

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN

NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 2011



NEW DIRECTOR OF ANDMA VISITS MACCA

The newly appointed director of Afghanistan's Natural Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), Mr. Dayem Kakar, visited MACCA to be introduced to the Mine Action Programme. The Department of Mine Clearance (DMC), the government focal point for mine action, is a sub-division of ANDMA. MACCA is supporting the capacity building of DMC, to enable the eventual transition of mine action to a national authority.

Both ANDMA and MACCA directors spoke about the importance and effectiveness of working together. Thanking MACCA, Mr. Dayem Kakar said: "We are happy to have MACCA supporting us and building the capacity of the DMC."

In another initiative, to promote better coordination between government ministries, MACCA organized a briefing for 11 focal points from different ministries. Attendees included Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Border and Tribal Affairs. The focal points were briefed on the MAPA structure, strategy and goals. All ministries agreed that before starting any humanitarian or developmental projects, they will consult MACCA to help them ensure Mine Action is considered in any plan.

UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT SUPPORTS MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

The UN Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy expressed her concern over the current situation of children affected by mines and UXOs during a recent visit to Kabul. As part of her visit, the Representative met children attending Mine Risk Education sessions at MACCA Implementing Partner OMAR. The major threat to children in terms of landmines and other explosive remnants of war in Afghanistan is now unexploded ordnance. In the last year 68% were caused by ERW/UXO.

Coomaraswamy said: "We have been looking at the statistics and have noted that the number of children being affected by landmines and UXO in Afghanistan is very high. We are concerned about this and we will support the efforts of mine action to protect children."

The main reason for the Representative's visit to Kabul was to sign an Action Plan with the Government of Afghanistan to protect children in the conflict. The agreement aims to prevent recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks against schools and hospitals, abduction and denial of humanitarian access by parties to the conflict. The signed agreement will be implemented by the Government's Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Children and Armed Conflict and monitored by UNICEF and other members of the United Nations Country Team task force including MACCA.



Radhika Coomaraswamy during her visit from a session of Mine Risk Education. (Picture by UNAMA)

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

Canada, European Commission, Australia, Japan, Netherlands, Finland, Spain, Denmark, Austria, Luxembourg, Oman and Lithuania.

MAPA is also supported by the following bilateral donors:

USA, Germany, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Japan, Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Government of Afghanistan, Ireland, Finland, Belgium, Czech & Slovak Federative republic.

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP TO AID MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

The International Road Transport Union (IRTU) signed an agreement with the UN VTF to contribute US\$1.9 million, to support Mine Action in Afghanistan. The IRTU is the global voice of the road transport industry throughout the world, represented by 180 national member-associations from 74 countries on 5 continents.

The funds contributed by the IRTU will be used to clear 15 square kilometres of landmines and explosive remnants of war from the 700 kilometre ring road that connects Kabul to Afghanistan's Northern Provinces and Central Asian neighbours. This will yield humanitarian benefits by preventing death and injury to those living in proximity to the route and reinvigorate socio-economic opportunities between Afghanistan and Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and beyond.

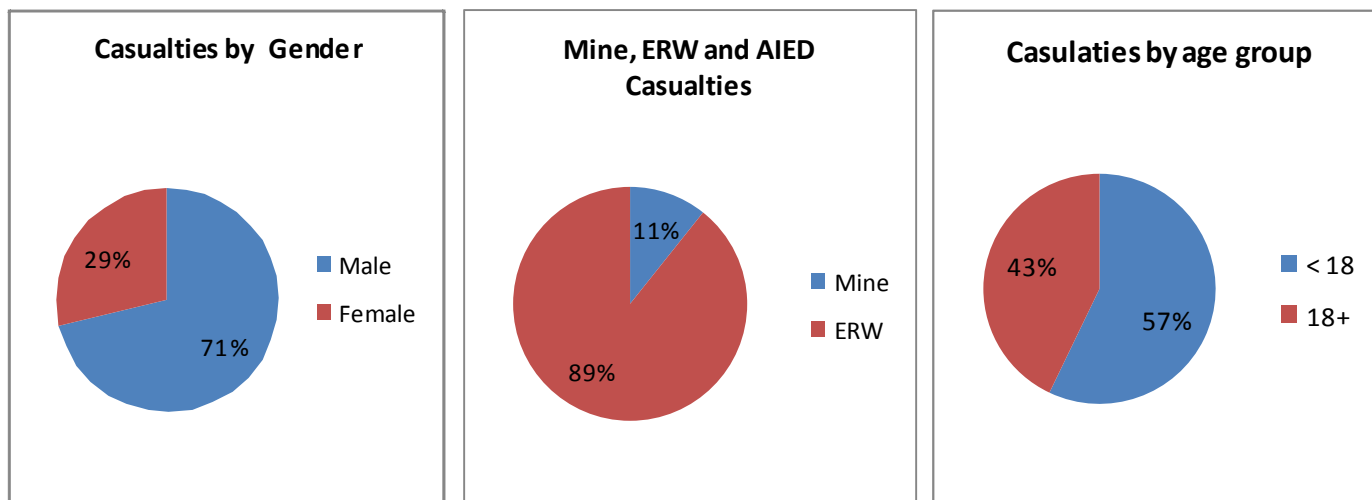


“It is hoped that the opportunities arising from the facilitation of trade and economic development will enhance the lives and livelihoods of those communities living alongside the road and of Afghanistan's population as a whole,” noted Dmitry Titov, UN Assistant Secretary-General of the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions.

