

UNMAS and DMC at the 13th Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty

The 13th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty (13MSP) took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 2nd to 5th December 2013. Governments, international organisations and civil society representatives gather annually to discuss progress in implementing the Mine Ban Treaty (MBT).

This year's MSP featured a side event, 'Gender mainstreaming in Mine Action projects: the role of donors', organised by the Netherlands and the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP). This



Ms. Abigail Hartley—Programme Manager for UNMAS Afghanistan is stating to the Parties.

event was borne out of the desire for increased cooperation between donors and implementing partners (IPs) when it comes to evaluating projects from a gender perspective.

Ms. Abigail Hartley, Programme Manager at UNMAS Afghanistan, emphasised the role of donors in fostering change beyond their financial function: "The role of UNMAS is to lead, coordinate, influence, promote, support, and raise awareness." Ms. Hartley spoke of the UNMAS commitment to gender, referencing the 2013-2018 Mine Action Strategy, which calls for age- and gender-sensitive data collection and service provision across all mine action pillars.

2013 saw UNMAS Afghanistan and the GMAP develop a fruitful partnership. UNMAS Afghanistan determined that, if partners were to be expected to mainstream gender, this had to be accompanied by training and the development of a common strategy. In November 2013, the GMAP conducted workshops in Afghanistan, the result of which was a gender mainstreaming strategy for the MAPA, which is to be rolled out in early 2014.

As part of its own strategy, UNMAS Afghanistan has established some key measures to encourage IPs to mainstream gender,

including the gender marker system. UNMAS recently analysed all of its IPs' proposals against this system. "The results were good, but there is always room for improvement," emphasised Ms. Hartley. "We will use this data as a baseline to measure our improvement as the gender mainstreaming strategy unfolds."

The Director of the Department of Mine Clearance (DMC), Mr. Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi expressed his Government's gratitude to UNMAS and the donor community for their support to the MAPA and had some good news for donors in the coming years. Recent trials have shown that the MAPA can achieve higher productivity rates than was initially anticipated in the Extension Request: "Based on these revised productivity rates, we recalculated the budget for our 10-year workplan, bringing the overall cost down from USD 544 million to USD 434 million."

Mr. Yosufi also noted that funding to the MAPA in 2013 had fallen by USD 24 million, a drop of around 25% since 2012. While the workplan covers 10 years, he said, the problem could be solved sooner if donors maintained support: "The good news is that the equipment and the experienced capacity are still available on the ground; all we need is the financial support to deliver."

Exchange visit on VA and disability to Cambodia

In November 2013, the Mine Risk Education & Victim Assistance (MRE/VA) Department of the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) visited the Kingdom of Cambodia along with their counterparts from the Government of Afghanistan. Like Afghanistan, Cambodia is also affected by mines, which result in disability and the loss of human lives. Thanks to the financial support of MACCA and with the help of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), the exchange created a platform to share experience and knowledge on victim assistance and mine risk education.

The main purpose of the visit by representatives of the Government of Afghanistan and the MACCA was to discuss victim assistance and disability issues. With this in mind, the delegates and their hosts discussed the integration of landmine and ERW survivors and other people with disabilities (PWDs) within the CMAA, Victim Assistance Authorities and other governmental networks. The visit also aimed to strengthen the capacities of Afghanistan's government representatives in relation to victim assistance, disability programmes, socio-economic and community-based activities, physical rehabilitation, education and training programmes. Conversely, the representatives from the MACCA and the Afghan government also had the opportunity to share their experience of victim assistance and disability in Afghanistan.

(Continues on Page 2)...

MAPA is supported by the following donors to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action administrated by UNMAS:

Australia, Canada, EU, Finland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Oman, UAE, and USA.

MAPA is also supported by the following bilateral donors:

Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Government of Afghanistan, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, PATRIP, Sweden, UN OCHA, UAE, UK, and USA.

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The Afghanistan delegation shared their experience with the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation, the Ministry of Education, the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics as well as civil society. Field visits were undertaken in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap to put the victim assistance and disability issues that had been discussed in context.

The delegation heard how Cambodia had strengthened victim and disability assistance in the country by creating an authority under the Council of Ministers, which is led directly by top government officials. The Cambodian government is also assuming responsibility for some of the physical rehabilitation and inclusive education activities from NGOs and integrating them into the government structure. This initiative will enhance the sustainability and national ownership of disability services.

"It was a good exchange visit to learn how Cambodian colleagues integrated VA in their mine action authority and encouraged good coordination with other government agencies and civil society to ensure the rights of survivors are fully included in all programmes and situations. The Afghanistan delegation can learn a lot from Cambodia and put this into practice in their disability rights programmes," said Mr. Samim Hashimi, Head of the Delegation.

