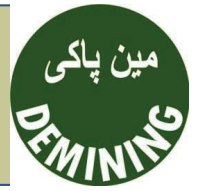




MINE ACTION PROGRAMME FOR AFGHANISTAN NEWSLETTER: NOVEMBER 2008



MINE CLEARANCE IN AFGHANISTAN THREATENED BY IMPACT OF FINANCIAL CRISIS

Afghanistan's ability to meet the Ottawa Treaty and Afghanistan Compact targets of mine clearance is in danger due to the impact of the global financial crisis. Sharp fluctuations in the currency markets have resulted in the MACA losing \$8m USD (13% of its budget) needed for the next year's vital mine clearance work. Although donors are continuing to support the work of the MACA, the fall of currencies against the dollar has seen a dramatic reduction in the value of the pledges and donations.

In order to raise awareness of this, MACA held a meeting to which all embassies with a Kabul representative were invited. The key points raised at this meeting were that the stage of the programme now means that the MAPA has the capacity and the expertise to fulfil the targets met by the Ottawa Treaty and the Afghanistan Compact, however, there is a serious need for a significant boost in the funding to mobilise the resources that are ready and waiting to complete the task.

11 COMMUNITIES FREE FROM THREAT OF MINES THIS MONTH

In the last year, six Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) accidents killed one child and maimed four other children in Qasaba. The clearance operation started there in March and ended in November where 1,991 anti personnel mines, 2,052 ERW were collected and destroyed. In this locality, 122,402 square metres of cleared land was handed over to residents through an official ceremony on Wednesday 26 November.

Another 759,479 square metres land was cleared of mines and other ERW in Ishkamish district of Takhar province and officially handed over to 9 communities on 11th November. 16 Suspected Hazardous Areas (SHAs) and 34 Minefields (MF) where 6 Anti Tank (AT) mines, 410 Anti Personnel (AP) mines and 696 ERW were collected and destroyed.

In Bagram, 1,068,254 square metres of cleared land was handed over to the residents in Bagram district of Parwan province on 28 November where 4,534 anti personnel mines, 15,616 ERW were collected and destroyed since January 2008.

Due to the existence of military bases in Qasaba and Bagram areas during the Soviet Occupation, those areas were heavily contaminated with mines and ERW. Residents have had no access to large areas of land which could be used for raising animals, agriculture, and other reconstruction activities.



9th OTTAWA TREATY STATES PARTIES MEETING HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

Afghanistan joined all countries committed to the Ottawa Treaty on Monday 24th November to provide updates on progress towards meeting its commitment to landmine clearance and victim assistance.

Dr. Adrak, Head of Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority, delivered a speech on mine clearance and Mrs Soraya Paikan, Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) delivered a speech on Afghanistan's efforts to assist landmine victims and other people with disabilities. She also highlighted the successful transition of this part of the programme to Government ownership.

Dr. Haider Reza, Programme Director, Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan, says: "Since becoming a State Party to the Ottawa Treaty in March 2003, Afghanistan has made impressive progress towards our goals.

However, the challenges ahead are great: the scale of contamination, the challenging terrain of much of the country and ongoing insecurity means that we need more support and creative approaches than ever before."



According to the Ottawa Treaty, Afghanistan should have cleared all landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) by 2013.

The Programme is now in the final stages, however, there is an estimated 512 km² still to be cleared.

DISABILITY COORDINATION WORKSHOP HELD IN KABUL

With the technical and financial support of the MACA, a five day disability coordination workshop was held in Kabul for the provincial directors of Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) on 16 November 2008.

The workshop was inaugurated by Her Excellency Mrs. Soraya Paikan, the Deputy Minister for MoLSAMD. The aim was to identify and study the problems, possible solutions and latest developments on disability. It also provided stakeholders with opportunities to report on activities and progress on disability issues and strengthen the coordination among government, national and international disability stakeholders in their regions.