“The International Road Transport Union is proud of this new public-private partnership with UNMAS as it will, in a very real and tangible way, clear the path for road transport to interconnect small and medium sized businesses in Afghanistan to every major world market and in so doing, drive progress, prosperity and ultimately peace for the Afghan people.” said Mr. De Pretto the IRTU Deputy Secretary General.

CASUALTIES IN JANUARY 2011

In January 2011 there were 28 casualties recorded due mines and other explosive remnants of war. The below charts show a breakdown of these casualties:



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.

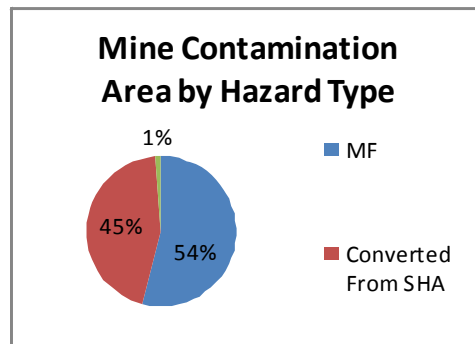
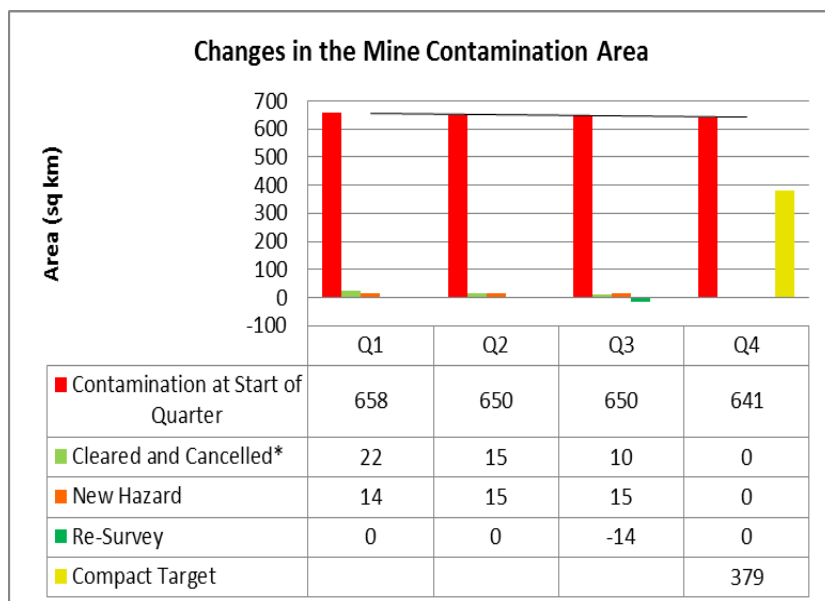
AFGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS TOWARD MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS(JAN 2011)

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

Indicator	Adjusted Baseline	Remaining Contamination	Clearance Processed	Compact Target of 70% of Hazards	Progress towards Compact	Treaty Target of 100% of Hazards	Progress towards Treaty
Number of Hazards	12,754	6,638	5,752	6,116	69%	12,754	48%
Hazardous Area (km ²)	1,277	641	622	894	70%	1,277	49%

EXPLANATION ON CHANGES TO BENCHMARK TABLE

The graph below further highlights that the significant amount of clearance undertaken by the implementing partners is failing to produce substantive progress towards the Afghan Compact and the Mine Ban (Ottawa) Treaty. The trend line in the graph below shows that the overall contamination is not reducing in line with clearance achievements due to new hazard being added to the database. It is important to note that this is newly-discovered not newly-laid hazard. As the deadline for the Afghan Compact falls in March 2011 (beginning of 1390), MACCA encourages donors to take note of this issue.



MF: Mine Field
SHA: Suspected Hazardous Area

* Cancelled area is land, incorrectly reported as minefield which the minefield team cancelled once technical survey was carried out.

MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS SUMMARY IN 1389 SO FAR (APRIL– JANUARY 2011)

- * 31,392 Anti-Personnel mines, 934 Anti-Tank mines, and 830,601 Explosive Remnants of War destroyed.
- * 149 communities cleared of mines and other explosive remnants of war.
- * 398,364 women and girls and 552,776 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

