

MINUTES

MINE ACTION SUPPORT GROUP MEETING

FRIDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2014

JAPANESE PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK

1. WELCOMING REMARKS BY CHAIR

The meeting was opened at 10.00am by the Chair of the MASG, H.E. Ambassador Yoshifumi Okamura, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan. The Chair welcomed all participants to the meeting and because it was his first time as Chair, he briefly outlined his own background. This included being the Director of Disarmament and Arms Control Division in Tokyo and covering Afghanistan some 12 years ago. The Chair said that he was pleased to be involved with mine action again.

The Chair then made a series of remarks about the MASG. He said that five new mine action donors had recently been invited to join the MASG. He welcomed Lichtenstein and Oman to the meeting, passed on the apologies of Monaco and was waiting to hear from Andorra and Brazil. The Chair welcomed the Secretariat and thanked the UK for originally funding the position and the USA for their current financial support. He noted that in August, at the request of UNMAS, the Japanese Mission in New York had chaired an emergency meeting of the MASG to discuss the situation in Gaza. He also noted that two days earlier the first meeting of the MASG Sub-group on the UN Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF) had been held at the Japanese Mission.

Ambassador Okamura then summarized some key aspects of Japan's support to mine action. He said that during the period April 2013 to March 2014 Japan had provided US\$52.3 million to 45 mine action projects in 22 countries around the world. This funding covered activities like removal of mines and unexploded ordnance (UXO), the dispatch of experts, provision of equipment, support for victims, risk-reduction education and South-South cooperation. With regards to the last point, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is planning to hold a workshop on South – South cooperation in Tokyo in March 2015 and in New York in April 2015. As a national policy, Japan will continue to promote the goals and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). The Chair then said that Japan would make a special effort, in conjunction with UNMAS, to mark the 10th anniversary of the International day of Mine Awareness on 4 April 2015. Finally, Ambassador Okamura confirmed that Japan would continue as Chair of the MASG until the end of 2015.

The Chair subsequently confirmed the agenda for the meeting, approved the minutes of the previous MASG meeting in Geneva held on 2 April 2014 and invited participants to introduce themselves. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Lichtenstein noted that they were a small country with limited finances, but that they supported mine action and looked forward to actively engaging with the MASG. The Deputy Permanent Representative of Oman thanked the Chair for the invitation and said that he would report the proceedings back to his capital. To end the first agenda item, the Chair invited Mr Naoto Hisajima, Minister at the Japanese Permanent Mission, who had

chaired the VTF Sub-group meeting on Wednesday, to provide a brief report. Mr Hisajima provided a short summary of the meeting and said that full details can be found in the minutes of that meeting.

2. OPENING REMARKS BY THE UNITED NATIONS

Mr Herve Ladsous, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations and Chair of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group – Mine Action (IACG-MA) had been invited to provide some opening remarks. However, due to unforeseen commitments he was unable to attend, but he was represented by Mr Dmitry Titov, Assistant-Secretary-General for the Rule of Law and Security Institutions within DPKO. Mr Titov congratulated Japan on becoming Chair of the MASG and welcomed Ambassador Okamura to the position.

Mr Titov then delivered a statement on behalf of Mr Ladsous, and the full text of the statement is attached to these minutes. In summary, it was noted that the scope of mine action has expanded to include the mitigation of the threats posed by cluster munitions, unsecured and poorly-managed stockpiles of weapons and ammunition, and improvised explosive devices (or IED's). The threat of IEDs is growing and concerns both humanitarian actors and peacekeepers. The statement then recalled that in its December 2013 Resolution on 'Assistance to Mine Action' the UN General Assembly had urged all States to support mine affected States by providing reliable, predictable, timely and where possible, multi-annual contributions for mine action, including through the VTF. The statement of Mr Ladsous concluded by encouraging MASG members to take an active part in ensuring that the next GA resolution on mine action accurately reflects the threats posed to civilians and uniformed personnel alike. Recognition of the work done by the United Nations, across all five pillars of mine action, as well as in the field of IEDs and weapons and ammunition management, in the case of UNMAS, was crucial.

The Chair thanked Mr Titov for the statement of Mr Ladsous and noted that Mr Titov would re-join the meeting at lunch to provide some additional remarks in his own capacity.

