

MASG

Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

Chairman: Amb. Jenö C.A. Staehelin

Secretary: Natalie Kohli

Tel: 212-286-1540 / Fax: 212-286-1555

MASG@nyc.rep.admin.ch

New York, May 2004

Inside this Newsletter:

1. Unofficial Minutes of the Mine Action Support Group Meeting of April 22, 2004 devoted to "Mine Action and Development" 2
2. Agenda for the MASG Meeting on 10 June 2004 New York 4
3. Updates 5
 - 3.1. Update from UNMAS..... 5
 - 3.2. Update from UNDP 10
 - 3.3. Update from Unicef 16
4. Integration of Mine Action and Peacebuilding 23
Presentation by Mr. Kristian Berg Harpviken, PRIO

1. Unofficial Minutes of the Mine Action Support Group Meeting of April 22, 2004 devoted to "Mine Action and Development"

1. In his opening statement, the Chair mentioned that, over the past years, the integration of mine action into development planning and budgeting processes had become an increasingly important issue among the international development community, the mine action community, and donors. However, it has generally not been carried out in a planned, coordinated way. With the mine action community's better understanding of the socio-economic impact of mines, there is now a greater appreciation for the need to integrate mine action into national and sector strategies of mine-affected States. At the donor level, some governments (notably Canada) have recently mainstreamed mine action into their budgeting processes, creating budget lines especially for mine action in their development cooperation budgets. Within the United Nations, UNDP has taken the lead in addressing this issue. The Chair also mentioned that this meeting is the first one to address such an issue within the MASG and that the reflection is to be continued in future meetings.
2. Sayed Aqa (UNDP) presented UNDP activities in this field. He mentioned a study that UNDP is about to publish on mainstreaming mine action into development programs. He underlined the resistance that the authors of the study had to face, since some were scared that mine action may lose momentum against other development priorities. UNDC is however taking a careful approach when developing, for each affected country, a coordinated package that includes mine action if this is a priority on the spot.
3. UNDP Program manager for Afghanistan, Mr. Kazuto Tsuruga, then presented the situation in Afghanistan. He elaborated on the mine problem and the development agenda for the coming years. Demining efforts were conducted first on and around Kabul Airport, then along the main roads, since mine clearance is a pre-requisite for road reconstruction and delivery of humanitarian assistance. The speaker also mentioned that DDR activities that train ex-soldiers as deminers have proved very effective. Finally, Mr. Tsuruga named the two challenges laying ahead in Afghanistan : first transforming mine action from reactive to pro-active, secondly developing national capacities.
4. Mr. Reuben McCarthy from the UNICEF offered a comment on the previous presentation in which it stated that its MRE programs are following a three step approach : first deliver basic knowledge where populations are totally unaware of the mine problem, secondly deliver more and more detailed information in regions where the mine problem is already known and being dealt with, and thirdly address the economic risk in providing education programs at schools. This third step is now the primary activity of UNICEF in Afghanistan.
5. Laura Turner presented mine action from the perspective of the World Food Program (WFP). The main focus of WFP is food distribution and mines are cleared if this is necessary for this activity. WFP does not conduct demining activities itself, although it may fund them. In Afghanistan as well as in Iraq, WFP is working closely with partners such as the *Fédération suisse de déminage* (FSD).
6. In the Q&A period that followed, a delegate asked if the Portofolio also captures the "side" money coming from development programs. Martin Barber (UNMAS) deplored that this

was only imperfectly the case. Questions were also raised about the definition of mainstreaming, the Canadian example, ownership and coordination with the government of affected States. The Chair mentioned that in many countries, mine action is still considered a humanitarian issue rather than a development one.

7. Martin Barber (UNMAS) then gave an overview of the Ottawa Convention Review Conference that will take place in Nairobi from November 29 to December 3, 2004. The Chairman of this Conference, Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch, Permanent Representative of Austria to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, considers that tremendous progress have been made, but a lot more still needs to be done. The goal of the Conference is to come up with an Action Plan for the next 5 years. It is expected that State parties will be represented at the highest level (Head of State, Head of Government) and the Secretary General himself could possibly attend, although his participation has not been confirmed yet.
8. Martin Barber and Arezou Asad (UNMAS) presented the recent up-dates of the mine action Portofolio, the usefulness of which largely depends on its continual up-dating. 31 new projects, which were not in the Portofolio at the beginning of the year, have been included, whereas 7 projects were cancelled or removed. Overall, the sum of projects have increased by 16% to \$335M. \$102M have been raised between October 2003 and March 2004 ; this considerable amount of money shows that the international community remains committed to mine action. The top three countries in new funds are Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan. A revised Portofolio will be e-mail to MASG members within the coming weeks.
9. Under AOB, the Chair addressed the issue of the MASG field trip to Angola, scheduled to take place from May 17 to 21. A total of 14 participants have singed up, including a reporter and a photographer of the New York Times office in Johannesburg. An information meeting for participants will be held at the Swiss Mission on May 6, 2004.

The next MASG meeting will take place on June 10 at 10:00 am at the Swiss Mission. The topic will again be "Mine Action and Development". The dates and themes of the MASG meetings of the second half of the year will also be discussed.

The meeting was closed at 12:30 pm.

2. Agenda for the MASG Meeting on 10 June 2004 New York

1. Welcome address by the Chair
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Presentations
 - UNDP study on mine action and development
 - Canadian Mainstreaming Strategy
 - NGO Perspective: VVAF
4. Discussion and Break
5. Presentation of Martin Dahinden (Director of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining): Relations of the GICHD with the UN
6. Report on Angola Fieldtrip
7. AOB

3. Updates

3.1. Update from UNMAS

POLICY, TREATY IMPLEMENTATION, INFORMATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Policy Coordination

Martin Barber, UNMAS Director, attended a workshop organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, the China Arms Control and Disarmament Association (CACDA) and the Australian Network of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines in Kunming 25 - 28 April. He also had meetings in Beijing on 29 and 30 April with officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with a group of donor representatives stationed in the Chinese capital. The visit highlighted China's desire to expand its cooperation with the UN in mine action, either as part of peacekeeping operations or through other arrangements.

General policy

On 13 April 2004, DPKO convened the Principals meeting of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action. Prior to the official commencement of the meeting, Ambassador Petritsch briefed the Principals in his capacity as President-designate of the Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. He urged the UN to provide input to the substantive review and action plan documents being prepared for the review Conference and to encourage governments to be represented at the highest possible level at the Review Conference. The Principals endorsed an advocacy strategy to support mine action entitled: "Eliminating the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war: The United Nations advocacy strategy for 2004-2005." They discussed the applicability and utility of International Mine Action Standards, reviewed the Rapid Response Plan lessons learned case study on Iraq, and considered the extent to which UN mine action in Sudan serves as a model for inter-agency collaboration.

