and are using the correct channels in reporting the suspected areas.

EMAO conducted a workshop for mine clearance teams and the community liaison staff to increase coordination and cooperation between both teams. This workshop explained to the participants (who were mainly deminers) the benefits of having community liaison (CL) as part of their team and the activities that the CL staff are assigned to do. The participants were glad to attend the workshop and now have a clearer understanding of the role of the CL officers.

The office for Rehabilitation and Social Affairs (ORSA) provided refresher training to the Rehabilitation Task Force teams in the western side of Tigray along the border (Humera) where there has been an increase in anti-vehicle mine incidents.

EMAO and the Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (RaDO) have, with assistance from the MRE technical officer, recruited two separate consultants to assist their organisations in establishing monitoring and evaluation systems within their offices. The monitoring and evaluation section in UNICEF is also assisting and monitoring the implementation of the systems.

RaDO is preparing a two-day workshop for all partners involved in establishing the surveillance system. In the workshop, the partners will decide on a more simplified process for data collection and will clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each organisation. The new system will concentrate on having fewer people involved in the data collection process.

UNICEF is also working closely with the MRE partners to encourage discussion on defining and agreeing on the different roles and responsibilities of the organisations involved in MRE in Ethiopia. Once this is decided amongst the partners they will be encouraged to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which outlines the different roles and responsibilities. This will hopefully improve the coordination of MRE activities in Ethiopia.

The MRE technical Officer is assisting the partners in developing their new plan of action for the coming Ethiopian New Year. The plan of action for each organisation will be in line with the agreed roles of each organisation.

Russia – North Caucasus

Mine Risk Education

UNICEF, through its implementing partner the 'Voice of the Mountains', completed a training on mine/UXO data gathering for 15 monitors in 15 districts of Chechnya, within the framework of the establishment of a new surveillance system based on 15 'letter boxes'. Support for the project has been provided by ECHO – the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office. Two new mine/UXO incidents were registered by 'letter-boxes' during the reporting period in Naur and Samashki villages of Chechnya. Two adults were reportedly killed.

A new MRE TV game was supported by UNICEF through its implementing partner 'Let's Save the Generation'. Two teams of students from the Chechen Oil University and the State Chechen University competed in the knowledge of MRE-related topics. Special decorations were produced and a questionnaire developed for the event, which was broadcasted by Chechen TV.

Survivor Assistance

In the framework of its survivor assistance programme, UNICEF is in the process of opening six new leisure centres for mine/UXO survivors and other disabled children, with financial support from the German Government. Meanwhile, UNICEF continued to enhance the provision of physical rehabilitation to disabled children, through the provision of additional equipment to the Republican Clinical Hospital in Grozny. During the reporting period, some 24 children received physical rehabilitation treatment at the hospital.

Sri Lanka

Landmines and UXO are a major problem throughout the North and East of Sri Lanka, putting children and their families at risk of injury and death. To help raise awareness of the dangers posed by landmines, the first week of July and August have been designated National Mine Action weeks across Sri Lanka by the National Steering Committee on Mine Action.

July, August and September are the most dangerous months in Sri Lanka for landmine injuries. Each year at this time, people return to their fields to begin planting and harvesting their crops. It is then that the lands of the North and East, seeded with explosives, reap their deadly harvest.

During these two weeks, activities will be held in Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar, Puttalam, Anuradhapura, Kilinochchi, Batticaloa, Ampara and Trincomalee. Nationally, radio spots will be aired to alert all Sri Lankans to the dangers of landmines and how to protect themselves against injury or death.

Last year, the intensive efforts of UNICEF, its partners and the mine action community, had a real impact on decreasing the number of new casualties. In comparison with landmine/UXO incidents in 2002, which averaged 12 per month, accidents dropped substantially in 2003 to 7 incidents per month. In 2004, this was reduced further to only 4 incidents per month. Adult males living in Jaffna district make up the majority of those affected by mine accidents.

UNICEF is the lead agency for MRE in Sri Lanka and globally, and operates under the overall coordination of the National Steering Committee on Mine Action. UNICEF and its partners focus their work on school and community-based initiatives to educate children and communities about the dangers of landmines and UXO. UNICEF is also providing support to the survivors and is advocating for the government to sign the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (APMBT) and for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam to sign the Geneva Call deed of commitment for non state actors.

UNICEF works with partners such as UNDP, the National Institute for Education, the Provincial Departments of Education, Community Trust Fund, Mines Advisory Group, Sarvodaya, Handicap International, Caritas Mannar, Jaipur foot centre Jaffna, The Tamil Refugee Rehabilitation Organisation, Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, the Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies and White Pigeon.

Sudan - South

MRE sessions

With the influx of IDPs into different areas in South Sudan, MRE staff have carried out MRE sessions with 100 IDPs at Pullchoum camp in Rumbek and visited Akot. The purpose of the visit to Akot was to get information on an incident, which happened in a village where two children (aged 7 and 10) were injured by a hand grenade while tempering with it. Fortunately, the two children survived but had minor injuries. Additional activities were also carried out in Maluel and Makur Agar Villages in Akot. About 664 school children, 13 teachers and 175 others attended the MRE sessions. Continued activities with other groups i.e. MRE training of teachers for self-sustainable MRE in primary schools, MRE training to women's groups so as to advise children, especially the returnees in villages where they settle were also carried out.

Meetings

Coordination meetings with NSMAD (New Sudan Mine Action Directorate), the Kenya Coalition Against Landmines and other mine action agencies were held in Nairobi on the upcoming regional mine ban workshop to be held in Bahr El Ghazal and Equatoria in July.

Similarly, the MRE staff had meetings in Rumbek with MECHAM about expansion of MRE activities to other areas where IDPs are returning and clearance activity is currently taking place.

Tajikistan

A new UNICEF MRE project is being developed in Tajikistan. On the basis of a recent needs assessment, the UNICEF country team, with support from an international MRE expert, has drafted a strategy for the implementation of a pilot project in two valleys of the central region and along a part of the Afghan border.

The project's main goal is to contribute to minimizing the number of mine/UXO victims in the Rasht Valley and Badarshan province. The implementation strategy is under the process of endorsement by the Tajikistan Mine Action Cell (TMAC) and the Ministry of Education. The primary rationale for the project includes the following points:

- Despite of the magnitude of the mine problem in the Northern region (along the Uzbek border), where the ICRC supports the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST), UNICEF, as a new MRE actor in the country, will first focus its activities in the Rasht Valley and Badarshan Province where prevention activities are also needed, but where few have been developed. There are four districts that are highly affected by UXO and partially affected by landmines. In each of them, casualties have been reported over the last 24 months.
- Twenty MRE focal points in twenty schools will be identified in (or close to) the most at-risk areas on the basis of two criteria: number of recent casualties and level of the contamination in (or close to) populated zones. Around five other focal points in five schools will be identified during the implementation, depending on the emergence of new identified at-risk areas (i.e. new casualties in an area not yet covered by the project). Within each targeted area, the school will serve as an anchor, but the MRE project will also have flexibility to be deployed out of the school.
- Potential geographic extensions of the project might be possible later, depending on the needs and the level of experience of the project.
- An integrated approach with FSD (Swiss Foundation for Mine Action) will be crucial for the relevance and effectiveness of the MRE project and clearance activities.

The implementation of the project will start by the end of August 2005.