



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



TWO MORE VILLAGES CLEARED THANKS TO THE SUPPORT OF THE UAE FOR ASSISTING AFGHANISTAN TO BECOME MINE FREE BY 2023

Demarcy and Salihan villages of Panjwayee district of Kandahar province are now cleared from all types of known mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and were officially handed over to the communities and the Government of Afghanistan during a ceremony held on May 7, 2013. The ceremony, hosted by the MACCA Kandahar Regional Office, was well attended by the department of refugees and repatriation, department of urban development and department of economy of Kandahar province and also members of the communities involved.

Historical clashes have left these lands contaminated with anti-personnel and anti-tank mines as well as ERW, which has seriously slowed down economic and agricultural activities. From the start of the mine action program, mines and ERW have left many casualties in these villages. The demining operations began in January 2011, and made safe for productive use over 2,939,010 square meters of land, unearthing 130 different types of anti personnel and anti tank mines as well as ERW.

Clearance in these two villages was mainly carried out by DAFA and EMCPA, which are both implementing partners of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA). The majority of the funding was provided by the United Arab Emirates and the area was totally cleared from the hazards with the allocated funds.

Abdul Samy, MACCA's Kandahar Area Manager said "we are delighted and express our heartfelt gratitude, and praise for UAE supporting the people of Afghanistan and playing a critical humanitarian role in saving lives, bringing peace, and developing Afghanistan. The EMCPA project is making a remarkable contribution to the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan. With the support of the UAE and as part of a project to clear over 100 villages in Kandahar province, this land spread across two villages of Demarcy and Salihan is handed over as safe now where the threat of anti tank mines no longer exists and where the Government of Afghanistan can without fear of mines facilitate the construction of a town for thousands of families who will be returning to Afghanistan after taking over 30 years refuge into neighboring countries due to conflicts."



Above: Mohammad Azim Nawabi, Director of Kandahar Refugees Department, During signing the handover document

Mr. Samy further added "We hope that UAE to continue the positive momentum generated by the EMCPA project and noble support to secure the transition to a truly "mine-free" Afghanistan."

Mohammad Azim Nawabi, Director of Refugees Department, talking to a large gathering of these two villages' elders at the ceremony, noted: " This plot of land we talk about has been cleared by demining teams and after that the government of Afghanistan will give outland for the deserved people of Kandahar province for building houses and other essential installations."

"During this important project thousands acres of land were cleared by EODT and DAFA, and the clearance operation was well coordinated by the MACCA Kandahar Regional Office. We have already distributed some forms for the local people to fill in, and based on that the Government of Afghanistan will hand over land for each of them to build their houses there." Mohammad Rahim Rahimi, Economy Department Director of Kandahar province said.

At the end of the ceremony, community representatives, and representatives from the government, signed the official hand-over document to indicate their agreement that the area has been fully cleared. Now that hazards have been removed, the land will be used for more than 4000 residential houses for the returnees and other essential buildings such as a health clinic and school. The United Arab Emirates has supported MAPA since November 2011 with \$27.8 million of funding to date.

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.

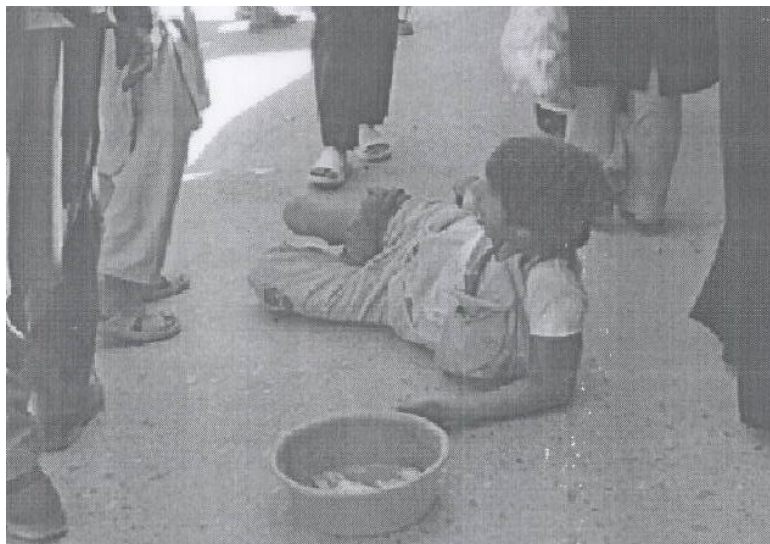
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ARE ACTIVE PART OF THE SOCIETY