Portfolio Process

Portfolio funding updates were presented by the UNMAS Director at the Mine Action Support Group during its monthly meeting on 22 April 2004. In order to obtain a more accurate picture of funding updates, the deadline for field updates of the Portfolio was extended to 10 May 2004. A draft Portfolio funding summary chart was circulated amongst MASG members for their perusal and comment. A CD-ROM of the 1st revised Portfolio will be available in late May 2004. To request copies, please call +1-212 963-9407 or email dpko-mines-portfolio@un.org.

Advocacy and treaty implementation

A UN Review Conference task force was established, holding its first meeting on 23 April 2004. The aim of the task force is to ensure a coordinated UN approach in the lead-up to the Review Conference in three key areas: 1) communications and awareness raising; 2) substantive support to the Review Conference; 3) assisting States Parties in developing National Plans to be presented at the Review Conference.

The Steering Committee on Gender and Mine Action met several times throughout April 2004 to discuss structure and content of the proposed gender guidelines. It was agreed that no more field trips by the gender consultant were necessary. The Steering Committee briefly discussed target audience for phase 2—training on the adaptation and implementation of the guidelines.

Information

The UNMAS Director, Martin Barber, held a press briefing to launch the preparations for the Review Conference of the Mine Ban Treaty to be held on 29 November – 3 December in Nairobi. Mr. Barber was appointed UN focal point for the Review Conference. The revised Portfolio of Mine Action Projects was launched on the www.mineaction.org website. A new search function for locating Portfolio projects and funding shortfalls was launched as well.

New contributions in the VTF 1 through 30 April 2004

Donor	Date received	Amount/Earmarking
Austria	30 April 2004	\$ 769,432 (Afghanistan P04-AF04)
UK	30 April 2004	\$1,800,000 (Sudan P04-SU08)
Canada (CIDA)	15 April 2004	\$ 446,469 (Sudan P04-SU10)
Roots of Peace	14 April 2004	\$ 100,000 (Afghanistan P04-AF04)
Canada (CIDA)	02 April 2004	\$ 456,247 (Sudan P04-SU10 & P04-SU32)
Canada (CIDA)	02 April 2004	\$ 380,202 (Coordination P04-GL01)

No new confirmed pledges obtained during the month of April.

TECHNOLOGY

The Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) hosted an International Symposium from 20 – 23 April attended by the Technology Coordinator. The CROMAC symposium exposed participants to the CROMAC commitment to using machines (85% of the area cleared last year was by machines). The UNMAS Director attended a workshop on humanitarian mine/UXO clearance technology and cooperation in Kunming, China.

UNMAS-SUPPORTED PROGRAMMES

Iraq

The report from the recent evaluation of the Iraq programme was the primary supporting document for a workshop that was held at the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) Training College in Rosersberg Sweden on 1-2 May 2004. The workshop involved approximately 30 participants from UN humanitarian and mine action agencies, international organizations and mine action NGOs. Participants developed a series of recommendations on enhancing the UN's Mine Action Operational Framework for Rapid Response.

In Iraq, Minetech continues its operations in southern Iraq where its efforts are coordinated by the Regional Mine Action Centre (RMAC) established by the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA). During the month of April, Minetech moved its operations from Al Amarah to an area south of Basrah in response to security issues in the Al Amarah area.

Afghanistan

The general security situation in Afghanistan remains tense, and security restrictions remain in place in the southern provinces of Ghazni, Zabol and areas of Uruzgan, as well as the eastern provinces of Paktika and Paktia. Assets previously deployed in these areas remain relocated to other sites to enable continued operations in safer locations. The United Nations Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (UNMACA) in cooperation with the Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator (UNSECOORD) in Kabul continues its close monitoring of the security situation.

New funding arrangements for the disbursement of grants to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action (VTF) was implemented as of 01 April 2004. The new modality is output driven, increases transparency, and provides NGOs with tools and capacity development for increased independence, oversight, resource and financial management. Furthermore, the modality aligns the VTF funding mechanism with the other funding modalities in place within the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA).

The process for transferring responsibility for the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) from the United Nations to the Government of Afghanistan has commenced. A task Force (TF) has been formed, in order to act as the initial planning group for the transition process. The TF is chaired by Dr M. Haider Reza, the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, and comprises representatives from the Government of Afghanistan, the United Nations, donors and implementing partners.

UNIFIL - Southern Lebanon

The United Arab Emirates-funded Operation Emirates Solidarity (OES)/Area 5 continued to clear minefields during April, in spite of heavy rain. Since project initiation in May 2002, a total of 4,897,000 square meters of contaminated land has been cleared and handed back to the communities of southern Lebanon. Area 5 will be completed by the end of May, as initially anticipated. Discussions with the Government of the UAE are still underway to seek further support for OES, while detailed planning

for Area 6 is ongoing. Information and data collected from the Lebanese Armed Forces are being rationalised with existing IMSMA data. UNIFIL UKRBATT continued verification and clearance of patrol routes along the Blue Line in support of UNTSO. The Post Clearance Review of OES 2 and OES 4 areas and the data collection for the next area, OES 3, is nearing its final stages. This report will be completed in May. During May, visits will commence with landowners in the OES 5 area to determine their confidence in the land, and post clearance land use. The objective is to allow potential donors to make funding available for rehabilitation and development needs identified in the reports.

MONUC - Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Locally-recruited deminers of the Swiss Foundation for Demining (FSD) mobile emergency mine/UXO clearance teams continued working in the Bunia area (Ituri District). An advanced team of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA) has developed a concept of operations for conducting rapid assessments of mine/UXO contamination within prioritized areas of the country. Initially, VVAFA will focus on assessments in the areas around the future election centres. Significant mine action assets will consequently be required to address the tasks identified through these rapid assessments. In this connection, Danish Church Aid (DCA) recently deployed to the Kalemie area (Northern Katanga). MONUC is concentrating its efforts in eastern DRC, and has identified the re-opening of major roads as a key priority, as well as support to the preparations for national elections.

