



## MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN (MAPA) NEWSLETTER: JULY 2014



### MACCA Open Day

On 5th August 2014, the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) held an open day at its headquarters in Kabul. The day was divided into two sessions, morning and afternoon, and provided an opportunity for participants to explore MACCA, and receive in-depth briefings on its key functions and role within the broader context of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan. Attendants included representatives of the Afghan Government, diplomatic missions, UN agencies, civil society organizations and the private sector.

The day allowed MACCA to showcase its key activities and share the successes to which donors have contributed, as it drives the MAPA towards the ultimate goal of a mine free Afghanistan by 2023. The schedule included a brief welcome and introductory remarks from the MACCA Director, the Department of Mine Clearance Director and the UNMAS Programme Manager; a presentation highlighting MACCA's role and functions, its achievements so far and future objectives; an exhibition of decommissioned ordnance and equipment used across the many mine action activities; and a tour of the office during which the Operations, Quality Management, Planning and Programme, Victim Assistance, Mine Risk Education and Gender departments gave presentations followed by questions and answers.

"The MACCA Open Day proved very informative for us. I was fascinated and impressed by the synergy, high visibility and transparency of MACCA's work. It was pleasing to see how MACCA is working closely with the Government of Afghanistan, its implementing partners and UN agencies. I would say it is quite an achievement." Nina Seahra, First Secretary (Development) - Embassy of Canada.

"I found the event very interesting. It was a good opportunity for us to get a better understanding of what MACCA, UNMAS, and the Afghan Government have achieved for mine action in Afghanistan." Ben Kybert, First Secretary (Development) - Embassy of Australia.



Mr. Sediq Rashid-MACCA Director while delivering his presentation to the guests



Mr. Mohammad Wakil, MACCA Chief of Staff is explaining Minefield model to a guest



Guest while talking to MRE Representative at the exhibition



UNMAS-AFG Management while talking to the guests

**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.

## Mir Bacha Kote District of Kabul Province is announced free of known mines & ERW

On August 10, 2014, Mir Bacha Kote District of Kabul Province was announced free of known mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). On completion of survey and clearance operations, the district was handed over to Government authorities and local communities at an official handover ceremony at the District Governor's Office. The ceremony was hosted by HALO Trust and MACCA's Central Regional Office.

Mir Bacha Kote is a northern district of Kabul Province. The ceremony to declare the district free of known mines and ERW took place at the height of Afghanistan's summer, against the backdrop of a vibrant and green Mir Bacha Kote. Mir Bacha Kote is a famous sightseeing spot during the spring and summer seasons. The greenery, fruit gardens and the river that flows from Guldarah District in to Mir Bacha Kote are attractive spots for the people of Kabul and nearby areas. Now that the district is announced cleared, people from different areas can visit the district without the fear of loss of life or injury.

Mr. Abdurahim Rashid, the District Governor of Mir Bacha Kote also expressed his appreciation for the achievements of MACCA and its partners. The Governor also praised MACCA's close coordination and liaison with governmental authorities and community elders: "I would like to personally thank all the Mine Action organisations who worked restlessly to make our district free of mines and ERW. Also we thank the donors and supporters of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan."

At the district handover ceremony, people were very happy and joyful. However, many participants recounted terrible stories and memories of landmine and ERW accidents in the past. Khan Aqa, the community leader of Saraykhoja Village, shared a story of his villager, Noor Agha, who was a victim of a landmine. Noor was a 10-year-old boy who went out hunting small birds with other boys from his village. The boys were laughing and having fun. After a while, they finally shot their last prey. Noor ran to collect the bird from under a tree when suddenly a huge blast shook the area. He stepped on a

landmine, which left him severely injured and caused him to lose both of his legs and one eye. He was taken to the nearby hospital for treatment. Noor is now 25 years old. He has since married and had children. While he sometimes grieves that he lost his legs and an eye because of a mine, he is also very happy knowing that his children are safe from mines and explosives as a result of the hard work of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan.

Another local man, Qazi Subat, became the victim of an anti-personnel landmine while he was irrigating his land near a stream. Subat lost four fingers from one of his hands.

Community members had many other stories of people who had become victims of mines and ERW while collecting firewood, while swimming in the river or streams or simply while passing by a fruit garden.