3. UPDATES – KEY AGENCIES, PRIORITIES AND PROGRAMMES

3.1 Update from the UN Inter-Agency Coordination Group – Mine Action (IACG-MA)

The Chair invited the Director of UNMAS, Ms Agnes Marcaillou, to provide an update from the IACG-MA. Ms Marcaillou said that she was speaking on behalf of all the United Nations agencies involved with mine action, and in particular UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF. Ms Marcaillou used a power point presentation to complement her statement and the presentation is attached to these minutes.

Ms Marcaillou reminded the meeting that the work of the United Nations in mine action was guided by the '*UN Mine Action Strategy 2013 -2018*' and that the Strategy included a commitment to improved monitoring and evaluation. She explained that a monitoring and evaluation mechanism had been designed after extensive consultation, that some country level survey work had been undertaken and that UNMAS was currently in a data collection phase. She also stressed that it was

not a 'heavy' or sophisticated system, and she thanked the donors who were supporting it. The Director UNMAS then outlined that the next UN Mine Action Portfolio of projects would be published in early 2015. This was the annual compilation of all UN mine action projects, along with those of some other organizations. The next Portfolio would be more 'user friendly', would be accessible through mobile devices and have 12 'areas of work' (inclusive of the existing five pillars of mine action).

Next the Director UNMAS spoke about the various legal frameworks. She noted that the APMBC 3rd Review Conference held in Maputo mentioned the work of the United Nations in the three major Conference outcome documents, and that they had asked the United Nations to continue its work on universalization in particular. At the 5th Meeting of States Parties to the CCM the United Nations reinforced the stigmatization of cluster munitions, but expressed concern at the slow pace of universalization. With regards to the CCW, the Director reminded the meeting that UNMAS is not part of the political negotiations, but that it does have a duty to report and provide facts on issues, such as anti-vehicle mines. Finally, the Director encouraged MASG members to actively participate in the drafting of the next GA resolution on Mine Action, due in October 2015.

A range of outreach activities was then described. Ms Marcaillou thanked the Japanese Chair for their support with this year's International Day for Mine Awareness on 4 April, which had the successful theme of 'women in mine action'. She then asked for suggestions from MASG members on how to best celebrate the day next year in 2015, which would be its 10th anniversary.

The next topic was an update on IACG-MA member organizations emergency programmes. These included Bosnia Herzegovina, Gaza, Iraq and Ukraine. Some emerging trends were then discussed. These included the problem of IEDs, (Mali and Afghanistan being mentioned as examples) weapons and ammunition management (Libya and CAR as examples), and the benefits of integrating victim assistance and risk education. Finally, the Director made some comments about capacity building in mine and ERW affected countries. She said that all IACG-MA members were in agreement that setting up unsustainable programs was not desirable, but rather understanding what countries needed and delivering projects designed to suit conditions on the ground was the most appropriate response. She gave the example of Cote D'Ivoire, where UNMAS had completed a successful weapons and ammunition management project, and now Cote D'Ivoire was being asked to help other countries.

The Chair then invited the representative of UNDP, M. Martin Ras, to speak. He outlined some work undertaken in Bosnia after the floods of 2014, mentioned that they had taken over a project from UNMAS in Sudan, and that they had some activities in Yemen (but that these were suspended in 2015 due to funding problems). The UNDP representative confirmed that UNDP mine action was in transition and that they would no longer have mine action staff at headquarters in New York. However, mine action projects would continue in certain countries, with a focus on livelihoods.

The Chair then opened the session to questions. The Swiss representative said that he agreed that UNMAS should have a short term approach to interventions in countries and supported the need for capacity building. However, with regards to weapons and ammunition management, he asked who in the UN was dealing with sustainability and the long term structural support at the government level. Ms Marcaillou said that at the strategic level weapons and ammunition was a complex problem involving legal, regulatory and SSR issues, and that some other parts of the UN system may

have assigned responsibilities e.g. ODA was responsible for the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG). However, at the field level, UNMAS helps build local capacity that can be sustained. In countries like Cote D'Ivoire and Haiti, UNMAS involved local actors from the start and through training and the development of good practice and standards, made sure sustainable capabilities are built locally.

Mr Paul Heslop, Chief of Programmes and Planning at UNMAS, said that it was widely agreed that even if all anti-personnel landmines were cleared from a country (because of an APMBC obligation) there is always going to be an ongoing ERW problem in most post-conflict situations. The sector should use the good lessons learned in the landmine sector in establishing longer term ERW capacity in countries. This may often involve using different partners, like training the national army, police or emergency services.

The representative of Finland asked how monitoring and evaluation was being done by UNMAS for the *UN Mine Action Strategy 2013-2018*. Ms Marcaillou said that it was done at the country level through an online survey using a network of UN Focal Points to gather data. The system has been piloted and is now in the process of being rolled out. Ms Marcaillou said she would continue to keep partners informed.