Sudan

Clearance operations in the Nuba Mountains and the South are going well. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) started with the training of deminers and surveyors at Yei which is progressing well. The project will enhance the clearance capacity in the South to a great extent when fully implemented. The two South Sudanese national nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) -- the Sudan Integrated Mine Action Service (SIMAS) and Operation Save Innocent Lives (OSIL) -- have announced their merger into one NGO.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has appointed a new Mine Risk Education (MRE) officer based in Khartoum. The MRE officer will be responsible for coordination of MRE and Victim Assistance (VA) in the Government of Sudan (GoS) territories. The prospect of a peace agreement has added to the urgency and need to conduct mine action, and to use the peace-building capacity created by it.

The onset of the rainy season will have a negative effect on some activities, and may even result in suspensions of work. Contingency plans are being prepared to limit the impact by identifying where operations can continue during the rainy season.

UNMEE - Eritrea

On 17 April, a driver of a Toyota pickup in Adi Ibrahim village on the road to Dasi in Sector West hit a newly laid metallic anti-tank mine. The driver suffered minor injuries to his legs. This is the first incident involving newly laid mines since July 2003. A MACC investigation is ongoing, and the MACC has recommended that all road users

in Sector West comply with recommendations enunciated in the MACC Threat Assessment of July 2003.

Mine clearance activities of the Peacekeeping Force, including MACC demining assets, continued at a steady rate. Clearance was focussed on the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) in Sector West, in the minefields of Shilalo, where the TSZ population remains the most mine/UXO-impacted. The Force demining assets cleared more than 40,000 square meters of land. Force demining assets and the MACC Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Team disposed of more than 350 anti-personnel mines and 230 UXOs.

The UNMEE Force Commander and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General visited the demining operations in the Shilalo area in Sector West to assess the current operations at the Demining Coordination Center (DCC) and in the Mai Hbey mine field.

UNFICYP

On 3 April, a mine or UXO was detonated by a farmer while ploughing in the buffer zone. The farmer suffered only minor injuries though the tractor was badly damaged. The United Nations Mine Action Cell (UNMAC) investigations are ongoing. Despite the rejection of a UN-backed settlement deal, talks between UNMAC and both sides continue to define the scope of the clearance project.

3.2. Update from UNDP

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

AFRICA REGION

Eritrea

Key Achievements

- The Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) has recently completed 100 percent of validation activities, and all field data have been collected. Furthermore, the Strategic Planning Group has reached consensus on the weighting of blocked resources studied in the LIS, which means that data analysis for the final survey report can proceed.
- The Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) is currently investigating a mine incident involving a newly laid mine on a road outside the Temporary Security Zone. A civilian UN contractor was involved, and although his vehicle was destroyed he suffered only minor injuries. This incident has prompted the EDA to promote itself to Government Ministries and organizations operating in the country as a source of mine information that should be consulted before travel and work in unfamiliar areas.
- Staff members from both the EDA and Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO) participated in a Middle Management Course in Jordan between April 15 and May 6.
- Swedish Rescue Services Agency has agreed to provide an in-kind Technical Advisor to help establish a national explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) team.

Key Objectives

- The construction of the new Orthopaedic Centre will be finished at the end of the Summer. The centre will provide equal access to orthopaedic services across the country.

Funding Update

- The Mine Action Capacity Building Programme currently has sufficient funding to maintain existing support until Autumn 2004; however, additional funds are urgently needed, not only to maintain basic programme. The current UNDP Mine Action Portfolio shortfall for 2004 is 3,375,000 USD.

Sudan

Key Achievements

- The legislation for humanitarian mine action was prepared and submitted to the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLM).

Key Objectives

- The advocacy seminar, addressing Government officials, senior Army officers and civil society, will be held in Khartoum from 22-25 May 2004. The seminar will be addressed by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Ms. Hiba El-Kholy, the UNDP Sudan Country Director and Mr. Martin Barber, Director of UNMAS.
- The preparations for the national workshop have commenced. The workshop will formulate the mine action strategy for Sudan, which will include all of the stakeholders, including the Government, the Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLM), UN Agencies, international and national NGO's, donors and civil society. The workshop will be the first week of July 2004.

ASIA-PACIFIC REGION

Sri Lanka

Key Objectives

- UNDP is assisting both the Trincomalee Government Agent and the District Steering Committee for Mine Action (which he chairs) in formulating the Trincomalee Mine Action Work Plan, which is almost complete. The Government Agent of Jaffna recently requested that the Mine Action Office also assist with the development of a similar plan. Once the Jaffna Work Plan is complete, all areas under Government of Sri Lanka control will have comprehensive work plans developed in consultation with all stakeholders.
- UNDP project staff is assisting the World Bank to integrate mine action into its major housing rehabilitation project in the Northeast.
- IMSMA staff continued work on the Survivor Assistance and Quality Assurance components of the database in April.
- UNDP is participating in and providing support to the Landmine Ban Advocacy Forum on an ongoing basis. It is currently working with the Forum on a media conference calling for a ban on AP mines by both the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), scheduled for early July.
- A UNDP Mine Action Project staff member attended the Programme Officer's training in New York in April. The workshop served both as a source of information on mine-action projects in other countries as well as an opportunity to share the positive experience of the Sri Lanka mine-action programme with representatives of other country programmes.

Funding Update

- The Government of Japan announced recent contributions to several mine-action operators in Sri Lanka.
- The Government of New Zealand has agreed to fund the UNDP Project over sixteen months to support information management, analysis, and verification.

Tajikistan

Key Achievements

- Tajikistan destroyed its stockpile of AP mines on 31 March 2004 in compliance with Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention.
- The government of Tajikistan hosted an international conference in Dushanbe “Progress Towards Ottawa Convention’s Aims in Central Asia”. This conference was a precursor to the Nairobi Summit meeting to be held in November.
- The five-year strategic plan was approved.
- UNDP sponsored the Dushanbe Landmine Conference in April 2004.
- UNDP is continuing to provide capacity building support to the Tajikistan Mine action Cell.
- With the assistance of instructors from GICHD, the IMSMA training complete its second period.
- Tajikistan Mine Action Cell is continuing with the process of staff training in all aspects of mine action planning, prioritization and coordination.
- Two survey teams have been re-trained and are deployed. Two manual mine clearance teams are currently being trained together with team leaders and medical units.
- Mine risk education has continued in all mine affected areas.
- Key Objectives
- TMAC has established priorities for technical survey and clearance with local authorities in the Central Region.
- Tajikistan has deployed two survey and two manual clearance teams by the beginning of June in the Central Region and along the afghan border.
- A survey is being deployed to undertake General mine action assessment in the South Region to increase the effectiveness of MRE in that region.

