

Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) NEWSLETTER



June - August 2017

A Two-day Consultative Workshop on the New Approaches to Anti-Vehicle Mine Clearance in Afghanistan launches in MDC

During August 15 – 16 2017, a two-day “Consultative Workshop on the New Approaches to Anti-Vehicle Mine Clearance in Afghanistan” was conducted in Mine Detection Center (MDC), Kabul. The workshop, was organized by DMAC/ UNMAS and was technically facilitated by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

During the opening of the workshop, Mr. Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Director, Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) of the State

Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs thanked the participants for their contribution to the workshop. Mr Yosufi said “ Overall, Anti – Vehicle mine make almost 50% of the legacy mine contamination in the country and we all have come here to consult on finding a functional mechanism and pragmatic solutions in order to address the Anti – Vehicle mine problem through more effective and efficient manner and to make sure that the assets and fund are allocated in a more efficient way in line with MAPA’s effort for application continual improvements”.

Mr. Mohammad Wakil- Chief of Staff, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) added that “In the current trend, innovation is part of every sector, thus the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) can also implement innovative approaches in order to achieve its goal of “Mine-Free Afghanistan by 2023”. Innovation can lead to extended levels of productivity with less use of resources and it can benefit the Programme since it’s underfunded due to various factors.



Photo by: DMAC

The total size of the area contaminated with anti-vehicle mines is 327 square kilometers which represents almost 55% of the total contamination in Afghanistan.

The workshop was well attended by thirty-four (34) staff members from DMAC/UNMAS HQ & Regional Offices and the representatives from the MAPA IPs.



ACAP III Responds to the 31 May Attack in Kabul

During morning rush hour on the 31st of May 2017, a truck bomb detonated in a busy area of Kabul killing 150 people and injuring over 300. The incident was the deadliest militant attack in Afghanistan since 2001. As described by Nargis, a mother of four who lives close to the explosion site and whose husband works at a local company, “I was so scared when I felt the walls shaking around me. I thought that it was an earthquake but it was the power of an explosion”. When news revealed that the explosion occurred close to where her husband works, Nargis hurried to a nearby hospital where she was able to identify her husband only by his foot and a letter in his pocket. Nargis has understandably struggled to cope with the loss of her husband and has suffered from insomnia and headaches and worries about her future “I am alone and do not have any one to support me. It is very difficult for a woman to live alone”.



Nargis, a mother of four has struggled to cope with the loss of her husband following the 31 May attack. She has received a relief package and psychosocial counseling from the ACAP III project to help begin her recovery process..

For victims like Nargis, the psychological trauma of losing a loved one is often compounded by worry about how they will continue to survive economically.

The Afghan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP) III*, funded by USAID and implemented by United Nations Mine Action Service, has responded rapidly to victims of the 31 May attack and other similar conflict-related incidents providing relief packages containing food and non-food items and psychosocial counseling to civilian victims. In the coming months, the project will also provide physical rehabilitation and income generation support to families. Income generation assistance seeks to help families identify a new source of sustainable income.

For the 31 May attack, ACAP III assessed 655 victims out of which 445 were found to be eligible for assistance. 428 relief packages were distributed containing food and non-food items and 394 victims have been identified for, and have started to receive, psychosocial counseling. Children in schools near the explosion have also started to receive individual and group counseling through the project and ACAP III staff will continue to follow-up on cases where children need more intensive therapy.



Photo by: UNMAS

The students of Amani High School, which was close to the site of the explosion, were among the first victims to receive counseling from ACAP III. To reach students as quickly as possible, ACAP III counselors provided group therapy sessions, followed by individual sessions for the children most affected by the incident.

To date 98 families have also been identified for income generation support. Women such as Fatima, who also lost her husband in the attack, have been grateful for the support. “Your staff were the only ones who gave the victims of the explosion a hand. You assisted us and visited our homes in person and provided us food. We are thankful to your organization for assisting us and sharing our sorrow. We hope this assistance will continue”, said Fatima.

***About ACAP III:**

The Afghan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP III) aims to mitigate the short-term and long-term impact of conflict on civilians, including victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW) by providing immediate assistance packages including food and non-food items, psychosocial counseling, physical rehabilitation support and economic reintegration packages tailored to individual needs to restore lost livelihoods and assist with recovery. The project also supports institutional capacity building to strengthen the government’s ability to meet the needs of civilian victims of conflict. ACAP III is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). The project operates throughout Afghanistan and activities are anticipated to continue until 2018. Project beneficiaries are selected based on a set eligibility criteria.

