

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN NEWSLETTER: FEBRUARY 2010



MINE AWARENESS EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS APPROACH OF INTERNATIONAL MINE ACTION DAY

On 23rd February, Kabul's Babur Gardens was host to more than 300 children taking part in a Mine Risk Education exhibition organized by the MACCA's MRE department. MAPA implementing partners came together to hold the event including the Mobile Mini Circus for Children, Afghan Red Crescent Society, AAR Japan and OMAR.

The teaching methods for the mine risk education messages included theatre, movies, singing and other interactive approaches.



Once the teaching sessions were completed, the children were given the opportunity to design posters that would warn other children of the dangers of mines and other explosive remnants of war. The winners will have a professional artist help them paint their designs onto the MACCA wall.

Many media came to the event including the BBC and Reuters.



The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan invites you to celebrate International Mine Action Day with a series of events:

10am, Wednesday 25th March. 21st Birthday Party of ATC

Afghan demining organization ATC will be celebrating their 21st birthday – come and meet deminers who have been working in demining for 21 years.

10am, Saturday 3rd April. Exhibition of various aspects of mine action including:

- * Exhibitions by various demining NGOs
- * Mine risk education sessions in a converted aeroplane
- * Survivor assistance project which provides survivors and other persons with disabilities with training and jobs making demining equipment
- * Afghanistan's only landmine museum

For more information, directions and RSVP, please contact:

Rafiullah Alkozai: rafiullah.alkozai@macca.org.af

Tel: 0705 966 372

NB. MDC will also hold an event for international mine action day.

Produced by : The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) on behalf of Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA)

GADOON LAUNCHES AFGHANISTAN'S FIRST BRAILLE MAGAZINE

In April, MAPA implementing partner DAO will launch the first Afghan magazine with a Braille section. The next edition DAO's Gadoon magazine will include articles in Braille as well as English, Dari and Pashto.

Gadoon is the only bimonthly disability publication, initially funded by the British Embassy in Kabul, but since 2008 has been jointly funded by MACCA and WRA's Victim Assistance Program. DAO started publishing Gadoon Magazine in 2006.

The magazine profiles the success of persons with disabilities to encourage others that disability does not need to stop them being successful in life.

Freshta, a resident of Khair Khana Mina, who has a visual impairment said, "When I first lost my sight,



I was worried and felt lonely all the time. I was not able to play with other children like before.

I learned Braille at Maryam high School and then joined a regular school, now I don't feel held back by my disability."

MINE AND ERW INCIDENTS JANUARY– FEBRUARY 2010

Month	18 Years and Younger		Over 18 Years		Unknown Age/Gender	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Jan	32	3	21	1	0	58
Feb	5	0	9	1		16
Grand Total	37	3	30	2	0	74

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.

DESTRUCTION OF ALL KNOWN STOCKPILES OF ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES

The Government of Afghanistan successfully fulfilled its Article 4 of Ottawa Treaty and Afghanistan Compact benchmark to destroy all known stockpiled anti-personnel landmines in its territory in October 2007.

KEYS TO MEETING THE BENCHMARKS FOR MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

- * Sustaining existing capacities
- * Expansion of Community - Based Demining
- * Programming through focused projects
- * Introduction of competitive tendering
- * Enhanced fundraising to ensure resources to meet benchmarks

CHALLENGES TOWARDS BENCHMARKS

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan must increase multilateral and bilateral funding to mine action to achieve the targets set by the Ottawa Treaty and the Afghanistan Compact. Essentially, funding needs to be coherent to enable effective delivery; this means funds must be received before the beginning of the year . If the funds are provided, the MAPA has the technical capability to achieve the targets.

MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS SUMMARY JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2010

- * 1,727 AP mines, 135 AT mines, and 110,194 ERW destroyed.
- * 19 communities cleared of mines and other explosive remnants of war.
- * 61,099 women and girls and 87,518 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

EXPLANATION ON CHANGES TO BENCHMARK TABLE

Introduction

In January 2006, when the Afghan Compact was signed, the baseline set of known hazard was 719 sq km, therefore the target of clearing 70% of the hazard required a removal of 503 sq km. The benchmark table below shows that to date, 426 sq km has now been cleared. This would mean the MAPA would be 85% towards the goal of 70% clearance, if the baseline had remained the same.

However, the baseline set at that time was in fact an incorrect picture of the overall hazard in the country. Much work has been done over the last few years to ensure that the national database presents an accurate picture of known hazard is included in this database. For a full explanation on these changes, please see p25-27 of the 1389 Integrated Operational Framework, available on www.macca.org.af

As a result, the baseline was adjusted up to 1,097 sq km. As of December 2009, the remaining contamination is 671 sq km. However, as people continue to return and resettle in Afghanistan, new hazard continues to be discovered. In addition, there is new hazard being laid by the insurgent forces in some parts of Southern Afghanistan (although not in traditional high-density minebelts). Therefore it expected that the baseline will continue to change and the progress towards these goals may fluctuate as the challenges to meeting these goals increases.

Nevertheless, this should not undermine the excellent achievements of the implementers of mine action over the last twenty years through the support of donors. It is the belief of the MACCA that - with continued and increased funding - the MAPA can make significant progress towards these goals and eliminate the threat of mines and ERW from Afghanistan.

Quarterly updating of table: Please note that the benchmark table will now be updated on a quarterly basis and the table from the preceding quarter will be published monthly in the MAPA newsletter.

AFGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS TOWARD MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS

70% reduction of mine/ERW contaminated areas by 2011 & clearance of all known anti-personnel landmines by 2,013:

Indicator	Adjusted Baseline Dec 09	Remaining Contamination at 31 Dec 09	Clearance Processed at 31 Dec 09	Compact Target of 70% of Hazards	Progress toward Compact	Treaty Target of 100% of Hazards	Progress towards Treaty
Number of Hazards	11,512	6,816	4,698	8,058	58%	11,512	41%
Hazardous Area (sq. km)	1,097	671	426	768	56%	1,079	39%

THE MINE ACTION STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

The strategy for mine action is based on the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's vision of a country free from landmines and ERW, where people and communities live in a safe environment conducive to national development, and where landmine and ERW survivors are fully integrated in the society and thus have their rights and needs recognized and fulfilled. To turn this vision into reality, the government has established benchmark obligations within its national development strategy, the Afghanistan Compact, which are in accordance with its obligations under the Ottawa Convention.

SUPPORT TO MINE ACTION NATIONAL CAPACITY

The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) supported by the United Nations and the Government of Afghanistan through its Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)/Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) have formed a partnership within the MACCA offices to plan, coordinate and ensure the quality of all mine action activities in Afghanistan. The most recent Inter-ministerial board meeting was held in March, key topics discussed included information exchange between ministries of Aynac copper mine.



MDD teams returning from demining operation in Charasyab district / June 2009

MAPA AND MACCA SUMMARY

The concept of humanitarian mine action was developed in Afghanistan in 1988/9. Mine action encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, demining (survey, marking and clearance), stockpile destruction, mine risk education (MRE), and victim assistance (VA). The programme is funded both bilaterally and through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF)^[1].

Collectively known as the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), mine action implementers in Afghanistan form one of the largest mine action programmes in the world. Together, these agencies have a twenty year history of successfully delivering mine action in Afghanistan and have cleared over 12,000 hazard areas throughout the country. The MAPA is coordinated by the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA), which is funded through a UN modality. The MACCA has sub-offices, known as Area Mine Action Centres (AMACs) in Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar, Kunduz, Gardez, and Kandahar.



Demining Operation in Samangan province Photo by : Jacob Simkin, April 2009

MAPA is supported by :