Funding Update

- Canada CD\$1,600,000 (includes CD\$600,000 for operation of the TMAC over two years)
- Japan US\$250,000
- OSCE Eur 360,000
- Norway Eur 100,000
- Sweden Eur 50,000
- UK US\$100,000
- Italy US\$35,000
- NATO US\$3,000

ARAB STATES REGION

Yemen

Key Achievement

- The manager of the Yemen Mine Detection Dog Center (MDDC) is currently visiting the MDDC in Kabul, Afghanistan, for three week's of on-the-job training through the Mine Action Exchange Programme. The process of breeding dogs started in April 2004 in order to sustain the minimum number of 36 dogs operational.
- Technical and operational capacity building, including training and expertise in areas such as standards and guidelines, are under revision.

Key Objectives

- The Yemen National Mine Action Programme (NMAP) is focusing on the following short-term objectives in accordance with the annual work plan.
- Capacity building, including training and development of expertise in areas of mine-detection dogs (MDD) and integration of landmine survivors.
- Data support for planning, monitoring, and evaluation of mine clearance, mine-risk education, and victim assistance activities.
- A review and revision of the Pro Doc "Strengthening National Capacity for Mine Action in Yemen."
- Preparing for the update of the Yemen Mine Action Portfolio.
- Reviewing and revising the National Mine Action Strategy covering the period of 2005-2009.
- The Ministry of Legal Affairs is in the process of preparing the legislation to implement the Ottawa Treaty.

Funding Update

- Mine Action Capacity Building
- Japan provided US\$ 436,616 to support the Yemen Executive Mine Action Centre (YEMAC).
- Germany provided US\$ 785,000 to support the MDD programme and for the provision of an Operation Advisor.
- Netherlands provided US\$ 300,000 to support mine action programmes in Yemen
- Italy provided US\$ 237,530 to Mine Action programme.

EUROPE & THE CIS REGION

Albania

Key Achievements

- Quality Control Operations has cleared the North East Albania. The total area cleared is 669,913m². The cleared area will be handed over to four communes of 25,573 inhabitants.
- Danish Church Aid (DCA) has deployed all demining assets to the mine affected areas in northeast Albania in accordance with the priority tasks.
- Handicap International has completed the recruitment process for the Technical Survey Project and is now in the training phase.
- A total of 23,764 inhabitants of high priority areas were kept informed on mine/UXO threats out of which 6,000 were children and 8,900 were female.
- The Albanian Red Cross (ARC) has identified 70 mine/UXO survivors from the 1997 uprising and to date has provided a list of 40 survivors to Albania Mine Action Executive (AMAE).
- The Mines and Weapons Victims Association (VMA) provided 17 mine survivors with cows for a socio-economic reintegration project, raising the total number of survivors assisted in this project.
- The International Trust Fund (ITF) agreed to provide the funding to treat another 20 amputees with difficult cases at the Slovenia Institute of Rehabilitation in 2004.
- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is continuing to provide the raw materials to the Tirana orthopedic workshop until the end of 2004.
- A new AMAE Chief Technical Advisor/UNDP Programme Manager has been selected and expected to start in the upcoming months.

Key Objectives

- The first week of June has been set as a tentative date for conducting the triage of mine/UXO amputees to send to Slovenia.
- MRE activities will continue in the affected villages by focusing on the most vulnerable target groups.
- National Mine Action Legislation issue still needs to be addressed.

Funding Update

- Capacity Building and coordination programmes of mine action have been funded for 2004 by the Canadian Government and UNDP
- The Technical Survey Project has been fully funded by the European Union

Funding Need

- FSD could not re-start the demining operations in Albania this year due to lack of sufficient funding. Funding for demining remains critical and with the existing demining capacities available, it seems likely that Albania will not be able to achieve the strategic goal to render Albania free of effect of mines by 2005.

LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARRIBEAN

Colombia

Key Achievement

- The Colombian Landmine Observatory has held a series of meetings with national and departmental authorities, NGOs and the international community to draw up the framework for public policy on mine action and a draft National Mine Action Plan.
- The European Commission carried out a mission on March 23 and April 28 to identify the major developments: a) the need for technical strengthening of the National Observatory; b) the preparation and execution of a Land Mine Impact Survey, with national ownership and adapted to the Colombian situation; and c) a potential Mine Risk Education (MRE) component to achieve an immediate reduction of accidents.
- UNDP and the Colombian Landmine Observatory have concluded the preparation and planning for the execution of US\$ 50,000 for 2004. The resources will strengthen the plans for the local mine action authorities in 3 regions. The funds were channeled by the thematic trust fund in UNDP BCPR.
- UNDP is continuing supporting the Colombian Landmine Observatory and has actively participated in the policy development discussions promoted by the Colombian Landmine Observatory as well as giving technical support to the elaboration of the draft National Mine Action Plan.

3.3. Update from Unicef

Afghanistan

UNICEF continues to provide overall coordination, capacity building initiatives and technical support for mine risk education (MRE) activities for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA).

UNICEF has recently supported the Ministry of Education (MoE) in a winter teacher-training programme that successfully provided training and MRE materials to approximately 27,000 primary school teachers throughout the country. This child focused MRE teaching methodology emphasizes participatory activities that assist children to recognize risky behaviours, potential dangers and identify safe behaviours. In addition, the MoE personnel were trained to provide the institutional capacity to sustain this programme.

During the past year, UNICEF has supported MAPA in the development of monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms for MRE activities. Focusing first on community based programmes, trained quality assurance monitors will begin external monitoring of the MAPA agencies implementing MRE throughout the country. Four teams have been deployed into the regional centres for these activities. Training will be provided to the MAPA agencies to strengthen their own quality assurance monitoring activities. Guidelines, standardized monitoring checklists, and survey tools have been developed and information will be fed into the UN Mine Action Centre data base.

UNICEF has also begun a new updated and standardized programme for returnees repatriating from Pakistan, Iran and other countries through the UNHCR encashment centres. Materials are being developed for the programme and a new film will be produced through MAPA partner AAR Japan. This programme will particularly target non-literate populations that have resided in refugee camps outside of Afghanistan.

Further, UNICEF is coordinating mass media programmes in both MRE and Victim/Disability Assistance. The MRE programme will feature radio, TV, print media and school and community activities. Research work has been completed and the analysis of the data has begun to guide the programme development process. This programme aims to promote communication mechanisms for MAPA, providing vital safety information to assist communities and families to lead safe lives within their current environments. Research on the perception and advocacy needs of landmine/UXO victims and people with disability should begin in the next months. This programme aims to increase awareness of the needs and abilities of those with disabilities and encourage inclusive attitudes and policy development.