3.2 Updates from MASG Observers.

3.2.1. Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). The Director of the GICHD, Ambassador Stefano Toscano, reminded the meeting that the GICHD was established 15 years ago to further mine action knowledge, promote norms and standards and support capacity development. He outlined an ongoing research project that was titled Management of Residual Explosives (MORE). This project was looking at risk management approaches to the residual hazards of explosives left over from WW1, WW2 and more recent conflicts. Other research work underway included a study on the 'Humanitarian and Development Impact of Anti-vehicle Mines' (which was presented later in the meeting) and the use of free running dogs for landmine and ERW survey work. The GICHD continued to act as the Secretariat of the Review Board of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and a new draft standard on underwater demining was about to be released. With regards to outreach and disseminating knowledge in local languages, the GICHD has a linguistic programme that, among other things, translates various materials into Arabic, French, Persian and Russian, often using local partners. The next annual meeting of the Arabic Outreach Programme will take place in Alger on 21-23 October 2014. Finally, Ambassador Toscano advised that the GICHD had moved offices to the new Maison de la Paix in Geneva, and was now collocated with other partner organizations, such as the Small Arms Survey. This will allow for enhanced cooperation in areas of growing importance, such as Ammunition Safety Management.

3.2.2 James Madison University / CISR. The Director of the Centre for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) at JMU, Dr Ken Rutherford highlighted two aspects of his Centre's work. The first was the annual preparation and publication of the US State Department report called '*To Walk the Earth in Safety*'. Dr Rutherford said that this year marked the 20th anniversary of the report and it records the US involvement with mine action over those years. The report for 2014 should be available shortly, both in hard copy and electronically. The second publication CISR is responsible for is the *Journal of Mine Action*. This Journal has three issues per year and has been published for the past 18 years, which makes it the longest running magazine dealing with mine action. A new edition

was about to be published, plus a call for papers for the next edition. Dr Rutherford concluded with some personal remarks about his own experience as a landmine survivor, and despite the success of the landmine sector to date, urged donors not to stop their support.

3.2.3 International Trust Fund (ITF). Ambassador Andrej Logar of Slovenia said that the ITF could not be present at the meeting today, but that he would deliver a statement on their behalf. He recalled that the ITF was established in 1998 with the initial aim of supporting mine clearance in Bosnia, but since its inception it had been continuously expanding its scope and geographic coverage. The achievements of the ITF included funding the clearance of 127 million square metres of minefield, assisting 2,000 mine survivors and supporting victim assistance projects in 12 countries. A total of 30 countries, the EU and many private donors had provided over US\$400 million to the Fund. They were currently reviewing their strategy, but human security would remain a central focus. Capacity building and confidence building in SE Europe would also remain a strong focus. Finally, Ambassador Logar extended an invitation from the ITF to MASG members to undertake a field visit to Bosnia to see the effects of the 2014 floods on mine clearance work. He said that the ITF would be willing to facilitate such a visit.

3.2.4 Organization of American States (OAS). The OAS had sent its apologies for not being able to be present at the meeting.

3.3 Updates from Donors

3.3.1 Netherlands. The representative of the Netherlands noted that they make multi-annual, unearmarked contributions to UNMAS through the VTF. This was because the problem of mines and ERW is a multi-annual one.

3.3.2 Australia. 2014 will be the final year of Australia's current five year *Mine Action Strategy 2010 - 2014*, which had committed AUD\$100 million for the period. In fact, to date AUD\$120 million has already been allocated. Australia will conduct a review later this year to inform its future directions and engagement in mine action, where the focus will continue to be to make a contribution to stability and prosperity among the most vulnerable people in Australia's region.

3.3.3 United Kingdom. The United Kingdom has just completed a review of its four year mine action strategy, which covered the period 2011 - 2014. During this time GBP40 million was allocated to activities in eight countries. The representative of the UK said he will send a copy of the UK review to the MASG secretariat for distribution to MASG members. A successor three year strategy is currently being planned. It will have an initial focus on clearance in five countries (Cambodia, Laos, Mozambique, Sri Lanka and Vietnam) and a capacity building component. A second phase of the strategy may include up to five more countries.

