

Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) NEWSLETTER

April - May 2017

Afghanistan Donor and Implementing Partners Coordination Workshop for Mine Action, Geneva



The Afghanistan Donor and Implementing Partners Coordination Workshop for Mine Action was held from 27th to 29th March 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland. The workshop was hosted by the United States Department of State, Office for Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) and Afghanistan's Ministry for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs, and it was facilitated by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

The three-day workshop brought together a total of 91 participants, comprising of key authorities and representatives from the Government of Afghanistan, MAPA donors, implementing partners, civil society organizations and the workshop facilitators.

Two days of formal meetings took place, with presentations and panel discussions focused on the context in which mine action takes place in Afghanistan and the challenges involved in meeting Afghanistan's mine action targets goals – in particular, the completion of clearance by 2023. The entire third day was devoted to informal bilateral meetings among IPs and donors. Three thematic working groups on Anti-Vehicle Mine Clearance, Clearance of PPIEDs and Planning for Residual Contamination also met during the second half of the third day.

On the evening of the last day of the workshop, a public panel was organized entitled «No Foot Forward: How Explosive Weapons Continue to Drive Displacement in Afghanistan». During the event, H.E. Minister Wais Barmak gave the keynote address, followed by interventions from Afghans involved in development and victim assistance and a representative from an NGO supporting refugees.

In conclusion, participants were generally pleased with the event and its structure. It was noted that such a forum for coordination is extremely useful to ensure that the needs of mine-affected countries are more fully understood, and that donors are informed in greater detail about the mine action performance being achieved using their resources.



SIX DISTRICTS OF BADAKHSHAN PROVINCE DECLARED FREE OF KNOWN MINES AND EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR



On 4th April 2017, The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan passed another landmark towards the Ottawa Treaty compliance by successfully declaring six districts of Badakhshan Province free of known mines and explosive remnants of war contamination, during a ceremony held in Badakhshan Provincial Governor Office. The ceremony also commemorated the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action.

Afghanistan has been the victim of violent conflict throughout its history, which has left the land plagued with landmines and UXO, disrupting the social, economic and environmental development of the country. The clearance of these six districts, Khwahan, Raghistan, Kohistan, Arghanjkhwa, Tagab (Kishimi Bala) and Ishkashim was carried out by HALO Trust, FSD and MCPA, with the financial support of Australia, Ireland, Norway and PATRIP.

The demining operations in these six districts made over 481,086 square meters of land safe for productive use; unearthing 23 anti personnel mines, and 15,752 different types of ERW. Further more, a total of 9,034 people received mine risk education in these districts. Additionally, in recent years, over 700 villages have been surveyed in to assess potentially contaminated areas.

Alhaj Dr Gul Mohammad Baidar, Deputy Governor of Badakhshan province, remarked his pleasure and appreciation for these mine action activities at the event, and added, "The aim of the Afghan Government is to have an Afghanistan freed of all

mines and ERW contaminations, so that its people can live in a safe environment, contributing to growth, progress and development of the country.

We are very thankful to the United Nations Mine Action Service, the international community and donors, who have supported the Mine Action programme of Afghanistan and are committed to continue supporting, we hope they can be with us until finishing the job. We are also grateful to the de-miners for their hard work, indeed they are the real heroes because they sacrifice their lives to save others."

Sayed Abdullah Dehqan, ANDMA Director in Badakhshan Province, also spoke at this event and highlighted the successful and ongoing transition of mine action coordination functions from the United Nations (UNMAS) to governmental body of DMAC/ ANDMA.

The event was well attended by mine action partners, provincial officials, District Governors and heads of key governmental authorities and representatives.

Now that the hazards have been removed, this area can be used to meet the essential needs of people, such as the development of health clinics, schools and roads, or the ability to conduct agriculture practices and produce livelihood options, overall, directly benefiting a significant number of people living in the wider area.



Photo by: DMAC

Mine Risk Education ,Herat

All modern-day armed conflicts have left behind the problem of explosive remnants of war, a lingering issue that lasts years and even decades after the conflict has ended. Afghanistan is no exception. During the long decades of war, all parties in the conflict have used ERWs, land mines and other explosive remnants of war, which pose a major threat to the lives of millions of Afghan citizens across the country. The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan, using unprecedented measurements, was able to initiate a programme called Mine Risk Education (MRE) to overcome such problems and to protect men, women, children as well as their livelihoods from such dangers.