UNICEF continues to support and develop new MRE training, monitoring and evaluation programmes to standardize teaching methodologies and quality assurance mechanisms for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan.

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)

UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina's mine action programme supports the national Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) for coordination and policy development related to integrated mine action and civil protection mine risk management training activities. UNICEF,

within its role as BHMAL partner for MRE and landmine victim assistance policy development, and in close collaboration with UNDP, is currently providing technical assistance and financial support to the revision of the MRE component of the national mine action strategy.

Some of the achievements to date include building on the results of two recent workshops that had developed a common plan for BiH. The mine action strategy MRE Working Group has been consulted to discuss and agree upon the strategic objectives. The revised objectives have been integrated in the overall mine action strategic document, which has been submitted to the demining Commission for review.

In victim assistance activities, UNICEF, through Handicap International Share SEE project, is providing technical assistance to the Landmine Victim Assistance Strategy Working Group. The group met recently to agree on objectives and proceed with a strategic analysis. The group is now working on the development of possible scenarios.

In April, the BHMAL organised a workshop which gathered the heads of department for Standards, Quality Assurance and Accreditation with representatives of mine-action implementing agencies and the Ministries of Education to validate the final inputs in the MRE Standards and initiate the development of required operating procedures. The MRE standards are now in their final editing phase.

Based on a training needs assessment, and to ensure the effective implementation of the BHMAL MRE policy and compliance with standards, the BHMAL designed a course for managers and a course for field workers. Training sessions are already underway in various locations.

The UNICEF commissioned assessment of MRE within the education sector is progressing well; the desk review is to be completed soon and the field survey is ongoing. The findings of the assessment, to be published in June, will provide the basis for the development of activities to address identified training and capacity building needs.

UNICEF supports the local NGO 'Genesis Project' in the implementation of comprehensive school-based MRE. The project, developed in collaboration with the Ministries of Education, enters schools with interactive and participatory puppet shows, training of teachers, peer education activities and participation of teachers and parents in community assessment and risk reduction planning. In February, March and April, the project trained 300 schoolteachers from 10 primary schools from the wider region of Banja Luka and the region of Dobož on the issue of landmines and on how to integrate MRE within their normal classes, conduct special activities or classes on MRE or undertake MRE through peer education processes. The training also included elements on child rights and the relationship to landmines. Other such trainings of Genesis include small arms and peace education.

In addition, in the same period, in the region of Dobož, 109 children and teenagers participated in the Genesis Project training and became MRE peer educators and, in the region of Banja Luka, 100 children and teenagers participated in the Genesis Project training and became MRE peer educators, while 2,782 children from Una-Sana Kanton, during April, participated in 24 interactive puppet theatre performances.

In May, the Genesis Project team will organise 9 interactive puppet theatre performances in wider region of Banja Luka for approximately 650 children, and 16 interactive puppet theatre performances in Una-Sana canton, for approximately 1,200 children. During second half of May, Genesis Project team will organize 20 activities of monitoring and exchange of experience with schoolteachers on MRE topic, 10 in wider region of Dobož and 10 in wider region of Banja Luka.

UNICEF is also supporting a sociological research that the Italian NGO INTERSOS is undertaking that will assist to identify attitudes and behaviour toward mine risk among the most at risk population groups. The field work and the secondary data analysis have been completed. The University of Sarajevo is currently proceeding with the analysis of the field survey information.

In North-East Bosnia, UNICEF pilots an innovative approach to mine action through the PRONI MRE team, in which local volunteers and experienced mine action professionals work in collaboration with local authorities to assess risks at community level and facilitate collaboration between all relevant stakeholders to develop local mine risk reduction plans. The fieldwork in the four municipalities of Lopare, Celic, Pelagicevo and Orasje has been completed, with over 5,000 people participating in 49 community meetings. Issues identified through the meetings were raised with local authorities, community representatives and mine action stakeholders in four municipality and one district round tables.

While the Italian government contribution, together with the donations of the UNICEF national committees of Austria and Ireland allow for the UNICEF BiH mine action programme to be funded for the current year (2004), the absence of available funds beyond 2004 is of serious concern as the long term nature of the UNICEF mine action programming requires long term funding commitments, which can now not be met.

Chad

In continuation of its emergency response in the east, UNICEF Chad continues to work in close partnership with the National Agency for Mine Action (Haut Commissariat National au Déminage –HCND). This collaboration has resulted in the design of a visual communication tool (folder) with basic messages about the danger of mines. Twenty thousand copies of this tool have been printed and a user-guide in both Arabic and French has been developed, along with a visual flipchart for trainers.

A rapid MRE needs assessment was also conducted in the most affected part of the eastern region where Sudanese refugees are settled. The mission found 11 recent victims of UXO explosions, mainly children. They also discovered polluted places/tracks that were not properly marked. A training workshop was then organised in N'Djaména for 25 staff of the HCND sensitisation Division, which focused on emergency MRE.

Additionally, at the end of April, UNICEF and the HCND started a massive education campaign in the east to deliver MRE to a targeted population of 100,000 people, both in host communities and among refugees. The campaign should be completed before

the rainy season in June. For this operation, the following activities are currently underway:

- Two MRE mobile team are training and monitoring 500 community leaders/ religious leaders/ humanitarian staff / schoolteachers in the refugee camps and along the border (among refugees and host communities). These “mobilisers” will receive an MRE package: a quick training (1 and a half hour module), the prevention folder to distribute to each family, a user-guide on how to use the prevention folder, an MRE tee shirt and later a flip chart.
- The teams are also proceeding to conduct basic marking of mine areas - with the involvement of the local population - for the information/protection of refugees as well as aid workers.
- They will continue to identify UXO with the help of a deminer and a GPS tool, so as to allow the HCND ‘EOD’ team to prioritize quick response clearance operations.
- They are proceeding to data collection on mines and UXO victims.
- MRE training is also planned for the security of emergency aid workers in Eastern Chad.

Colombia

In April, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the National Landmines Observatory to design a suitable needs assessment in order to determine the MRE needs of the country.

UNICEF has also started the process of transferring the results of the Participatory Situation Diagnosis (PSD) into the Information System for Mine Action (IMSMA). The results were developed in 11 municipalities of Antioquia and Cauca Departments. The methodology for the PSD will also be shared and used in the departments of Meta and Bolivar.

Together with the Observatory and a mission of experts from the European Union, UNICEF has conducted a field visit to the municipality of Silvia, in the department of Cauca. This indigenous community is one of the most mine affected municipalities in Cauca and has been part of the UNICEF MRE project since 2003.

