



MINE ACTION PROGRAMME FOR AFGHANISTAN NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2008



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES CELEBRATED IN STYLE THROUGHOUT AFGHANISTAN

The celebration for the 2008 International Day of Persons with Disabilities was a successful cooperation of the Government of Afghanistan, UN and civil society. The celebration reflecting the theme of 'dignity and justice for all of us' included participation of Government representatives, NGOs and most importantly of all, many Afghans living with disabilities. Events were held in Kabul and also in various regional centres throughout the country.

The day began with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by the National Anthem, led by a group of children singing the Anthem in Afghan Sign Language.

Next, the Government officials, His Excellency Mr Wasil Noor, Deputy Minister for Social Affairs and Her Excellency Mrs Soraya Paikan, Deputy Minister for Martyrs and Disabled gave speeches which highlighted the rights of persons with disabilities and the Government statues which promote this including the Afghanistan National Disability Action plan and the National Disability Law, soon to be signed by the president.

Two films were then shown, highlighting both the positive and negative aspects of life for persons living with disabilities in Afghanistan.



Dr Haider Reza, from the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan and representing the United Nations and MAPA reminded the audience of the reason that we celebrate this day each year, specifically to:

- * Promote an understanding of disability issues.
- * mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.
- * increase awareness of benefits of integrating persons with disabilities into every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

He also encouraged each person to think about what they could do personally to contribute ensuring dignity and justice for their fellow Afghans.

GOVERNMENT SIGNS CLUSTER MUNITION BAN

The Mine Action Centre of Afghanistan (MACA) supports the Government of Afghanistan's decision to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions, an international treaty that prohibits the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of cluster munitions and provides support for victims, which opened for signature in Oslo, Norway on Thursday, 4th December.

Dr Haider Reza, Programme Director, Mine Action Centre of Afghanistan, said: "We applaud the Government of Afghanistan on its decision to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We, alongside other partners who desire a mine-free Afghanistan, have been active in advocating for this.

As a result of clearance work coordinated by the MACA, most of the cluster munitions in Afghanistan have now been removed and destroyed. However, by signing this convention, we are affirming that we believe that Afghanistan can be freed from the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war."



Mine Risk Education for students carried out by MACA implementing partner mobile mini circus for children in eastern Nangarhar province.

UPDATE ON COMMUNITY BASED DEMINING (CBD) PROJECTS

Three Community Based Demining (CBD) projects are underway in Kunar and Helmand and Uruzgan provinces.

In total, 235 jobs have been created and through salaries over US \$50,000 will be invested in these communities on a monthly bases. They will clear a total of 3,237,807m² contaminated area in their localities.

Local offices have been established in each province and after survey, completion of training and provision of required equipments, clearance operation started in Kunar province, clearance in Uruzgan and Helmand province will be begin nearly in Jan 09.

During operations in Kunar 51,465 m² area has been cleared in Marawara districts where 1,089 Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were collected and destroyed and 1,735 community members received Mine Risk Education.



New Community Demining Personnel in Uruzgan Province

MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ottawa Treaty:

Clear all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 2013;
 Destroy all known anti-personnel mine stockpiles by 2007; and
 Provide mine risk education to Afghans and assist mine survivors.

Afghanistan Compact:

Land area contaminated by mines and ERW will be reduced by 70% by March 2011;
 All stockpiled anti-personnel mines will be located and destroyed by March 2007.

SUCSESSES OF MINE CLEARANCE IN AFGHANISTAN AS OF DECEMBER 2008

Destruction of all known stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines:

The Government of Afghanistan successfully fulfilled its Article 4 of Ottawa Treaty and Afghanistan Compact benchmark to destroy all known stockpiled anti-personnel landmines in its territory in October 2007.

AFGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS TOWARD MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS

70% reduction of mine/ERW contaminated areas by 2011 & clearance of all known anti-personnel landmines by 2013:

	Adjusted Baseline at 31 December 2007*	Clearance Processed from 31 January to Date	Compact Target of 70% of Hazards by 1389 **	Progress toward Target at end-November/ 2008	Treaty Target of 100% of Hazards at 1391	Progress toward Target from 2006 to end-Nov,08
Number of Hazards to be Cleared	5,973	3,246	4,181	78%	5,973	54%
Estimated Area of Hazard Clearance	852 km²	361 km²	596 km²	61%	852 km²	42%

***NOTE ON ADJUSTED BASELINE:** THE BASELINE FIGURE HAD TO BE ADJUSTED AT THE END OF 2007 AS DATA SETS THAT WOULD HAVE AFFECTED THE ORIGINAL BENCHMARK WERE KEPT IN SEPARATE DATABASES. WHEN THE DATA SETS WERE MERGED A HIGH POINT OF 852 SQ KM OF HAZARDOUS AREA AND 5,973 KNOWN HAZARDS WAS ESTABLISHED.