Recently, the UNMAS delegations visited the MRE projects based in the Herat province of Afghanistan, which are being coordinated by one of the MAPA implementing partners and are funded by the Government of the Republic of Korea, to make sure that the project is going well and meets the requirements of the programme.

MRE does not only assist the beneficiaries to identify and protect themselves from mine and ERW dangers, but it also plays a role in the planning and prioritization of mine action by mobilizing mine-affected communities to report dangerous areas and helping to identify mine survivors and their needs.

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan has provided Mine Risk Education to 23,754,609 people since the start of the programme in 1989.

ACAP III Conducted a Workshop for DoLSAMD Representatives

On 12-13 April, the Afghan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP III) conducted a two-day workshop in Kabul with over 70 provincial directors and managers from the Department of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled (DoLSAMD). Representatives from all 34 provinces discussed the ACAP III eligibility criteria, reviewed implementation progress, gave project feedback and helped to identify provincial implementation issues.

DoLSAMD is a key ACAP III partner; representatives attend assistance distributions and ACAP III works with the parent ministry (MoLSAMD) on capacity building initiatives to better serve victims of conflict.

ACAP III is a project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) that provides immediate and short-term assistance to civilian victims of conflict in Afghanistan.



Photo by: UNMAS, Afghanistan

National Mine Action Strategic Plan Annual Review

The Afghan National Mine Action Strategic Plan 1395-99 (NMAASP) was approved by State Minister for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Affairs Wais Ahmad Barmak in April 2016. The document is intended to provide strategic direction to the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) over a five-year period. As part of the monitoring and evaluation system established in the NMAASP, a technical review committee was formed in order to assist the Directorate of Mine Action Coordination (DMAC) in tracking progress towards strategic objectives; considering any significant trends; and assessing their implications for the strategic plan. The committee has a mandate to provide ongoing support to the NMAASP Steering Committee, including assessing whether any adjustments are necessary and making formal recommendations. To this end, the committee meets annually to conduct a formal review. This document is an account of its first annual review meeting.



DMAC chaired the review meeting, with UNMAS acting as co-chair. The GICHD was involved in the development of the NMAASP and as such was invited to attend as an external observer.

The DMAC/UNMAS planning department manager provided an overview of the day-to-day monitoring process that has been developed during the first year of implementation:

- o Following the first two monthly technical committee meetings in a bigger group with DMAC, UNMAS and IPs participating, DMAC/UNMAS elected to establish a smaller group that would meet on a weekly basis in order to discuss day-to-day progress:
- o The group is made up of division heads working in the same compound, thereby reducing travel and staff time for IPs.
- o The group has been meeting regularly since August 2016.
- o Originally, it was chaired by the Planning and Programme Manager; in the future, it will be chaired by the UNMAS Chief of Staff.
- o A monitoring framework, based on the Objectives and Action Plans Matrix, has been developed and is being used to record progress made:
- o The framework is a live document that records those objectives and action plans that are completed, in progress, and planned.

Overall, there are 4 main goals supported by 33 objectives followed by 111 action plans. The committee is focusing on implementing action plans that will lead to achieving related objectives and goals. During the first year, work on 12 out of 111 action plans is completed/achieved, which equates to 11 % of all action plans completed, and there are 43 action plans in progress with some of them occurring regularly (monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.). These in-progress action plans occurred in the first year, but we cannot mark these action plans as complete as continued action is still needed. During the first year of action plan implementation, the committee noticed some challenges and found solutions. It also suggested a number of ways to improve strategy implementation and avoid facing such obstacles in the future.



TURMAC/ SNMAC and NPA envoys visit from the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan had the honour to welcome delegations from the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC), Sudan National Mine Action Centre (SNMAC) and the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) during May 2017, in Kabul. The aim of this visit for TURMAC and SNMAC delegations was to learn about the Afghanistan Mine Action Programme as it is one of the biggest and most successful programme in the world in order for them to apply the knowledge they gain from the visit in their own mine action sector. While the NPA envoy was coming to assess the context of the cooperation within Afghanistan and MAPA as a sector and to begin a new chapter of collaboration with the programme.

The two side visit was mainly focused on mine action management, processes and system established here and the structure and governance of mine action since the start of the Programme.



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