UNICEF has also participated in the landmines technical committees developed during April in the departments of Antioquia and Cauca. These local committees are the foundation of local planning regarding humanitarian mine action.

Democratic Republic of Congo

In mid-April, UNICEF conducted a joint assessment mission in Ikela in Equateur Province with the Mines Awareness Trust and the Swiss Foundation for Demining. The objective of this assessment was to ascertain the presence of mines and UXO in Ikela and the socio-economic impact on the communities. Findings of the assessment confirm that there is an immediate risk of mines and UXO in the area, which are affecting security, safety, agriculture, health and the economic subsistence of the population. The fact that most of the population are IDP returnees exacerbates the

situation. UNICEF notes the need to conduct MRE in Ikela and its surroundings and is currently searching for potential donors for this project.

UNICEF will be conducting MRE training for members of local NGOs working in the provinces of North and South Kivu. The personnel will be trained in basic techniques of direct presentation in MRE, and questionnaire and discussion methods for needs assessment. Community based MRE 'train the trainer' training is also being organized for June 2004. Personnel from various local NGOs that are working in the most affected communities in the province of Equateur will be targeted. This training will focus on the dissemination of the correct messages and teaching methodologies as well as data collection to contribute to the IMSMA database.

Eritrea

In light of recent newly laid mines, UNICEF has stepped up landmine safety briefings to international NGOs. Together with its counterparts, the Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) and Eritrean Demining Operations (EDO), UNICEF is also assisting with MRE safety briefings to local organisations working in the field. Briefings will be held in local languages by the EDA and EDO MRE coordinators and their assistants.

Both of the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre's MRE teams were deployed in Sector West and conducted MRE activities in Shambiko and Laelay-Gash Sub-Zobas under Gash-Barka Zoba. The two teams conducted MRE for a total of 2,745 people including women, children and shepherds.

The MRE sub-technical working group held its meeting at the EDA with all relevant mine action players, involving ICRC and the Red Cross of Eritrea. Various aspects of MRE, particularly achievements and shortcomings including possible solutions were discussed in order to improve coordination in the field and materials from ICRC and UNICEF, which will be produced in near future.

Ethiopia

UNICEF, in collaboration with its MRE partners, is making significant progress in implementing a sustainable MRE programme in Ethiopia. At the regional level, UNICEF is working with the indigenous NGO - Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (RaDO), in order to hand over the MRE programme to the regional authorities in both regions, as they are keen to take ownership of this project. UNICEF and RaDO, with the regional governments, are now in phase two of the handing over process. In this phase, RaDO is conducting training for all concerned parties, which is based on the planned programme.

UNICEF is also working with the federal designated agency, the Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO), to assist in building its capacity to independently implement MRE throughout the country. With UNICEF's assistance, EMAO has recently conducted different training courses for its staff. In April, UNICEF facilitated training from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) for all MRE partners; subjects included MRE management, the Ottawa Treaty, and MRE project planning. Also in collaboration with UNICEF, EMAO provided training for their new recruits for community liaison.

Further, UNICEF is working with all the MRE actors to develop a surveillance system which will collect data on victims, dangerous areas and MRE activities. This system will help all the partners manage MRE activities in a strategic, efficient and effective manner. The process for collecting the data is now developed and training for surveillance training is planned for June 2004.

Liberia

In April and May, UNICEF has conducted a situation analysis and risk assessment of the mine and UXO situation in Liberia. While landmines have not yet presented a formidable problem in Liberia, there has been a moderate level of reporting on the danger from rockets, grenades and UXO.

The main groups identified at-risk during the situation analysis are displaced persons and refugees who are returning to UXO-contaminated areas, as well as children who are unaware of their danger. Casualties reported to date indicate that people were tampering with rockets and hand grenades, or were brushing their land with fire (which caused a detonation of the device).

In line with the situation analysis and risk assessment, a draft detailed guideline for the development of awareness messages and communication tools is currently being discussed.

Further, UNICEF organised a meeting among officials from the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and 60 workers of the Monrovia City Corporation in charge of solid waste management. This meeting informed MCC employees about safe reporting procedures if they find UXO.

Advocacy activities have also started through meetings with select officials. As part of this effort, several meetings were held with the Ministry of Defense, one where the Minister declared that the Government of Liberia does not have a stockpile of landmines. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines has been informed.

Nicaragua

With support from the Government of Japan, UNICEF Nicaragua's landmine and UXO information and education project restarted its activities directed toward children and adolescents in primary and secondary school in February 2004. In March, the Project implemented intensive informative and preventive activities with more than 1,000 children and adolescents in 19 schools. The activities were carried out in communities where minefields exist or are situated close to mined zones.

The project also succeeded in reaching a significant number of the out-of-school population in the targeted rural communities at risk. A total of 368 out-of-school children and adolescents in more than 20 communities were encouraged to participate in the activities, which were aimed at adults, children, and adolescents. More than 2,000 adults participated in the informative and preventive meetings and talks. The meetings and discussions were conducted by leaders of the communities (52 women and 110 men), who were previously trained in special training sessions.

During the third week of March, children and adolescents of the municipality of Santa Maria de Pantasma, Department of Jinotega, participated in the landmine and UXO risk awareness campaign. In this campaign, informative and recreational activities were carried out, including distribution of brochures, posters, house-to-house visits, as well as theatre and music with educative messages. A similar campaign will be realised during the third week of April in the community of Plan de Grama, Department of Jinotega. To this end, 40 adolescents and youths of this community were trained to support its execution.

Sri Lanka

As a continuation of the MRE management training that was carried out in 2003, UNICEF Sri Lanka organised a three-day workshop for Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP) in April for more than 20 participants who represent all of the MRE implementing agencies in the country. The objectives of the workshop were to define the nationwide MRE programme's goals, objectives and expected outputs; to identify the expected beneficiaries; and to identify the programme's strengths and weaknesses. The outcomes of the workshop will be useful for all MRE agencies when planning their activities, in line with the nationwide programme strategy. A series of individual workshops with the respective implementing agencies will follow.

The workshop was also the first opportunity to introduce the findings of the evaluation survey, which was recently carried out by the UNICEF supported MRE programme. This in turn was the basis for the strategic workshop.

Organisations or individuals interested in getting the final report of the evaluation survey can contact Hanoch Barlevi at hbarlevi@unicef.org.

In the eastern peninsula of Mannar, UNICEF has commenced supporting a rehabilitation centre for people with disabilities, including survivors of landmine and UXO incidents. The centre's facilities will be upgraded to be able to receive and accommodate patients from the entire western region of the island. UNICEF is already supporting another orthopaedic clinic in Kilinochchi in the North of Sri Lanka.