Mines and explosive remnants of war are causing disabilities to people all over the world and especially here in Afghanistan.

Mrs.Zarbegam is one of those women who have lost one of her legs in a mine explosion, said, "Persons with disabilities are an active part of society. I understand that opportunities must be made available for persons with disabilities in Afghanistan, they must show their skills and abilities to the people in society in order to try to get a job and an education. This will make society accept that persons with disabilities are not a burden to their families or society in general".

"I want to say that a person with a disability shouldn't be called unable; tolerance and accepting each other is very important in life. I learnt that unity is strength so unity must be developed amongst ourselves".

"It is true that I have lost one of my legs, but I should never lose my endurance and ability. If I lose my endurance and ability I couldn't perform my daily activities, but now I am happy that I can perform all activities without the cooperation of others." She added.



Above: Abdul Latif a Mine Victim in the picture

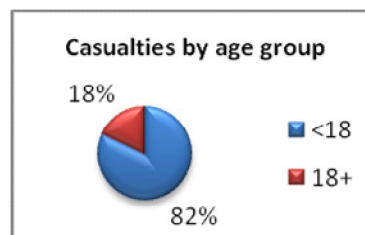
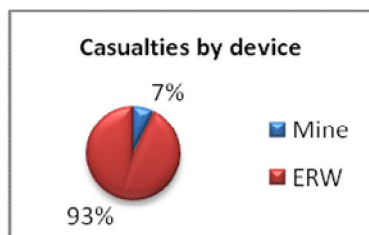
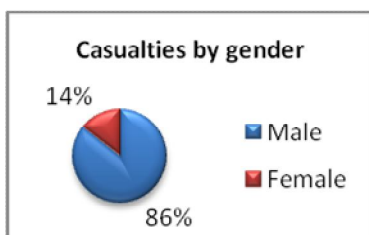
Abdul Latif is also one of the victims of a mine explosion, and is living in Kandahar province. "I was a student at primary school, I was eight years old and I didn't know about mines and the dangers of mines because I was a child and I felt happy to play with different things. One sunny day when we were playing in a play ground I stepped on a hidden mine. I had thrown my football towards it and from the blast I was seriously injured. After my treatment here in Kabul, I found that this explosion not only took my legs but has also deprived me from education. I become a person with disability".

He was very sad and his eyes were full of tears, he said," The financial status of our family is very weak, no one provided any kind of assistive opportunity for me and due to which I was persuaded to come out in the street and road sides of Kabul for begging to assist my family. I didn't know about the rights of a person with disability, I was not aware of the opportunities that our government has provided and is still providing for persons with disabilities".

"One day a person told me that their organization is providing the capacity building, rights and disability awareness workshops for persons with disabilities, so he introduced me to their supervisor and then this organization provided me opportunity to participate in this valuable workshop held here in Kabul and was an important initiative taken by MAPA; we the persons with disabilities have gained a lot of benefits from this initiative." He added.

CASUALTIES IN MAY 2013

In **May 2013**, there were 28 casualties due to Mine/ERW recorded in Afghanistan (data as of 11 June 2013).