3.3.4 Canada. The representative of Canada said that Canada appreciates the important work of the Mine Action Support Group (MASG). Since 2006, Canada has contributed more than US\$215 million to mine action. Canadian funding is used to support activities related to the humanitarian impact of all explosive munitions – be they mines, cluster munitions or other explosive remnants of war – and to increase access to safe land for agriculture and other socio-economic purposes. The Global Peace and Security Fund (GPSF), which is currently one of the main sources of funding for mine and cluster

munitions action, was renewed on 1 October 2014 through to 31 March 2016. Information concerning specific priorities for programming can be provided as it becomes available.

3.3.5 United States of America. The representative of the US announced that their annual report *'To Walk the Earth in Safety'* was soon to be released. He then spoke about a conference held in Istanbul in August to discuss the ERW situation in Iraq and Syria. Over 40 countries or organizations attended the meeting and there was a high level of donor interest. One of the outcomes of the meeting was a commitment to coordinate and collaborate. The US believes that the MASG is the most appropriate forum to discuss the ERW situation in Syria, and that how to implement projects will be the major challenge. The US had also provided US\$250,000 to UNMAS for Gaza. He thanked UNMAS for their prompt response in Gaza and requested an update on progress.

3.3.6 Germany. The representative of Germany stated that Germany was undergoing a review of its current mine action policy and some restructuring within the Humanitarian Division of the FFO had already occurred. In the past, Germany had provided funding in the range of US\$10 to \$15 million to mine action each year to a large number of organizations. The number of partners may be reduced in the future. Germany has worked with UNMAS in the past and hopes to do so in the future, but it will also continue to provide direct support to NGO's. He noted that Germany has a strong mine action lobby in its Parliament. Germany hopes to present its new strategy at the next MASG meeting in February 2015.

3.3.7 Italy. The representative of Italy announced that at a recent meeting of the Italian National Committee for Mine Action it had been agreed to contribute funds to mine action activities in Afghanistan (Euro 250,000), Gaza (Euro 200,000), Colombia (Euro 150,000) and to support the Italian Campaign to Ban Landmines (Euro 130,000).

3.3.8 Switzerland. Switzerland's mine action response is guided by its *'Strategy 2012 – 2015'*, which has a budget of \$60 million. Support to the GICHD forms a significant part of this response. Switzerland will review its strategy this year with a view to developing a new strategy for the period 2016 – 2019. The representative of Switzerland said that he did not foresee any big changes in the new strategy.

3.3.9 Finland. The representative of Finland noted that they were a donor to UNMAS. Finland would be commencing a review of their mine action policy later this year and hope to have a report finalized by mid-next year. Finland would be interested to hear how other countries had evaluated their mine action strategies. Finland was also interested in a MASG field visit.

3.3.10 Japan. The representative of Japan noted that in the period April 2013 to March 2014 Japan had contributed US\$52.3 million for 45 projects in 22 countries. The top recipients were Cambodia, Lao PDR, Libya and Afghanistan. Japan supported UNMAS through the VTF, and UNICEF. Bilateral support was provided to Afghanistan, Cambodia, Lao PDR and Sri Lanka.

3.3.11 Responses to Donor Updates. A number of remarks were then made in response to some of the points or questions raised by the MASG members in their statements. In response to Finland, the Director UNMAS replied that UNMAS was currently undergoing a detailed audit conducted by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) which was an independent body. The Director UNMAS then provided the USA with a detailed update on the situation in Gaza (see handout) and

reminded donors that in any emergency response situation the need for good coordination, data management, quality control, etc. was as important as mine clearance operations and should be properly funded. On the question of Finland's planned evaluation, Ambassador Toscano of the GICHD noted that the GICHD's new strategy would move to a Results Based Management basis. The goal is to measure 'impact' and 'outcomes' of mine action interventions, as well as determining the 'attribution' as to who caused the change, which can prove challenging. Good baseline data and indicators were required, but again this is a demanding task.

LUNCH BREAK

Mr Titov re-joined the meeting over the lunchbreak and made a series of broad ranging remarks. He said that UNMAS was a 'flagship' within DPKO and that he was proud of its achievements in dealing with landmines, ERW, humanitarian assistance, medical support and disability advocacy. He said that the recent IACG-MA principals meeting was unanimous in their view that mine action was still a forward looking issue and that a strong UN response was indispensable. Mr Titov went on to outline that the United Nations response is rapid, flexible, comprehensive, sustainable and transparent. Mr Titov concluded by urging donors not to reduce their commitment to mine action and to place mine action higher on their list of priorities.

