

## MINUTES

### MINE ACTION SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

5 SEPTEMBER, 2012, NEW YORK

**1. Introduction.** The Chair of the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) (Ms Philippa King) opened the meeting at 10.00 and welcomed all participants. In particular, the Chair thanked all the donor representatives for their participation, and welcomed the recently appointed Director of UNMAS, Ms Agnes Marcaillou, to her first annual meeting of the MASG. The Chair thanked the USA for their work as chair of the MASG over the past two years and gave a brief outline of Australia's plans for the MASG over the next 18 months. The Chair also thanked the UK for providing the funds to establish a part-time secretariat for the MASG. The Chair confirmed the minutes of the previous meeting of the MASG held in Geneva on 29 March 2012. The agenda for the meeting was agreed, and a copy of the final agenda and the attendance list are attached to these minutes. (Note: all presentations given at the meeting will be posted on the MASG website at [www.mineactionsupportgroup.org](http://www.mineactionsupportgroup.org)).

**2. Update from the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group – Mine Action (UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF).** Ms Marcaillou gave a detailed update on the recent work and achievements of the United Nations in Mine Action. The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) review of the United Nations work in mine action had been completed and UN agencies had responded. Implementation against the JIU Review will be reported to the General Assembly Fourth Committee (68<sup>th</sup> session) in 2013. The UN 'Strategy on Mine Action 2006 – 2010' has been extended until the end of 2012. Work is underway to elaborate a new strategy and a series of consultations with stakeholders is planned over the next months. The new strategy is planned to be launched in early 2013.

UNMAS, UNDP (Mr Tim Horner) and UNICEF (Ms Judy Grayson) updated the meeting on work in a range of countries. UNDP's priority countries for mine action are Libya, Mozambique, Albania, Yemen, Laos and Cambodia. UNICEF's priority countries for mine action are Cambodia, Congo, Sri Lanka and Yemen. The UN Portfolio of Mine Action Projects for 2013 will be launched in December 2012 and funding priorities were outlined in respect of Afghanistan, Libya, DRC and Colombia. UNMAS noted they were seeking funding for emergency situations and rapid response as their capacity was limited due to funding constraints.

UNMAS outlined priority work for 2013:

- Update the UN Victim Assistance Policy
- Revamp the E-Mine website
- Further develop the UN Completion Initiative
- Initiate a study measuring the economic and recovery benefits of mine action
- Support national injury surveillance systems
- Develop methodologies for evaluation of mine action.

Canada asked about the UN role in Colombia and possible duplication of effort with the OAS. Ms Marcaillou assured the MASG that the UN intervention in Colombia was coordinated and that they were working closely with the government of Colombia and the OAS. This was confirmed by Mr Case of the OAS. Australia asked about the outcome of a recent UN inter-agency mission to Myanmar. Ms Marcaillou noted the problem with landmines and UXO in Myanmar and that the mission was a first step. The mission had been well received at ministerial level. The initial UN response will be to strengthen the Resident Coordinator's office with a technical adviser, who will define the needs and develop a plan of action.

### **3. Updates from Other observer organizations.**

3.1 Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Mr Ted Paterson, the Head of Strategic Management at the GICHD, gave an overview of the work of the GICHD and distributed a handout giving details of current activities. The new GICHD strategy focuses on two main areas – global clarity on explosive hazards (though land release, decision support and understanding impacts) and developing high performing national authorities and national ownership (through training, research and advisory services). Full details of the work of the GICHD can be found at [www.gichd.org](http://www.gichd.org).