CASE STUDY: Nine Martyred Children:

It is not a fairy tale; it is a story of war and its effects. This is the story of Dawolatzei village, Chaperhar district in Nangarhar province. On 18th December 2012, Dawolatzei village witnessed a bloody explosion, which caused the deaths of nine innocent children. Abdul Jalil, a resident of the village, recounted the incident to us.

The living standard of people living in Dawolatzei village is very low. People are mostly engaged in agriculture and livestock. Since all the people are poor, children often bring firewood from the fields and hills close by to heat homes and for cooking purposes. Under this custom, two innocent children by the names of Nazifa and Marzia, daughters of Abdul Jalil, along with seven other girls went to bring firewood. While collecting firewood, all the children were having fun; they were laughing and shouting and enjoying their innocent time. Meanwhile, a hatchet of one of the children hit an anti-tank mine while she was cutting firewood. With a loud sound and black smoke, the explosion silenced the sound of children. In few seconds, there was no sign of joy and happiness, there was no sign of a children's playground. It looked like a battlefield. There were bodies, blood and death everywhere.

After the funeral of the innocent martyred children, the villagers decided to remove the plague of mines and explosive threats

from the area. Together, they sent a letter to the District Office, requesting mine clearance agencies to visit their village and clear the hazards. The request made its way to the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA). The NGO Mine Detection Centre (MDC) is now working on clearing the area. Up to now, 73,350 square meters has been cleared of mines and other explosives. MDC has found four anti-tank (AT) mines and four explosive remnants of war (ERW). Most of the people of Dawolatzei are now out of danger and are living in a prosperous area.



Graves of Martyred Children

Quote of the Month

Alexandra Dawes— Former Program Manager at Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Australian Aid (AusAID) - Afghanistan Office:

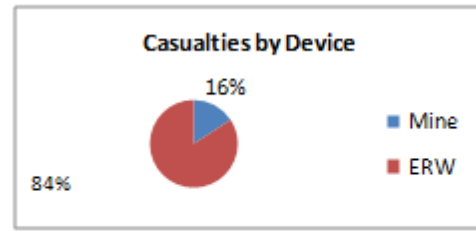
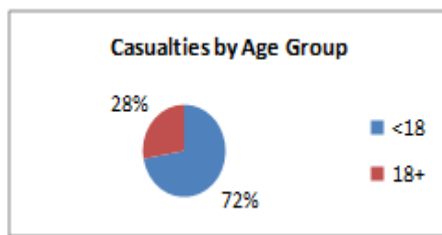
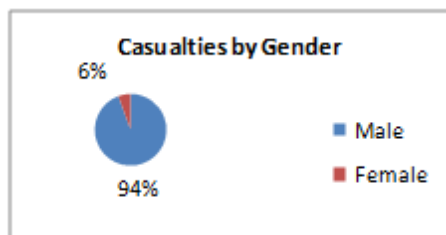
"It has been an absolute pleasure to work with UNMAS and MACCA. Among the many development programs here in Afghanistan, I have always found the success of MACCA to be inspiring. And that success is only due to the passion and dedication of the MACCA staff."



Alexandra Dawes at Afghanistan

CASUALTIES DURING DECEMBER 2013

During this month, 32 civilian casualties due to Mine and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were recorded in Afghanistan.



MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

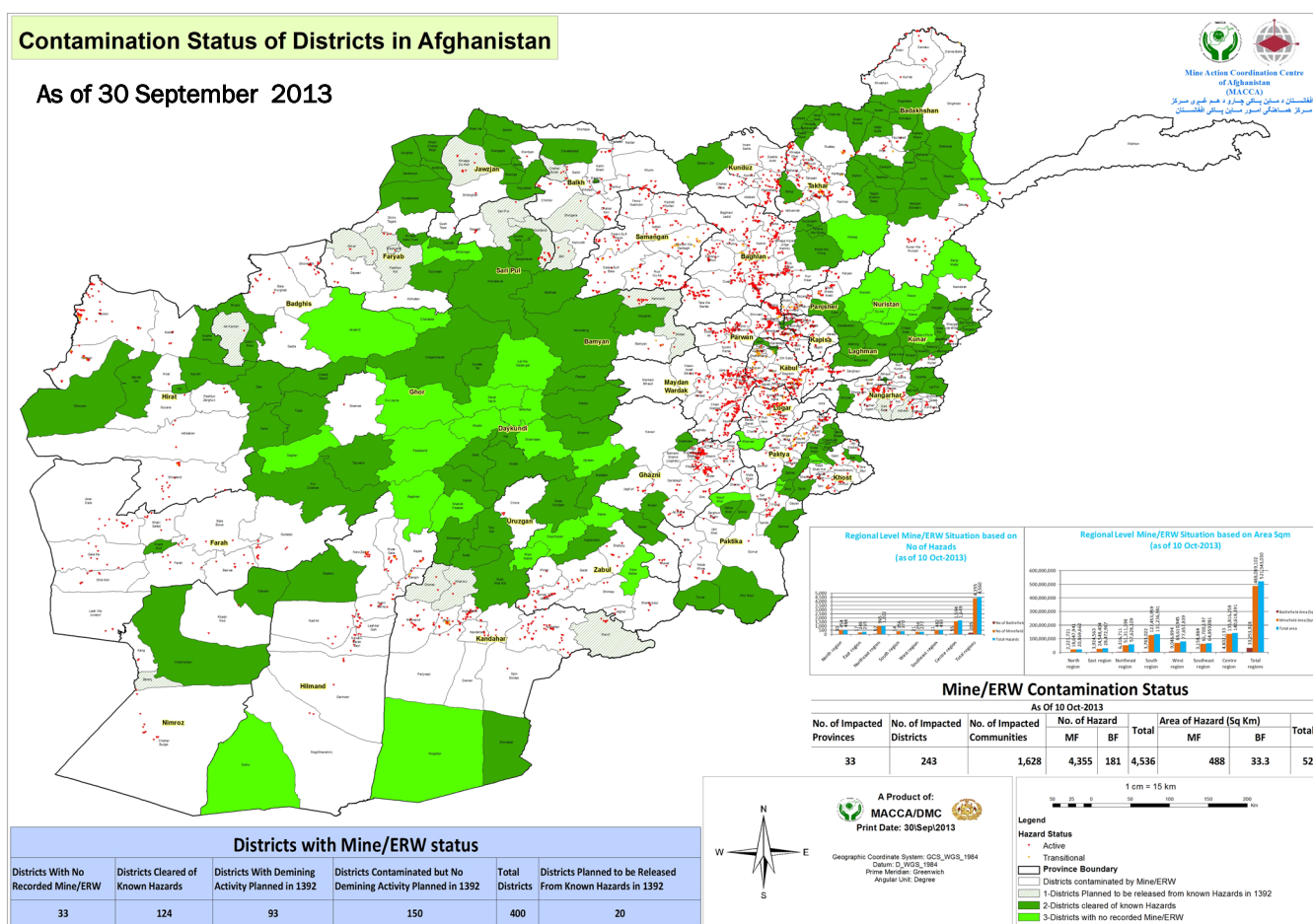
Ottawa Convention:

As part of its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, Afghanistan aimed to clear all emplaced anti-personnel (AP) mines by 2013; destroy all known AP mine stockpiles by 2007; provide mine risk education and assist mine survivors. To note, the Ottawa Convention is about the removal of AP mines, and not of anti-tank (AT) mines or ERW. However it is equally important to ensure that other hazards are not forgotten whilst the focus is on meeting the Ottawa Convention's obligations. In March 2012, the Afghan Government submitted a request for a ten-year extension of the deadline to remove all AP mines by 2023. All AP mine stockpiles have already been destroyed. This request was assessed by 10 members of secretariat at the end of November 2012, where all parties accepted the Afghanistan's request. The current baseline and progress is shown in the benchmark table below. In this table "Hazards" represents number of hazardous areas and "Area" represents the area of hazards in square kilometers.

Hazard type	Baseline April 2013		Previously unreported hazards, up to end of November 2013		Resurvey results up to end of Nov 2013	Current target as of end of November 2013		Hazards processed from April to end Nov 2013		Remaining hazards at the end of November 2013		Progress at the end of Nov 2013 against current target	
	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Change	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area
	a	b	c	d	e	f (a+c)	g (b+d+e)	h	i	j	k	l (% of a & h)	m (% of b & i)
AP + (AP,AT,ERW mixed)	3439	266.4	416	21.7	-1.3	3,855	286.8	825	39.5	3,030	247.2	21.4	13.79
AT + ERW	1248	252.1	189	20.4	-3.6	1,437	268.8	298	32.0	1,139	236.8	20.74	11.89
BF	179	33.5	88	58.3	0.8	267	92.6	53	8.1	214	84.5	19.85	8.76
Total	4866	551.9	693	100.4	-4.1	5,559	648.2	1,176	79.6	4,383	568.6	21.15	12.28

Contamination Status of Districts in Afghanistan

As of 30 September 2013



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1392 SO FAR

- * 17,393 anti-personnel mines, 632 anti-tank mines, and 581,690 ERW destroyed.
- * 221 communities cleared of known mines and ERW.
- * 232,634 women and girls, and 272,015 men and boys received Mine/ERW risk education throughout the country.

