

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN NEWSLETTER: JULY 2011



MACCA, ONE OF THE REPRESENTATIVES IN UN CARES REGIONAL MEETING (ASIA AND THE PACIFIC)

This year, MACCA's focal point for UN Cares, along with the UNAMA focal point who were selected by the UN Resident Coordinator in Afghanistan and UN Cares, attended the UN Cares Regional Meeting for Asia and the Pacific under the title of "Meeting of Minds" to share the achievements and challenges ahead from Afghanistan within UN agencies, National AIDS Control Programme (NACP) and other relevant sections.

UN Cares is a group of UN agencies working together to address issues relating to HIV.

The three day meeting held in Bangkok, Thailand convened 60 UN staff from 20 South, Southeast, and Pacific Island nations.

The UN Cares inter-agency teams consist of UN personnel, known as UN Cares country focal persons, officially assigned to deliver on 10 minimum standards related to HIV in respective countries.

The UN Cares country focal persons play a significant role in designing and implementing programme activities and motivating the local UN system toward successful implementation of UN Cares programmes.

"Afghanistan is one of those countries, faced with a high risk of HIV epidemic. Despite low HIV prevalence, Afghanistan is at high risk for spread of HIV infection due to almost 3 decades of protracted armed conflict, huge numbers of people displaced internally and externally, poor economy, poppy cultivation and use of injecting drugs and lack of blood safety and injection practices", Samim Hashimi the MACCA focal point for UN Cares said.

Mr. Hashimi added: "These risk factors led officials to warm of the urgent need for early interventions to prevent a potentially rapid spread of HIV in Afghanistan."

Given the present context of implementing UN Cares, the UN Cares biennial regional meeting for country focal persons is a proven platform created to echo the issues and challenges faced by the countries and learn from shared strategies and success from each other.

MACCA and UNAMA with support from WHO will continue to lead the UN Cares Process within UN agencies and government related sectors during 2011 and 2012.

The upcoming regional meeting aims to bring in key implementers of the UN Cares Programme at country level and create a platform for exchanging information and gaining further skills to expand the scope of the UN Cares Programme in Asia and the Pacific.



The UN Care regional meeting attendees in Bangkok.

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

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MAPA is also supported by the following bilateral donors:

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PEOPLE BELIEVE MINE ACTION WILL IMPROVE THEIR LIVELIHOOD DCONDITIONS

Aghul Khan village, located in Salang district of Parwan province is only 40 m away from the highway which connects Kabul to the northern provinces.

This village, in which 450 families live, was mostly contaminated with landmines and explosives during the Soviet Union occupation and had created many problems for the residents.

"We have been living here with the threat of mines for several years. We have not been able to collect wood, send our children to school or walk around without any tension" said Mohammad Naser, one of the residents of this village.

Salang is a place where people from all over Afghanistan and specially Kabul go for amusement purposes.

Existence of mines and other explosives was an obstacle for these people too.

"I remember, a family came here, I think from Kabul for a picnic, their child who was around 6 years old went a bit far and eventually he lost his leg in an explosion. This is one of the accidents I have seen and I have heard other people too, talking about such accidents in our village,"

Naser remembers how his villagers became disabled or were killed due to explosions of landmines and other explosive remnants of war: "I cannot forget that tragedy, where our three villagers were killed and some of them lost their hands and legs."



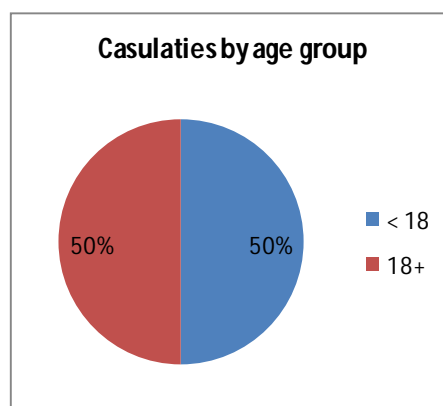
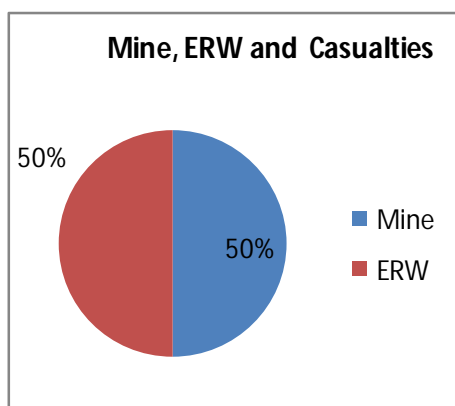
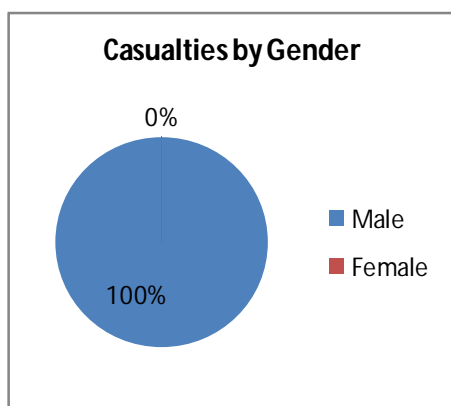
A resident of Aghul Khan village who has lost his fingers in a mine explosion.