3.2 The Center for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) – James Madison University. The Director of CISR, Dr Ken Rutherford gave a brief background on the work of the CISR and highlighted information exchange, including – the Journal of ERW and Mine Action, the CISR website and the US State Department publication 'To Walk the Earth in Safety'. Dr Rutherford stressed that these are valuable tools available to groups like the MASG and others in the mine action community. He noted that every article published in the Journal since its inception in 1997 and an extensive archive of research materials and reports produced over the last 15 years are available on their website at [www.cisr.jmu.edu](http://www.cisr.jmu.edu)

3.3 The International Trust Fund – Enhancing Human Security (ITF). The Deputy Director of the ITF, Mr Goran Gacnik gave an overview of the work of the ITF. In recent years the ITF had expanded its geographic focus beyond South-Eastern Europe, and it now covers a wider range of topics including conventional weapons destruction and enhancing human security. One example was that the ITF had recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Libya to discuss aspects of conventional weapons destruction. Details of the ITF are at [www.itf-fund.si](http://www.itf-fund.si)

3.4 The Organization of American States (OAS). The General Coordinator for mine action at the OAS, Mr Carl Case, gave a brief background to the OAS and updated on its recent mine action work in Central and South America. The OAS has followed a regional approach and has provided funding, training and technical assistance to affected countries in the past. This has mainly been done on a military to military basis, although the recent work in Colombia was on a civilian basis. On funding, 98% of the work is donor funded, with only 2% coming from core funds. Mr Case forecast \$3 million was required to support projects in 2013. The OAS website is at [www.oas.org/dsp/espanol/cpo\\_desminado.asp](http://www.oas.org/dsp/espanol/cpo_desminado.asp)

**4. Reports from donors.** The following MASG members made statements on their current mine action funding. Full details of each statement will be available on the MASG website.

- Germany. Lt Col Koppetsch summarised contributions to mine action, noting Germany remains committed and a new strategy on humanitarian aid will be released by November 2012.
- USA. Mr Lawrence outlined US contributions to conventional weapons destruction, which includes mine action. He noted some special initiatives included a proposal for a multi-year UXO strategy for the Asia-pacific region, and also the need to make humanitarian mine action a cornerstone of stability operations in Burma.
- Netherlands. Ms Titulaer noted the Netherlands had just completed a new round of tenders for mine action funding, which will provide Euro 45 million for the period 2012 to 2016. She announced the organizations that had been successful. Ms Titulaer said that the lessons from the process were that it provided greater transparency, but that it was not suitable for crisis situations.
- Australia. Ms Pahlman provided a handout that summarized Australia's contributions to mine action. The findings of the mid-term review of the Mine Action Strategy for the Australian aid program 2010 to 2014 were summarised. Australia would start in mid-2013 to develop a new strategy for the period 2015 to 2019.
- United Kingdom. Mr Reed stated that the UK was nearing the end of its current four year strategy which was due to end in early 2013. A review was currently underway (looking at the links between mine action and development).
- Finland. Mr Kari Puurunen recalled Finland's Development Plan and humanitarian policy, and stated that they had provided Euro 5.5 million in 2012 and were focusing their support on providing predictable financing for fewer but credible initiatives.
- Japan. Mr Sumi gave the trends in Japanese funding for mine action and said that they were a strong supporter of UNMAS, i.e. in 2011 they were the second largest contributor to the VTF. He noted Japan provided funding in support of countries obligations to the Conventions and that at the 3 MSP CCM they were hosting a side event with Laos.
- New Zealand. Colonel Russell outlined the history of New Zealand's involvement with mine action and said that he would make available a note with the projected contributions for next year. He said that their focus included the West Bank, North-Eastern Cambodia, Mozambique and Palau.

**5. Experience from recent emergency situations e.g. Libya.** The Chair introduced this item by explaining that it was a chance to explore and exchange information on how the mine action sector has responded in emergency situations, with a particular focus on the situation in Libya. A short video produced by the UN was shown which highlighted the large ERW problem in Libya and detailed some of the steps the UN and other partners had taken to address the issue.

Mr Jim Lawrence from the US spoke about their response in Libya and highlighted the difficulties in establishing a program in a country where there was no established partner government. He then introduced Ms Nicolette Boehland from the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School who co-authored a report titled "Explosive Situation: Qaddafi's Abandoned Weapons and the Threat to Libya's Civilians". The report (available on the MASG website) was based on two field missions and documents the risks posed to Libyan civilians from the extensive stockpiling and spread of munitions following the 2011 armed conflict. The report also calls on Libya, with international support, to improve its stockpile management, clear munitions, educate the population about risks,

and assist victims. In response, the German delegate stated that Germany had provided assistance to Libya, and that it was important to use this window of opportunity for donors to stress in a coordinated way to the Libyan government that they were ready to help, but the Libyan authorities must take responsibility for the problem.

