



Mine Action Round Up of 2008: Looking Ahead to the Ottawa Treaty

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan has made significant strides forward during the last year. In the last year alone, 49km² of minefield has been cleared and over 81,000 anti-personnel mines, almost 100 anti-tank mines and 2.5 million explosive remnants have been destroyed. Over 500 communities have had their land freed from the threat of mines and made available for them to use to grow crops, graze their animals and build on again. In order to continue the reduction in casualty rates, there have also been significant efforts made in mine risk education, with 1.5 million Afghans receiving training as well as advocacy for the rights of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. In all these ways, it is evident that mine action is proving an essential first step to development in Afghanistan.

In 2003, Afghanistan became a signatory to the Ottawa Treaty, also known as the Mine Ban Treaty, which is supported nationally by the Afghanistan Compact. This means the country has committed to clearing all mines by 2013. We have recently calculated, incorporating all known factors, the resources needed to achieve this. The total required (bilateral and multilateral) to fund the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan to reach this target is just over \$500m over the next five years. The programme has the technical expertise and ability to complete the task, but the current resources are inadequate and it urgently needs an increase in funding to be able to meet these targets.

In 2008, Afghanistan also became a signatory to the Cluster Munitions Ban. Although due to the work of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan, cluster munitions are not a major threat in the country now, signing the ban signifies the determination of the country to become, and remain, mine-free permanently.



About the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan

Mine action in Afghanistan encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, survey and clearance, stockpile destruction, mine risk education (MRE) and Victim Assistance (VA). Mine action activities reach out to almost every corner of the country. Within this context, the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations are currently working in partnership to implement this vast undertaking through joint responsibility for the coordination, including planning, management, and quality assurance, of all mine action activities in Afghanistan.

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