4. Integration of Mine Action and Peacebuilding

Implications for Donors, Implementers and Host Populations

Presentation to the Mine Action Support Group

Geneva 19 March 2004

Kristian Berg Harpviken, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO)

My working assumption is the following: Mine Action is important for peacebuilding - it has considerable untapped potential for contributing further to overcoming armed conflict and building peace.

This statement has led to a broad variety of reactions from different stakeholders, such as:

“Whether or not mine action contributes to peacebuilding is first and foremost a question of getting the mines out of the ground as quickly as possible”

“Now we have tackled national capacity-building, socio-economic impact – and you come here to bother us with yet another issue?”

“If we can label some of what we do as peacebuilding, it opens up yet another avenue for funding!”

All of these reactions are taken from the real world – I have encountered them in the context of various presentations and discussions on the topic over the past couple of years. While none of them sums up all there is to say about the issue, they are all conveying valid points.

By the end of the day, however, it is not an option for mine action not to relate to the peacebuilding agenda.

- It is already generally seen as a major peacebuilding instrument
- It usually occurs in war or post-war situations, where contributing towards peace must be the first priority
- As proven by practice, mine action can have huge potential for impact on issues of conflict and peace. And – as any intervention in a conflicted context – it has an impact whether we seek it or not. There is no way by which MA can isolate itself from the conflictual political dynamics in which it intervenes.

What is peacebuilding?

We have moved a long way since the then UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali launched the term in his 1992 *Agenda for Peace*, where it was generally regarded as an inventory of relevant tools and activities. The UN Security Council

definition of 2001, for example, has a more comprehensive and principal definition of peacebuilding, such as in emphasizing that it 'is aimed at preventing the outbreak, the recurrence, or the continuation of armed conflict.'

In broader terms, this implies that peacebuilding has its focus on:¹

- Processes as much as activities: Peacebuilding is a highly uncertain undertaking. It is more difficult to predict the consequence of building a bridge in a war zone than of setting up a water pump in a stable society. Hence, promoting good practice through conduct is as important as the final product. A code of conduct integrating key values such as good governance, transparency and fair distribution of benefits is therefore particularly important. The way in which a demining project is conducted – in terms of priority-setting, communication with locals etc. – may be no less important than the actual elimination of mines.
- All stages of conflict: Peacebuilding may take place before, during or after conflict. For one, this draws our attention to interventions that can initiate positive processes in the midst of war, the first steps in what may lead into a full-fledged peace process. Secondly, it draws attention to the need for peacebuilding interventions to be robust. We know that 50% of all peace agreements break down within five years. Interventions need to be able to handle both the full-scale setbacks and the low-intensity conflicts that follow many settlements. Actors need to realize that peacebuilding is a risky business. Finally, we need to make sure that interventions do not trigger new or exacerbate existing conflicts – a considerable challenge in itself.
- Local engagement: Societies in conflict possess their own “capacities for peace”. Individuals, networks, organisations, and values and norms that are the key resources for peacebuilding. An obvious caveat, however, is that societies in conflict also possess destructive forces, either as individuals and groups that have an interest in prolonging the conflict, or as fundamental conflicts or grievances that are seemingly impossible to solve. The implication is not that ensuring local engagement is less important in a peacebuilding context, only that it is even more challenging. Ultimately, the ability to convert destructive forces into playing constructive roles is a hallmark of most successful peace processes.
- Fundamental transformation of society and its institutions: The term reconstruction has gradually been replaced by peacebuilding, mainly due to the realization that a return to the post-war scenario is not a sensible option, not the least because that means reconstructing the very conditions that led to war. This implies that peacebuilding need to be broad and comprehensive, it needs to be sustainable, and it needs, in an integrated manner to address issues in all domains of society. This insight is summed up in what has recently been referred to as the 'peacebuilding palette' – the full scope of peacebuilding instruments – which need to be used in various blends, at the right intensity and with the right timing in order to form the best possible response in a particular

¹ See also K B Harpviken & B A Skåra, 'Humanitarian Mine Action and Peacebuilding: Exploring the Relationship', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 5, 2003, pp 809-822; Goodhand, J & D Hulme, 'From Wars to Complex Political Emergencies: Understanding Conflict and Peace-Building in the New World Disorder', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 1, 1999, pp 13–26.

context. An example of this is the Afghan Mine Action for Peace program, which has its effects not only in demining, but also in demobilization, reconciliation and in strengthening civil society at the local level (to mention some).

As to mine action, the implication of all this is that its peacebuilding impact should never be taken for granted. We must move beyond the common assumption that mine action is peacebuilding by default. Mine action, just like any other type of intervention, may have negative peacebuilding impacts.

Many peacebuilding impacts of mine action are unintended, and may also remain unrecognized. The challenge is – through focused efforts within the mine action community – to make sure that the peacebuilding potential of mine action is tapped to the fullest extent.

Implications for mine action

One illustration could be to take a simple model of the project cycle – including the four phases of analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation – and look at the possible implications for various actors in each of these phases.²

Analysis

Any intervention in a conflict needs to start with analysis. This may sound obvious, yet a careful reading of project documentation reveals that basic analysis of the conflict is either absent or light-handed, and that actual project designs make no reference to the overall conflict.

Most fundamentally, there is a need for an overall conflict analysis. Ideally, this would not be undertaken by actors within a specialized sector, such as mine action, but rather as a joint effort involving multiple actors from different levels, ranging from donors to host country representatives. A conflict analysis is exactly what it says – a qualified attempt to disentangle what the conflict is about. It should be looking at root causes, fault lines, the actors and their interests, as well as obstacles to and opportunities for peace.

A conflict analysis, however, constitute only parts of the overall analysis. As a basis for assessing a possible intervention, there is a need to conduct what is formally referred to as a Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments (PCIA). This part of the process is more targeted. It is based on the conflict analysis, but moving beyond it; working out what the likely impact of a given intervention may be.

In mine action, new tools of impact assessment have been a key issue, at least since the late 1990s. The most prominent instruments coming out of this is the Landmine Impact Surveys, which are conducted by the Survey Action Centre, and the cost-benefit analysis, which has been prepared by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. These steps represent massive progress for mine action, but they relate to the conflict dimension only in a very general and indirect sense. In designing a mine action intervention with a peacebuilding impact, one will need to move beyond the analysis that these tools represent.

² This section draws on D Smith, *Getting Their Act Together: Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding*, The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003.

