



MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN (MAPA) NEWSLETTER: FEBRUARY 2013



JAPAN PROVIDES 3.5 MILLION DOLLARS TO SUPPORT MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

The Japanese Government donated 3.5 million US dollars to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action which will be used for the UN Mine Action Service Program in Afghanistan. The contribution will enable 36 minefields to be cleared directly benefiting over 11,500 Afghans and 144 communities for the removal of Explosive Remnants of War. Work will be conducted in the provinces of Samangan, Baghlan, Parwan, and Kandahar.

"This generous contribution of the people of Japan will bring us closer to an Afghanistan that is free from the threats of landmines and other explosive remnants of war," said Mohammad Sediq Rashid, Chief of Operation and OIC of the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan.

Abigail Hartley, the Programme Manager of the UN Mine Action Service Program in Afghanistan, further added, "The much welcomed and appreciated contribution by



Above: Mohammad Sediq Rashid Chief of Operations and OIC of MACCA

Japan is very timely as it will contribute to the delivery of high priority projects of the first year's work plan under Afghanistan's Ottawa Treaty Extension Request. The support will save lives, contribute to stability and make land safe, enabling socio-economic development to take place. Continuing support is needed though to ensure that the Afghanistan is mine free by 2023."

Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Director of the Department of Mine Clearance saying, "On behalf of the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan I greatly thank the people and Government of Japan for their generous and continual contributions in support of Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan. Japan continues to remain as one of the most important partners for Afghanistan and within the last three years (1389, 1390 & 1391) has provided over USD 34 million in support of mine action in Afghanistan. Financial support of Japan to mine action has significantly contributed in the process of landmines and ERW clearance in Afghanistan."

Japan is the second largest donor to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and has significantly supported the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan for many years. Through the provision of \$110 million since 1991, Japanese funding has contributed considerably to the success of the programme which has cleared over 20,000 hazardous areas, destroyed over 1 million anti-personnel mines and over 14 million items of ERW. The accident rate has dropped from over 2,000 people killed and injured in 2001 to 315 in 2012.

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

Australia, Austria, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Netherlands, Oman, UAE, UK and USA.

MAPA is also supported by the following bilateral donors:

Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Government of Afghanistan, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, UAE, United Kingdom and USA.

WITHDRAWAL OF THE COALITION FORCES FROM THEIR BASE IN KOHI SAFI, RESULTING IN DEATHS AND INJURIES

On January 26, 2013, as a result of the withdrawal of coalition forces from Kohi Safi district, Parwan province, Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) left behind in the local vicinity caused an explosion.. There were eight casualties; three people were killed on the spot and five others were seriously wounded. Almost immediately, the local community contacted MACCA via its hotline system.

The hotline number, +93 (0) 708 606060, is available 24 hours a day 7 days a week and works throughout the country; it allows reporting the existence of mines and UXO, incidents and also complaints on the delivery of mine action services. It is monitored and managed by MACCA.

After receiving the phone call from a resident informing MACCA of the existence of UXO in their neighborhood and the explosion that had happened that day, the MACCA Kabul Regional Office appointed one of its operations assistants to visit the area and do an assessment and investigation of the accident. During this visit, Mr. Lutfullah, a villager shared, "In this place coalition forces had their military base for around three years, occupying a huge area next to the District Governor's office". He added, "During this time period, no one was allowed to walk nearby their base, and they had even declared 100 meters area of around their camp as a no go zone, saying anyone getting close to the camp will be shot down without any warning".



UXO left behind by coalition forces in Kohi Safi

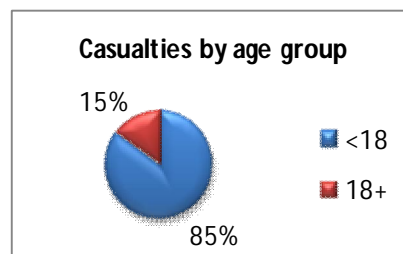
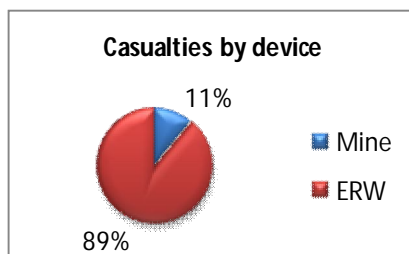
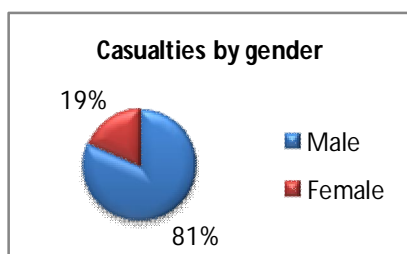
Lutfullah further adds, "These restrictions had made our lives quite difficult, as we had to walk all over the other side of the military base (a long distance) for obtaining food, collecting woods, grazing animals, and visiting relatives who were living other side of the base. Although, after the coalition forces left our district, we were very happy and begun a normal life back again; but regrettably that was the time when another catastrophe happened - an UXO explosion left behind by coalition forces resulted into three deaths and five injuries."

After discussing the assessment findings, within MACCA and with the MAPA implementing partners, it was decided to perform clearance in the area and conduct risk education for its people. Finishing the formalities and processing its paper work, on Feb 18th the ATC EOD-06 team was deployed and is now clearing the area and ARCS M/ERW risk education team is undertaking awareness sessions to the villagers. During the first week of their work the ATC EOD team found and destroyed 200 UXO as well as marking the remaining danger areas. So far, they have completed 12% of the work. The ARCS M/ERW risk education teams were also able to conduct 6 sessions, training 120 community members including children and the work continues.