Naser seemed to be very happy with the Mine Action work ongoing in his village and thinks the clearance of the village will also help their livelihood conditions. He said: "If our village is cleared of mines and other explosives, we don't have to spend lots of our money buying fire woods for winter, we can collect it from the area which at the moment is contaminated with mines and other explosives. This way we can save money too,"

"There are a lot of almond trees, but the area is contaminated with mines and other explosives, therefore no one dares to walk there, but if the area is cleared of mines and other explosives, then we can easily go there and collect almonds and eventually sell it. This can have a very positive effect on our livelihood condition." he added.

CASUALTIES IN JULY 2011

As of August 11, 2011 there were only 4 casualties recorded in July due to landmines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Please be aware that casualty reports take time to come in from the field and so the monthly total may increase for some weeks after this newsletter is published. 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.

Between 2006 and March 2011 the MACCA was reporting progress towards the Afghan Compact target of a 70% reduction in all mine hazard. Post the Compact that was not met (albeit 69% of the 70 target was) the MACCA has adjusted the table to reflect the achievement purely of Ottawa.

It is important to note that the Ottawa treaty is about the removal of AP mines not of AT or ERW. However it is equally important to ensure that the other hazards are not forgotten whilst a focus is on meeting the Ottawa treaty obligations

2013 is the year that the Afghan State may seek an extension of their time to complete the clearance of all known AP sites.

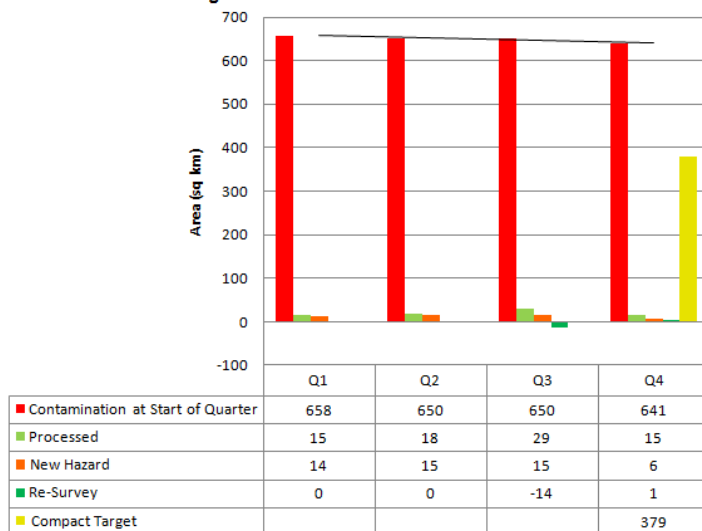
FGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS TOWARD MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS (APRIL 2011)

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

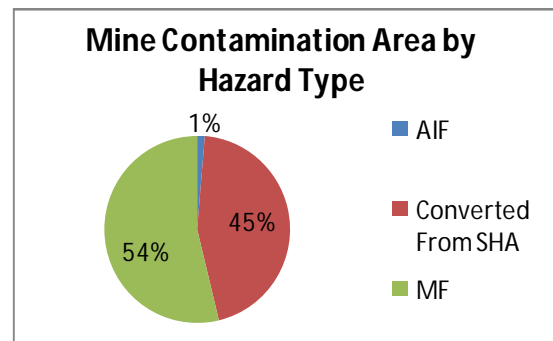
	Baseline		New Hazard		Hazard Processed		Progress		Remaining Hazard	
	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	Hazards	Area	% of Hazards	% of Area	Hazards	Area
AP (+ AP,AT,ERW mixed)	8,303	693.1	40	3.1	3,477	346.0	42%	50%	4,786	344.0
AT + ERW	4,703	593.1	28	2.1	3,130	326.3	67%	55%	1,545	264.7
Overall Contamination	13,006	1,286.2	68	5.2	6,607	672.3	51%	52%	6,331	608.7

The graph and pie chart below show progress against all hazards.

Changes in the Mine Contamination Area



Mine Contamination Area by Hazard Type



AIF: Abandoned IED Fields
 MF: Mine Field
 SHA: Suspected Hazardous Area

MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS SUMMARY IN 1390 SO FAR (July 2011)

- * 9814 Anti-Personnel mines, 382 Anti-Tank mines, and 316146 Explosive Remnants of War destroyed.
- * 74 communities cleared of mines and other explosive remnants of war.
- * 156406 women and girls and 215377 men and boys received Mine Risk Education throughout the country.