The UN program manager for Libya, Mr Max Dyck gave an overview of the ERW problem in Libya and the UN response to date. He advised that the former Joint Mine Action Coordination Team (JMACT) had become the 'Arms and Ammunition Advisory Section' of UNSMIL. He said that the main challenges in Libya were; lack of government continuity, lack of a national coordination architecture and a lack of resources available within the Libyan government.

**6. Presentation and discussion of the MASG study on 'Donor Coordination'.** Due to time constraints this agenda item was not discussed at the meeting. The study on 'Mine Action Coordination and Partnerships' maps donor interests and support to mine action and considers ways that the MASG may be able to improve coordination and partnerships in the area of mine action. The draft study report circulated to members before the meeting identifies ways that the MASG could be more proactive in coordinating the work of its members through joint assessments, information exchange, joint monitoring and evaluations etc. It was agreed that the Secretariat would circulate the draft document again to MASG members and ask for comments by 30 November 2012. A revised draft would then be circulated in advance of the next MASG meeting.

**7. Request for MASG representation on the Review Board of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).** Mr Mansfield explained that on 2 August 2012 UNMAS wrote to the MASG inviting the Secretariat of the MASG to take one of the two seats reserved for donors on the Review Board of the International Mine Action Standards. A copy of the UNMAS letter and the Terms of Reference for the IMAS Review Board was sent to members in advance of the meeting. The workload for the Secretariat would involve attending the annual IMAS Review Board meeting in Geneva (always held in the margins of the National Directors meeting and the MASG meeting), reviewing draft IMAS and posting updates on the MASG websites. Following general discussion it was agreed that it would be a good idea for the MASG to be represented on the Board to represent views of the donors and to provide updates on the IMAS to MASG members. It was noted that between now and March 2013 the existing work days allocated to the MASG secretariat would be sufficient to cover the workload. It was agreed that the MASG write and accept the invitation (for the standard three year term) on the proviso that membership post-March 2013 would be dependent on sufficient funding being available for the Secretariat post to continue.

**8. Future of MASG Secretariat post-March 2013.** The Chair reminded the meeting that in 2011 the United Kingdom allocated funds through UNMAS for the establishment of a part-time Secretariat for the MASG. The post was openly advertised and a panel consisting of the former MASG Chair, current MASG Chair and the United Nations undertook a selection process. Mr Mansfield was engaged in January 2012 on the basis of up-to-10 days per month, plus travel to MASG meetings. The UK grant expires on 31 March 2013. The Chair noted that the work of the Secretariat to-date had been most beneficial to the Chair and the MASG in general. Following discussion members supported the continuation of the Secretariat post. UNMAS said that as the UK grant was part of a larger commitment to UNMAS they were not able to state at present if any funds were likely to be left over, or if they could be carried forward beyond March 2013. The UK representative said that

the UK were currently reviewing their mine action policy so could not make any commitment at this stage for continued funding. The Chair said that Australia would look at some options in this regard and also asked members to consider making some expressions of interest. In summary, it was agreed in-principle to continue with a part-time secretariat for the MASG. The Chair will explore options for the level of support needed and the funding required for the post beyond March 2013.

**9. Any Other Business.** The Chair advised that on 4 September she had received a letter from the Ukrainian Coordinator on Cooperation and Assistance for Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War of the CCW. A copy of the letter was distributed to the meeting and in it the Coordinator had outlined some recent discussions on cooperation and assistance undertaken in the context of the CCW. The letter also listed specific requests for assistance from some ERW affected countries, and a request that these be passed on to the MASG.

The Chair proposed that she reply to Mr Lisuchenko informing him of the current work of the MASG on donor coordination and cooperation, and inform him that the MASG would be willing to deliver a statement on donor coordination at the November meeting of the CCW, as requested. Australia will draft the statement and consult with the MASG in time for the November meeting.