Additionally, there is a challenge that stems from a rapidly shifting environment, a common trait of conflict situations, where power relations are shifting, the economic environment in flux, and large population groups may be on the move. Some existing initiatives are addressing this, but are not widely used.³ The challenge in terms of analysis is therefore twofold: solidifying the use of conflict analysis as well as Peace and Conflict Impact Assessments, but also to do this flexibly so that the analysis is always as relevant and updated as possible.

Planning

For planning purposes, the fundamental question is related to the ambitions. A minimalist approach is to avoid 'doing harm', moving ahead with business as usual. A maximalist approach is to consider mine action primarily as a vehicle for peacebuilding, perhaps in some cases even at the cost of conventional mine action effectiveness. Following the minimalist approach of avoiding harm is in itself demanding. Once having achieved that, being sensitive to the opportunities that may arise for a more active peacebuilding role may be a less dramatic step to take.

A key challenge is that there is no standard recipe for how to build peace. Neither is there any standard recipe for how to avoid doing harm. Each conflict setting is likely to have its own particularities that beg for a tailored response, which again presupposes a solid analysis. Similarly, the constitution of the mine problem is likely to be so different from one place to another, that the opportunities it presents in terms of peacebuilding are also very different. The lack of an overall standard recipe, however, does not imply one cannot use familiar experiences as building blocks.

Ultimately, peacebuilding is a 'risky business'. The more an intervention has an explicit peacebuilding objective, the more is it likely not to succeed. Projects that aim at fostering confidence by gathering mine information in the midst of conflict may succeed only at a rate of one to ten. In principal terms, that may not be a problem, as long as lack of success does not mean grave harm. What it does require, however, is that the parties involved realize that peacebuilding is a risky business, and that it may differ significantly from other kinds of projects. The upside is that when successful, such projects are enormously important.

Implementation

The extent to which direct engagement with the peacebuilding aspects of an operation lies with the mine action implementer, and to what extent it is with other actors, will vary from one situation to another. Where mine action is coming in first, an implementing agency will have to deal with peacebuilding largely on its own. In the context of a larger and more complex peacebuilding operation, however, the mine action project would ideally fit in a larger peacebuilding strategy, which would be coordinated and monitored by various other bodies.

³ K B Harpviken, A S Millard, K E Kjellman & B A Skåra, 'Measures for Mines: Approaches to Impact Assessment in Humanitarian Mine Action', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 5, 2003, pp 889-908; B Goslin, 'Making analytic tools operational: task impact assessment', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 5, 2003, pp 923-938.

The question remains, however, what capacity mine action agencies have to pursue peacebuilding objectives? Notwithstanding the fact that many mine action practitioners have proved extremely skilled at building confidence, settling conflicts, and gaining access to sensitive areas, it is a heavily specialized sector where the focus is on narrowly defined objectives. This has implications both at the individual and organizational levels. At the individual level, many of those responsible in mine action are recruited precisely because of their technical competence. At an organizational level, a substantial degree of institutional isolation from other sectors, a strong focus on the technical aspects of the work, and the existence of tight standards for most aspects of the activity, is likely to dampen the flexibility and innovativeness required to engage more actively in peacebuilding. If this assumption holds true, it represents a fundamental dilemma, yet one that needs to be addressed if the peacebuilding potential of mine action is to unfold.

Evaluation

Establishing the peacebuilding impact of mine action is difficult, just like it is for any other peacebuilding intervention. Establishing causality – the link between a particular intervention and fundamental changes in terms of peacebuilding – is at best a very imprecise science, at worst it is impossible. Not only is this a complex environment, where factors entirely beyond the control of the project turn things upside down. Many of the objectives – such as confidence-building or reconciliation – are extremely abstract, and are likely to be achievable only over a long period of time.

One response to this problem is not to do impact assessments of individual peacebuilding interventions, but to focus exclusively on process indicators (combined with narrow and more technically defined output indicators).⁴ While this might seem attractive, it does not solve the problem, since once a project is underway, its success will be assessed (more or less formally), and these assessments will form the basis for adjustments in the implementation. In other words, evaluation feeds back into analysis and planning in an ongoing cycle, and some sort of analysis will unavoidably be applied in order to adjust the course. Hence, the challenge is to work on strengthening the capacity to conduct ongoing monitoring of projects, as discussed above, and to seek overcoming the difficulties involved.

Concluding Remarks

So what does this imply for the various actors in mine action?

For host populations, there is a need to uphold the importance of the process itself – securing that projects are implemented according to best practice in terms of transparency, good governance, and fair and equitable distribution of benefits. Reminding ourselves that war-torn societies contain real conflicts, and that not all actors see peace as their best interest, we must still uphold the ideals of building local capacity and influence.

The implementers are on the spot, being the ones doing the work on the ground, but also being the link between donor governments and host populations. Taking the

⁴ I.e. D Smith, *Getting Their Act Together. Towards a Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding*, The Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2003.

peacebuilding agenda seriously introduces new challenges for mine action implementers. Their peacebuilding measures will have to be carefully tailored to the individual situation, including the degree to which other actors can deal with issues of strategy and overall coordination. This requires in-depth knowledge of the context in which one works. At an overall level, however, new competence and new tools will have to be worked out, rooted in the wealth of existing experience.

If donors see mine action programs as peacebuilding instruments, this does not imply that current quality indicators, including cost-effectiveness and efficiency, are less important. The quote at the beginning – that securing peacebuilding impact is essentially a question of truth – is not wholly unfounded. Some observers of the Angolan peace process that broke down in the mid-1990s, for example, have argued that a more expedient clearance of roads could have secured the peace process. Increased movement for the population would have undercut UNITA's 'spoiler strategy', which basically was to prevent contact between the population groups. In concrete terms, a peacebuilding focus for mine action will also require a higher degree of trust from the donors' side, as efforts on the ground will need to be flexible and responsive to changing contexts. Peacebuilding is a risky business – at least in the sense that peace impacts are uncertain – and donors will have to be motivated to take on that risk.

The new interest in the peacebuilding impact of mine action is good news. It is particularly good news that innovative initiatives are under way in the field, such as in Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and Sudan. The International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO) has underway in-depth case studies in these countries, where we intend to look at the peacebuilding impact of mine action at multiple levels, ranging from the local to the international. The peacebuilding agenda of mine action is unfolding in field contexts as we talk – as today's case presentations vividly demonstrate. We look forward to work with practitioners and host country representatives in disentangling this dynamic – knowing that a rich 'well of wisdom' exists – just awaiting documentation.

Thank you for your attention.