Donors and supporting agencies that supported surveys, mine risk education training sessions, and clearance operations in Mir Bacha Kote District over the years include the UN Voluntary Trust Fund through UNMAS, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), US Department of State, the Government of Norway, the Government of Ireland, the Government of the Netherlands, and Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development. The implementing partners who were engaged in various mine action activities in the district are: ATC, DAFA, DDG, HALO Trust, MDC and OMAR. It is worth mentioning that the final Mine & ERW Impact Free Community Survey and the clearance of the last known hazards were conducted by HALO Trust.

Now that the hazards have been removed, the district will be included in the Government's development plan and the cleared lands of these districts will be used to build houses and other essential services for the communities, such as agricultural activities, health clinics, schools, businesses, and roads, all of which will directly benefit the communities of the district and indirectly the region's wider population.

Due to many years of survey and clearance in the area, more



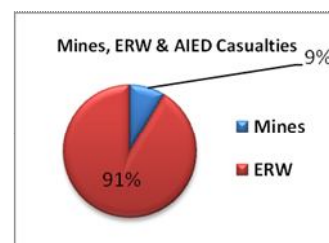
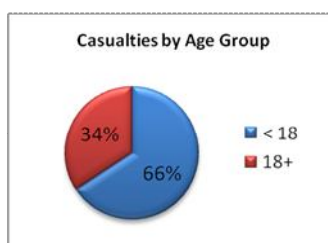
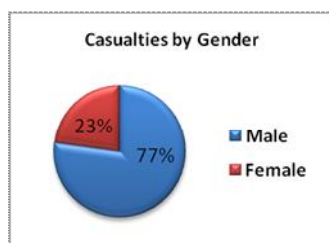
Mr. Abdurahim Rashid—Mir Bacha Kot District Governor



Mir Bacha Kot District is announced free of known Mines/ERW

## CASUALTIES DURING JULY 2014

During this month, 35 civilian casualties due to mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were recorded in Afghanistan.





than 106 anti-tank mines, 2,426 anti-personnel mines, and 35,741 items of ERW were found and destroyed.

Every village and district that is cleared of mines and explosive remnants of war is taking us one step closer to our ultimate goal, which is to make Afghanistan free of known mines and ERW by 2023.

### **Qalai-e-Now District of Badghis Province is freed of known mines/ERW**

On June 9, 2014, Qalai-e-Now District of Badghis Province was declared free of all known mines and other explosive remnants of war (ERW). The district was officially handed over to the communities and the district authorities during a hand-over ceremony held in the district conference hall. The ceremony was hosted by the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan Regional Office and was well attended by local authorities, the district governor, CDC representatives and community elders.

MACCA Regional Office West Representative, Mr. Sharif Shah, warmly welcomed and thanked the local authorities and public for their support and assistance. Shah briefly explained MACCA's achievements in the western region and Badghis Province. He thanked all the government authorities, mine action implementing partners, and the local communities for their cooperation and support of the mine action programme in Badghis Province, especially in Qala-e-Now district.

The Director of the Badghis Governor's Office, Mr. Sharafuddin Majidi, thanked the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan for creating a safe and secure environment for the people of



Governor Office Director Mr. Sharafuddin Majidi while signing District Handover Certificate

it is worth mentioning that the final Mine & ERW Impact Free Community Survey by conducted by HALO Trust, a MAPA implementing partner.

### **Quote of the Month**

"I found the event very interesting. It was a good opportunity for us to get a better understanding of what MACCA, UNMAS, and the Afghan Government have achieved for mine action in Afghanistan." Ben Kybert, First Secretary (Development) - Embassy of Australia.



Mr. Ben Kybert while talking with Mr. M. Sediq Rashid—MACCA Director

Afghanistan and especially for the people of Badghis Province. He added: "Our brothers in mine action services are putting their lives in danger to save others." He thanked the donors for their generous support for mine action.

Now that the hazards have been removed, the district will be included in the Government's development plan and the cleared lands of these districts will be used to build houses and other essential services for the communities, such as agricultural activities, health clinics, schools, businesses, and roads, all of which will directly benefit the communities of the district, and indirectly the region's wider population.