There were no further matters of “Other Business” raised.

**10. Next Meeting of the MASG.** It was agreed that the next meeting of the MASG be held during the week of the next National Mine Action Directors meeting, scheduled to be held in Geneva during the period 8 -12 April 2013. The exact day for the meeting would be advised nearer to the date.

**11. Wrap up morning session.** The Chair summarized the morning session and outlined the changes to the sequence of the agenda for the afternoon session.

### **Lunch session**

During the lunch break the meeting was joined by Mr Herve Ladsous, the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Mr Dimitri Titov, Assistant-Secretary-General and the Head of OLROSI. UNMAS played a video which outlined the range of work they are currently undertaking. Mr Ladsous then made some remarks on the United Nations work in mine action. He promoted the concept of ‘one’ UN and noted some recent successes, such as the UN response in Congo (Brazzaville) and South Sudan. Mr Ladsous thanked the donors for the nature of their assistance, and stressed the need for strong partnerships. He noted that the current mine action priorities for the UN were Afghanistan, Libya, DRC, Western Sahara and potentially Syria. He noted that the UN supervisory mission in Syria had closed, but that there was a small UN team in Damascus which included two staff from UNMAS. He estimated that it will cost at least \$9 million for a clean-up in Syria when the security situation stabilizes, but noted that this was far away and the first priority was to gain humanitarian access to the country.

The Chair thanked Mr Ladsous for his comments and explained the current focus and work of the MASG. She also appreciated the work of the UN staff in places like Syria, as the information they provide helps donors to develop evidence-based policies.

**12. Presentation on the MASG study on ‘Completion’.** This first agenda item after lunch was deferred until after Item 13, so it will be reported on in that sequence in these minutes.

**13. Perspectives on completion by mine and ERW affected countries.** To enhance the discussion on completion, four countries representing a range of perspectives with regard to mine action completion were invited to speak to the meeting and to share their experiences. The Chair welcomed the four representatives;

- Jordan - HRH Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al Hussein, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations
- Mozambique – HE António Gumende, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Mozambique to the United Nations
- Palau - HE Mr Stuart Beck, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Palau to the United Nations
- Cambodia - Lieutenant Colonel Dara Him, Military Attaché, Permanent Mission of Cambodia to the United Nations

13.1 Jordan. Prince Zeid said that he was pleased that Jordan had completed its Article 5 obligations under the APMBC and noted that Jordan was the first country with serious landmine problems to do so. He thanked the 22 donor countries who had supported Jordan over the years. He also appreciated the work of the Norwegian Peoples Aid in their clearance role. Prince Zeid summarized the mine contamination faced by Jordan and the way that they had dealt with it in three different areas of the country. He noted that the thousands of Syrian refugees crossing into Jordan at present were doing so through areas that had been demined – and if they had not been cleared there most certainly would have been a high rate of casualties among them.

Prince Zeid said that the lessons they had learned for successful completion were as follows;

- Civilian control of the mine action authority was essential, and this also made it easier for donors to deal with the affected country
- A nationally driven campaign binds all sides to achieving the result
- Mine action must be kept transparent at all levels
- He believed the Jordan model was a good model for other countries with a long term mine problem (but not emergency situations)

13.2 Mozambique. Ambassador Gumende noted that the Article 5 deadline for Mozambique was 1 March 2014. He outlined the mine problem in Mozambique and the remaining areas needing clearance and noted some trends, such as the declining number of new victims each year. He said that the country was working under a National Mine Action Plan 2009 – 2014 and that the estimated cost over the period 2012 – 2014 was \$32 million. Mozambique had raised \$24 million to date, so were short \$8 million. Ambassador Gumende said that determining the true extent of the contamination was a key step, and that Mozambique was undertaking another base-line survey in order to quantify the remaining work needed.