Please encourage victims of conflict to call the ACAP III hotline (0705892989) for an eligibility assessment.



Photo by: DMAC

MAPA delivers assistance to victims of flood in Shahki district of Badakhshan

On 8 July 2017, following heavy rain over the weekend, a flash flood hit Rawanak village, located in Shekay district of Badakhshan, leaving numerous people homeless or displaced.

As a result of flooding, a landslide in Dur Ab village destroyed 14 buildings, including people's houses and one mosque. In addition to this destruction, three civilians were killed and 15 others were wounded. The flood also blocked the roads and destroyed a power base in the area, which prevented the population from fleeing the area and disconnected electricity.

In response to this natural disaster, the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan deployed teams to assist the affected area and deliver first aid to the victims. These teams also helped move people from the affected area to a safer place.

Livelihood survey conducts in Takhar Province

From 7 – 18 August 2017, The Directorate of Mine Action Coordination conducted the second phase of the Mine Action & Livelihoods Survey in Takhar Province,

This survey mainly focuses on the impact of demining activities on peoples' lives, as well as the implementation of development projects in cleared areas, recognizing demining priorities based on peoples' demands and ensuring the quality of demining operations.

The survey findings show that as a result of demining activities, the residents of this province can now easily access agricultural lands, water canals, roads, schools, as well as creating the opportunity for implementing of the development projects such as building schools, residential towns, university which ultimately leads to an improved public service provision.

The Directorate of Mine Action Coordination is a national entity which is responsible for coordination and regulation of demining activities across the country and is technically supported by the United Nations Mine Action Service.



Photo by: DMAC



Photo by: DMAC

DMAC/UNMAS Delegations Visits Northern Regional Office, Mazar - e - Sharif

During 26 – 27 July 2017, DMAC/ UNMAS delegations visited northern regional office located in Mazar-e-Sharif. The aim of this visit was to monitor, review and improve the coordination function and management of Mine Action operations and enhance government support to mine action at a regional level.

During this visit, the delegation met with ANDMA provincial director and discussed the existence of obstacles to mine action at the provincial level. Mr. Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Director, Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) of the State Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs expressed his concerns about the IED and Explosive Remnants of War left in the battlefield after the fighting is ended which claims civilian lives and said” We would like that ANDMA present this issue to provincial meeting and inform the security forces to clear all the areas contaminated due to armed fighting and he also added that the ANDMA office cooperates on collecting causality data as well as helping the demining operations in this province”.

The ANDMA provincial director promised to cooperate with the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan at the provincial level and stated that Mine Action is part of our efforts for protecting of Afghan lives.



Photo by: DMAC

A nightmare behind the War

Afghanistan has been the victim of violent conflicts in the last nearly four decades. This situation has left behind a massive number of landmines and Explosive Remnants of War which are a major threat to the lives of Afghans every day. Many reports have been shown that Afghanistan is still remained as one of the most contaminated country in the world and therefore it needs more support to clear the landmines and ERW in order to give the Afghan citizens their lives back.

Khatol was not far from this threat, he lost his leg during a military ground engagement between Afghan security forces and anti-government elements at the Khost Province. It was very difficult for him to walk without a leg and had concerns about his future - "I was very chill and I could not play games with other boys. I was very upset when people called me disabled!". Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) has established a Physical Rehabilitation Centre in Farah Province to treat the victims of landmines and ERW in the country. The project is implemented by AABRAR, one of the MAPA implementing partner. After Khatol was introduced to this centre, he received physical rehabilitation services and a prosthesis and now is able to walk - "I am thankful and very happy". Said Khatol.

The existence of landmines and UXO in Afghanistan is a real threat to the lives and livelihoods of thousands of Afghan citizens. According to the UNAMA mid-year report on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflicts, during the first six months of the 2017, 365 civilians have been killed or injured by Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) and as a result of pressure-plate IEDs, 547 civilian casualties (252 deaths and 295 injured), a 22 per cent increase compared to the same period in 2016 and a 42 per cent increase in civilian deaths.



Photo by: AABRAR

Khatol, a ten year boy who lost his leg during a milliatry clash between Afghan securtiy forces and the anti government elements in Khost province.

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