On Feb 25th a staff member of the mine action program asked a villager, named Ashoquallah, about the progress of the ongoing demining and awareness activities, where he replied, "The first few days of the demining operation is having a great impact on our lives. Now, we can use the areas declared safe by the mine action teams without any doubt, and we haven't had any other accident in the area considering the amount of the problem here. MRE team has also helped us a lot, from now on most of our children understand the danger of mines and UXO."

CASUALTIES IN FEBRUARY 2013

In **January 2013**, there were 27 casualties due to Mine/ERW recorded in Afghanistan (data as of January 2013).



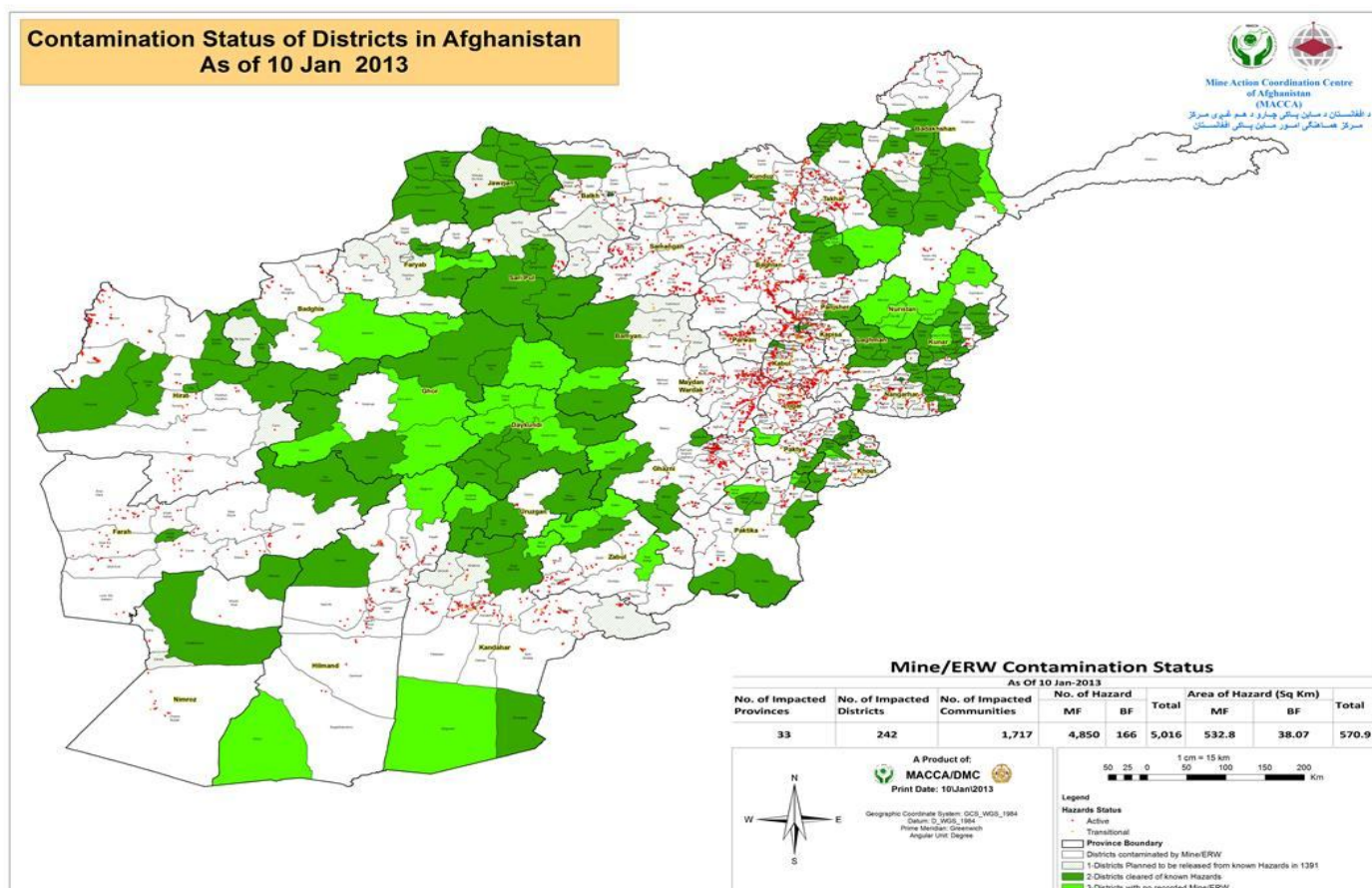
MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

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 the other hazards are not forgotten whilst the focus is on meeting the Ottawa Convention obligations. In March 2012, the Government of Afghanistan applied for 10-year extension of its deadline to clear all AP mines by 2023. All AP mine stockpiles have already been destroyed.

BENCHMARK TABLE - FEBRUARY 2013

	Baseline		New Hazard		Hazard Processed		Progress		Remaining Hazard	
	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	% of Hazards	% of Area	Hazards	Area
(AP,AT ,ERW mixed)	9,236	722,228,545	16	-702,932	5,777	456,889,931	62.55	63.26	3,459	265,338,614
AT + ERW	5,104	642,160,872	17	1,714,096	3,829	384,281,474	75.02	59.84	1,275	257,879,398
Total	14,340	1,364,389,417	33	1,011,164	9,606	841,171,405	66.99	61.65	4,734	523,218,012



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN YEAR 1392 SO FAR (February 2013)

- * 23,906 AP mines, 2,109 AT mines, and 848,929 ERW destroyed.
- * 313 communities cleared of mines and ERW.
- * 281,372 women and girls and 318,137 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