13.3 Palau. Ambassador Beck explained that Palau was affected by an ERW problem dating back to World War II and that until recently no demining activity had taken place. The exact scale of the problem is not precisely known, but it is widespread. He noted that a recent survey found that ERW was present in 26% of households. Eradicating ERW has become a national priority, and Palau has signed both the APMBC and the CCM. Palau has developed a national plan for ERW eradication, which Ambassador Beck believed could become a model for the region. The plan covers risk

education in schools, developing local capacity for survey and clearance and information and data management. Palau needs additional resources to finish the job, but believes that with support they can eradicate all ERW within three to five years. Ambassador Beck announced that Palau will be holding a regional conference from 24 to 26 October 2012 with the aim of supporting development of a regional unexploded ordnance strategy and assisting other affected Pacific states to establish national programs.

13.4 Cambodia. Lieutenant Colonel Him overviewed the history of mine action and explained the current set up with the Cambodian Mine Action Authority. He explained that in Cambodia mine action was aligned with broader development goals, and that Cambodia has designated mine action as a 9<sup>th</sup> MDG. Mine Action in Cambodia is considered to be a long-term challenge and is currently guided by a National Strategic Plan 2010 – 2019. Lieutenant Colonel Him noted that Cambodia had deployed deminers with the UN Peacekeeping Mission in Sudan (UNMAS). He concluded by thanking all the donors for their support.

13.5 General discussion on presentations. A number of questions were raised on donor coordination, South –South cooperation and leadership. Prince Zeid noted that donor coordination had not been difficult due to the presence of an agreed national plan. It was also highlighted by Australia that Cambodia’s partnership principles were an excellent example of how to maintain good coordination between all partners. On South – South cooperation, Prince Zeid noted that experience will disappear if it is not tapped. Canada noted that Jordan had been sharing its experience through their management training program. Colonel Him said that Cambodia had shared its experience by hosting many visits from representatives from other affected countries. UNMAS noted that the Cambodian contribution to peacekeeping operations were a good example for others to follow and that UNMAS would put more emphasis on hiring local companies. On leadership, CISR noted that Jordan had received an international award for its positive role in victim assistance, and that it led by example. It was also noted that when Mozambique signed the APMBC, ten other African countries joined shortly after, and that Palau had led universalization efforts in the Pacific.

**12. (continued) Presentation on the MASG study on ‘Completion’.** The Chair explained that the aim of the study was to consider how the MASG may contribute to the “Completion Initiative” established by the United Nations to assist affected countries complete their clearance work and meet their APMBC and CCM clearance obligations. A joint presentation on the draft study was then given by the Secretariat, Mr Ian Mansfield and Mr Ted Paterson from the GICHD. The study noted that there are potentially four components of mine action completion. They are:

- Completion under Article 5 of the Mine Ban Convention (MBC)
- Completion under Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)
- Completion of clearance of all ERW (as loosely defined by the CCW)
- Completion as defined by a non-State party to any of the above

The study concluded that each individual country will need to define what completion means in their own country context. In developing a business case to support ‘completion’ the study found that any case requires credibility and should contain the following components;

- Clear performance targets
- Implementation plans based on value-for-money considerations

- Clear agreement on the level, organisation and governance of the long-term capacity to deal with residual threats of ERW
- Financing mechanisms that provide incentives for success

Although an affected country may meet its obligations under the APMBC or CCM, it is likely that there will be an ongoing problem with ERW in many countries. The study recommended that in these cases, MASG members commitment to 'completion' should be linked to ensuring the affected government is willing and able to make credible commitments to assume responsibility for sustaining the operational capacity to deal with residual threats.

**14. General discussion on 'Completion' study.** A number of speakers then made comments on the draft study. UNDP said that the key aspect was that the different types of completion had been identified, and that the different considerations had been written down in the draft study. It was agreed that the UN Completion Initiative document needed to be revised and the number of countries to be considered for completion support be reviewed along with the criteria. The Chair proposed that the Secretariat continue to refine the study and that comments are invited on an ongoing basis. The Secretariat would report on progress in relation to mine action completion at MASG meetings on an ongoing basis.

**15. Wrap up of afternoon session.** The chair gave a brief summary of the afternoon session and then thanked all the members and observers for their participation. The meeting closed at 16.30 hours.

Final Version

29 November 2012