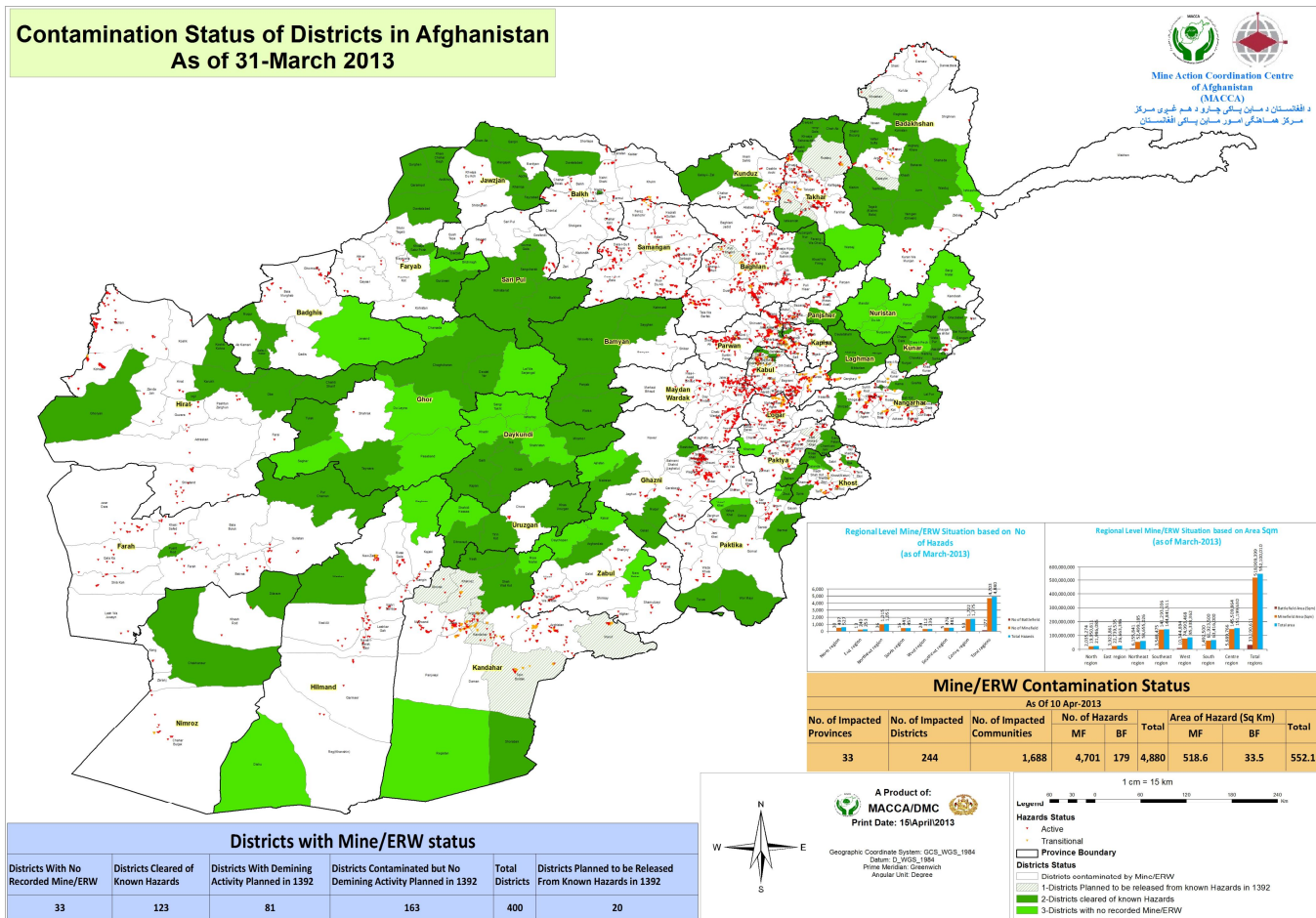


MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

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.

Contamination Status of Districts in Afghanistan As of 31-March 2013



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1392 SO FAR

- * 3,166 AP mines, 137 AT mines, and 371,177 ERW destroyed.
- * 78 communities cleared of mines and ERW.
- * 45,867 women and girls and 51,845 men and boys received Mine/ERW RE throughout the country.