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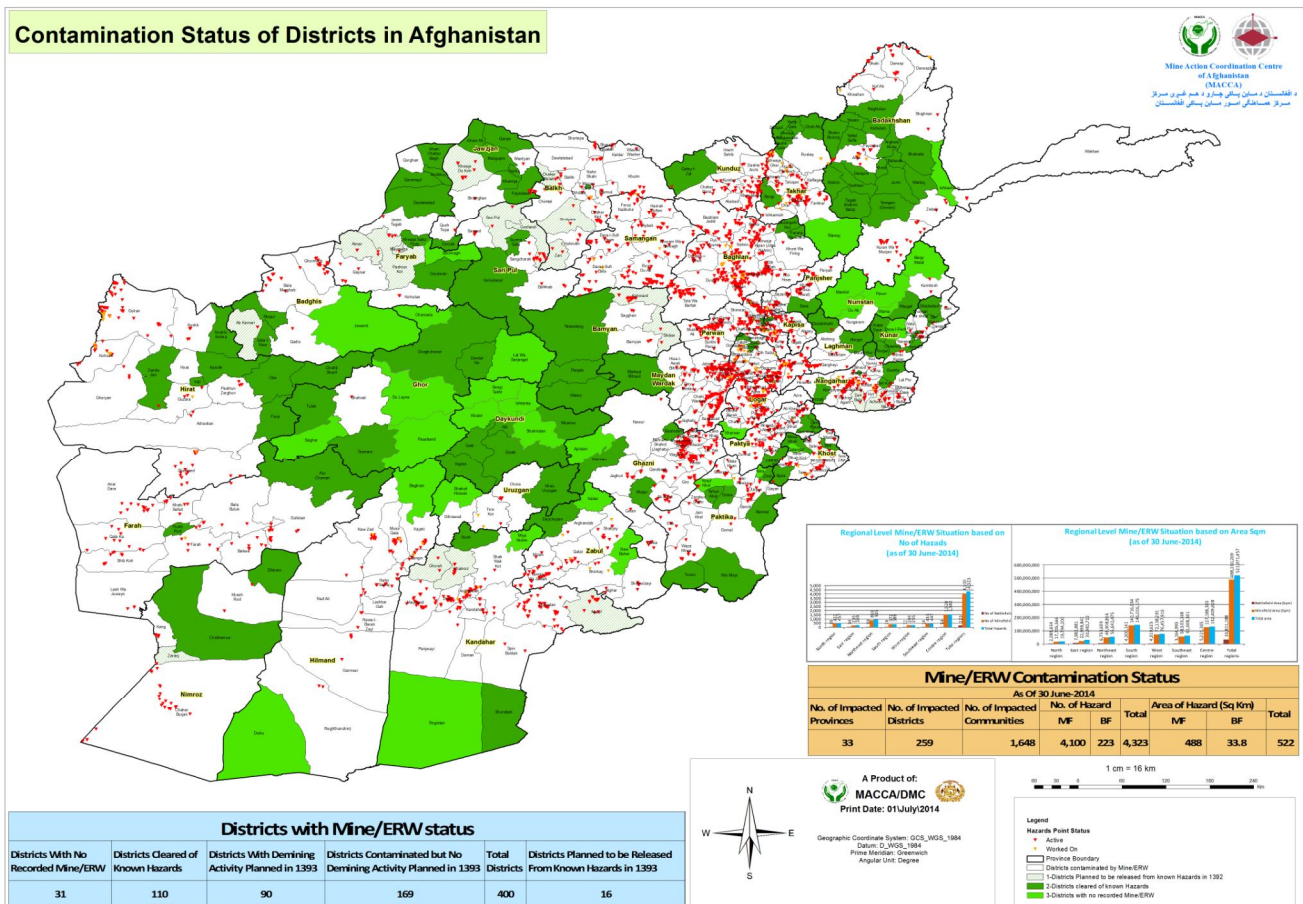
## MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

### 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 July 2014		Resurvey results up to end of July 2014	Current target as of end of July 2014		Hazards processed from April 2013 to end of July 2014		Remaining hazards at the end of July 2014		Progress at the end of July 2014 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)	3,439	266.4	656	40.2	-1.7	4,095	304.9	1,171	58.3	2,924	246.6	28.60	19.11
AT + ERW	1,248	252.1	318	45.3	-11.7	1,566	285.7	441	47.4	1,125	238.4	28.16	16.58
BF	179	33.5	119	12.8	1.0	298	47.3	79	14.6	219	32.8	26.51	30.77
Total	4,866	551.9	1,093	98.3	-12.3	5,959	638.0	1,691	120.2	4,268	517.8	28.38	18.84

### Contamination Status of Districts in Afghanistan



## MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1393 SO FAR

- \* 5,747 anti-personnel mines, 150 anti-tank mines, and 78,661 ERW destroyed.
- \* 38 communities cleared of known mines and ERW.
- \* 55,460 women and girls, and 71,547 men and boys received Mine/ERW risk education throughout the country.
- \* 2405 people received victim assistance and disability activities including Disability awareness & advocacy, Physical Rehabilitation and socio-economical reintegration.