The representative of the United States commented that from their experience it was important to recognize that dealing with IEDs required a much higher trained individual than a regular deminer. Mr Titov agreed and stressed that from the United Nations perspective they were not involved with the 'terrorist' aspects of IED's, but rather with the protection of civilians and peacekeepers. He said that in most peacekeeping operations the troop contributing countries did not have the skills or equipment to deal with IED's, so they had to turn to UNMAS to provide this capability. Mr Titov said there was no way back on this issue and he requested additional support for UNMAS in the form of specialized training and equipment so that they could respond better and faster.

The Chair noted that the issue of 'public relations' was vital in maintaining interest in mine action among donor countries, and gave the example of Japans support to Afghanistan. Mr Titov agreed and said that having all parts of civil society engaged in the issue was important. Whenever he or the Director UNMAS visited donor capitals they used the opportunity to raise the profile of the work of the United Nations in mine action. However, UNMAS was a very small office with limited PR support. Mr Titov then suggested that UNMAS, the MASG and other like-minded organizations could hold a working level workshop to discuss the 'image' aspects of mine action. The Chair agreed with this proposal and took note of the suggestion. The Chair again thanked Mr Titov for taking the time to join the MASG meeting and for his valuable insights.

4. CHANGING CONTEXT AND PRIORTIES FOR MINE ACTION

4.1 Funding Priorities – UNDP, UNICEF and UNMAS

Each UN agency outlined its current funding priorities and a copy of their presentation is attached to these minutes. The Representative of UNDP explained that UNDP funding priorities were Bosnia for management training and capacity building, Libya for capacity building, Yemen for clearance activities and Sudan for capacity building and clearance. UNICEF provided a detailed handout

covering its global funding needs in the area of risk education, victim assistance, advocacy, research capacity building, surveillance and coordination. The UNMAS priorities were the ongoing emergency response in Gaza, support to humanitarian operations in the DRC (which will close without new funding), support to the peace process in Colombia and ongoing assistance to Afghanistan. In this latter case, the amount of funding to Afghanistan had reduced recently and this was starting to seriously affect the capacity of Afghanistan to meet its APMBC commitment of completion by 2023.

In question time, the Swiss representative asked what is the share of funding from peacekeeping operations and what is the VTF share in the case of the DRC? The Director UNMAS explained that UNMAS was 'bi-focal' in some peacekeeping or political operations. In the case of a peacekeeping mission, if mine action is explicitly mentioned in the resolution, UNMAS will receive funding from the peacekeeping mission budget. However, in the same country UNMAS may already be undertaking humanitarian activities separate from the mission, or be asked to start activities by the relevant national authorities. In these case UNMAS needed to source extra-budgetary funding. In the case of DRC, the revised UN resolution had removed humanitarian mine action from the peacekeeping mandate so they were receiving no funds from the assessed budget. The current request for funds for the DRC was to support humanitarian demining and to support national capacity building. Ms Marcaillou explained that for political missions, like Libya or Somalia, the assessed budget only covered staff costs, and UNMAS had to raise additional funds to cover operational costs like vehicles, fuel etc.

4.2 The Humanitarian and developmental Aspects of Anti-Vehicle Mines (AVM)

The Director of the GICHD stated that in recent years in some countries like Cambodia, anti-vehicles mines (AVM) were causing more casualties than anti-personnel mines. The topic of AVM was gaining in importance, so the GICHD had recently completed a study on the topic, together with the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI). The report was based on three country case studies (Afghanistan, Cambodia and South Sudan), basic impact surveys in 15 countries and an analysis of news reports between 2010 and 2014. The general findings were that AVM had an overall humanitarian impact by causing civilian casualties, a short term impact (during and in the aftermath of conflicts) by restricting the delivery of aid and hindering the movement/return of displaced people, and a longer term impact (long after conflicts) on development (like causing a hazard to the introduction of mechanical farming equipment and restricting transport routes to new markets). With regards to the legal framework, the Director GICHD noted that AVM had been a long standing issue on the international agenda (e.g. in the CCW from 2000 to 2006 and again in 2012) but little progress had been made. The report makes seven recommendations, of which three were highlighted 1) that further regulation of AVM is needed to comply with IHL, 2) AVM should be detectable, and 3) that data about AVM should be disaggregated from other mine action data. The Director said that the report had been launched in Geneva on 2 October 2014, some hard copies were available in the room today, or it could be accessed on the GICHD website at (<http://www.gichd.org/mine-action-resources/publications/detail/publication/the-humanitarian-and-developmental-impact-of-anti-vehicle-mines/>).