****NOTE ON ADJUSTED COMPACT TARGETS:** TARGET IS TO REDUCE BY 70% THUS TOTAL ADJUSTED HAZARDS ARE 4,181 & ADJUSTED AREA 596 SQKM.

KEYS TO MEETING THE BENCHMARKS FOR MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

- * Sustaining existing capacities
- * Expansion of Community-Based Demining
- * Programming through focused projects
- * Introduction of competitive tendering
- * Enhanced fund raising to ensure resources to meet benchmarks

CHALLENGES TOWARDS BENCHMARKS: The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan must increase multilateral and bilateral funding to mine action to achieve the targets set by the Ottawa Treaty and the Afghanistan Compact. We have calculated that this requires just over \$500m over the next five years. Essentially, funding needs to be coherent to enable effective delivery; this means funds must be received before the beginning of the year. If the funds are provided, the MAPA has the technical capability to achieve the targets.

TRANSITION OF MINE ACTION RESPONSIBILITY TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

The Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA) supported by the United Nations and the Government of Afghanistan through its Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)/Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) have formed a partnership within the MACA offices to plan, coordinate and ensure the quality of all mine action activities in Afghanistan.

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

- * Mine Risk Education integrated into Ministry of Education in June 2007
- * MACA / DMC merger completed May 2008
- * Victim Assistance activities integrated into Ministries of Public Health & Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled in June 2007
- * Second Inter-ministerial Body for Mine Action meeting hosted at ANDMA-July 2008
- * Inter-Ministerial Body for Mine Action established December 2007
- * Third Inter-ministerial Body for Mine Action meeting August 2008
- * DMC designated lead Government Focal Point for Mine Action during first Inter-ministerial Body meeting in January 2008
- * Introduction of MRE monitoring mechanisms to MoE – regional activities August 2008
- * MACA / DMC partnership agreed February 2008
- * First Inter-ministerial task force for Disability meeting hosted by the MoLSAMD – October 2008.
- * DMC relocation to the MACA completed in April 2008.
- * Afghanistan national disability action plan approved by MoLSAMD – October 2008.

MINE AND ERW INCIDENTS JANUARY– DECEMBER 2008

Month	18 Years and Younger		Over 18 Years		Unknown Age/Gender	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Jan	29	1	27	2	1	60
Feb	32	11	38	2	1	84
March	46	2	36	2	2	88
April	47	5	27	2	0	81
May	42	12	10	2	0	66
June	26	4	25	3	1	59
July	20	10	21	1	0	52
August	24	6	43	7	0	80
September	23	3	15	1	1	43
October	11	0	8	2	1	22
November	25	0	13	0	0	38
December	16	1	5	0	0	22
Grand Total	341	55	268	24	7	695

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME IN 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 currently are 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.

Afghans are living in 2,082 contaminated communities throughout the country. An estimated 689 square kilometers of land containing 5,384⁽¹⁾ hazardous areas with different types of -

anti-personnel and anti-tank mines or littered with countless pieces of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) still requires clearance⁽²⁾. Seventy-five percent of these impacted communities are found in 12 of the country's 34 provinces⁽³⁾.



JANUARY – DECEMBER 2008 – MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENT SUMMARY

- * 3, 246 hazardous areas (361,000 000 m²) were cleared, cancelled or closed
- * 503 communities declared impact free
- * 81,984 AP mines, 917 AT mines, and 2,571,163 ERW destroyed
- * 624,038 women and girls and 917,396 men and boys received MRE throughout the country

THE MINE ACTION STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

The strategy for mine action is based on the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's vision of a country free from landmines and ERW, where people and communities live in a safe environment conducive to national development, and where landmine and ERW survivors are fully integrated in the society and thus have their rights and needs recognized and fulfilled⁽⁴⁾.

To turn this vision into reality, the government has established benchmark obligations within its national development strategy, the Afghanistan Compact, which are in accordance with its obligations under the Ottawa Convention.

¹The number of hazards is higher than the original benchmark figure noted on this report, because hazards become more defined through survey. A suspected hazardous area is likely to be recorded as one or more smaller minefield hazards after the survey process is completed.

²Data is as appears in the nationwide contamination database on 15 December 2008 and encompasses field activities and assessments that occurred through the end of December 2008. Figures including victim data will fluctuate in the future as additional data is received from the field offices and implementing partners

³ These provinces are Kabul, Parwan, Baghlan, Ghazni, Wardak, Kandahar, Herat, Nangarhar, Paktia, Takhar, Balkh, and Samangan.

⁴ Mine Action in Afghanistan, the Way Ahead, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Saur 1385 (May 2006).

MAPA is supported by :