In question time, the Swiss representative noted that the reference to Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM), or basically AVM, had been removed from the draft 1st Committee Resolution on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

4.3 Public – Private Sector Partnership.

The Director UNMAS introduced this topic by saying that public-private partnerships were important to UNMAS to help raise awareness and to support public relations efforts. The Director gave some recent examples of work done in this area to assist UNMAS. This included the creative agency Brooklyn Brothers who had designed some safety awareness posters, Mr Marco Grob, an award winning Swiss photographer who had provided his services and photos for free, and the Schonstedt Instrument Company who had provided almost US\$0.5 million worth of metal detectors for free. A Canadian marketing company called 'Critical Mass' had developed an interactive, digital minefield and a video of this project was shown, where people walked through a simulated minefield. This display would soon be permanently installed in the lobby of the UN Secretariat building, and other locations were suggested, like in the lobby of the GICHD building in Geneva. The video is available on the UNMAS website at www.mineaction.org

4.4 UN Mine Action management and Transparency Tool

The final presentation of the meeting concerned a financial tracking tool called 'The Cube' that was under development by UNMAS. It is a web based platform that would be accessible by mobile devices and it would allow donors and other users to have real time access to data sorted by year, programme, mine action pillar or project. Ms Marcaillou said that the work had been undertaken as part of the UNMAS commitment to be open and transparent.

The German representative asked if it was just a more 'user friendly' version of FTS, and also would it be available to the other UN agencies involved with mine action. Ms Marcaillou replied that the Cube is separate from FTS, and more efficient. The Cube is a way to display data from ProFi, which is the UNMAS financial accounting system. ProFi tracks the contributions, while the Cube displays the data in user-friendly ways. The project had been developed for UNMAS' own use as part of their commitment to greater transparency. The other UN agencies have their own financial reporting requirements so it would be up to them if they wished to develop or use similar tools.

The UK representative asked if this tool was meant to assist with existing reporting or represented an extra layer of reporting. Ms Marcaillou stressed that it did not replace the formal reporting requirements of the United Nations (as outlined by the Acting UN Controller on Wednesday) but that it was a tool to aid transparency.

5. MASG MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 Report from MASG Secretariat

The MASG Secretariat, Mr Ian Mansfield, provided a brief update on his work during the year, which included organizing the MASG meetings in Geneva in April and these meetings in New York. He maintained the MASG website, which is hosted by UNMAS on their website E-Mine but all

information is posted by the Secretariat. Mr Mansfield also undertook the normal range of secretariat functions to support the Chair and MASG members. A draft workplan for 2015 has also been developed in anticipation of the secretariat function continuing in 2015. Both the 'Report of the Secretariat 2014' and the draft 'MASG Secretariat Workplan 2015' are attached to these minutes. Finally Mr Mansfield noted that his work this year had been funded by the US and that the Chair had already thanked them for their support.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

6.1 Possible MASG Field Visit.

Mr Junichi Sumi, First Secretary at the Japanese Mission, said that they were floating the idea of a field visit by MASG members to see first-hand the mine action work they were funding. He indicated that the Chair of the MASG, Ambassador Okamura, wished to visit some demining operations, particularly those funded by Japan. It may be possible and efficient to combine such a visit with other MASG members, on a self-funded basis. Some MASG members had already expressed an interest in a field visit, and UNMAS has expressed its willingness to assist with the field level arrangements.

The representative of Finland said that Finland was interested in such a visit but would wish it to be to a country which had other major mine action NGO operators present. Also, Finland argued the country to be visited should be a member of the APMBC and have a demonstrated commitment to mine action.

The Chair noted the comments and said that informal consultations would continue between interested parties.

6.2 Next Meeting of the MASG.

The Chair noted that a MASG meeting was held each year in Geneva in the margins of the Annual Meeting of Mine Action National Directors and UN Advisers. The Directors of UNMAS and the GICHD confirmed that next year the National Directors meeting would be held during the week 16 – 20 February 2015. The MASG meeting has traditionally been held on the Thursday of that week, so the date of Thursday, 19 February 2015 was tentatively set as the date of the next MASG meeting – subject to confirmation nearer the date.

6.3 Any Other Business.

There were no points of other business raised at the meeting.

7. MEETING CLOSE.

The Chair thanked Mr Titov, the Director UNMAS, all the MASG members and the observers for their active participation in the meeting. He felt that there was good solidarity among the MASG and that the Group must maintain their passion and commitment to mine action.

The Chair closed the meeting at 15.15 hours.

Final version (as at 6 Nov 14)