It was the first workshop of its kind in Afghanistan, with MoLSAMD provincial directorates from all provinces coming together to discuss their issues and exchange views. There were presentations on a range of issues including



The Afghan National Disability Action Plan, Community Based Rehabilitation, prevention of disabilities, responsibilities of the society and government toward people with disabilities, inclusive education, physical accessibility, national and international disability laws and a reporting mechanism to the MoLSAMD.

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.

SUCCESSSES OF MINE CLEARANCE IN AFGHANISTAN AS OF NOVEMBER 2008

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.

AFGHANISTAN'S PROGRESS TOWARD MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS

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

	Adjusted Baseline at 31 December 2007*	Clearance Processed from 31 January to Date	Compact Target of 70% of Hazards by 1389 **	Progress toward Target at end-November/ 2008	Treaty Target of 100% of Hazards at 1391	Progress toward Target from 2006 to end-Nov,08
Number of Hazards to be Cleared	5,973	3,223	4,181	77%	5,973	54%
Estimated Area of Hazard Clearance (km ²)	852 km²	346 km²	596 km²	61%	852 km²	43%

***NOTE ON ADJUSTED BASELINE:** THE BASELINE FIGURE HAD TO BE ADJUSTED AT THE END OF 2007 AS DATA SETS THAT WOULD HAVE AFFECTED THE ORIGINAL BENCHMARK WERE KEPT IN SEPARATE DATABASES. WHEN THE DATA SETS WERE MERGED A HIGH POINT OF 852 SQ KM OF HAZARDOUS AREA AND 5,973 KNOWN HAZARDS WAS ESTABLISHED.

****NOTE ON ADJUSTED COMPACT TARGETS:** TARGET IS TO REDUCE BY 70% THUS TOTAL ADJUSTED HAZARDS ARE 4,181 & ADJUSTED AREA 596 SQKM.

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 fund raising to ensure resources to meet benchmarks

CHALLENGES TOWARDS BENCHMARKS

The mechanisms and systems are currently in place within the MACA to meet the Afghanistan Compact and Ottawa Treaty benchmarks and obligations. It is understood that the challenge to clear Afghanistan is great, but the MACA and its DMC colleagues strongly believe that the obligations and benchmarks are achievable with greater and continued financial support from the donor community.

TRANSITION OF MINE ACTION RESPONSIBILITY TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

The Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA) supported by the United Nations and the Afghanistan Government through its Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)/Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) have formed a partnership within the MACA offices to plan, coordinate and ensure the quality of all mine action activities in Afghanistan.

TRANSITION ACTIVITIES COMPLETED

- * Mine Risk Education integrated into Ministry of Education in June 2007
- * Victim Assistance activities integrated into Ministries of Public Health & Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled in June 2007
- * Inter-Ministerial Body for Mine Action established December 2007
- * DMC designated lead Government Focal Point for Mine Action during first Inter-ministerial Body meeting in January 2008
- * MACA / DMC partnership agreed February 2008
- * DMC relocation to the MACA completed in April 2008.
- * MACA / DMC merger completed May 2008
- * Second Inter-ministerial Body for Mine Action meeting hosted at ANDMA-July 2008
- * Third Inter-ministerial Body for Mine Action meeting August 2008
- * Introduction of MRE monitoring mechanisms to MoE – regional activities August 2008
- * First Inter-ministerial task force for Disability meeting hosted by the MoLSAMD – October 2008.
- * Afghanistan national disability action plan approved by MoLSAMD – October 2008.

MINE AND ERW INCIDENTS JANUARY– NOVEMBER 2008

Month	18 Years and Younger		Over 18 Years		Unknown Age/Gender	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Jan	27	2	27	2	1	59
Feb	32	11	36	1	1	81
March	46	2	36	2	2	88
April	47	5	27	2	0	81
May	42	12	10	2	0	66
June	25	4	24	3	0	56
July	19	10	21	1	0	51
August	24	6	42	6	0	78
September	19	3	13	1	0	36
October	9	0	6	1	0	16
November	14	0	7	0	0	21
Grand Total	304	55	249	21	4	633

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME IN AFGHANISTAN

Mine action in Afghanistan encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, survey and clearance, stockpile destruction, mine risk education (MRE) and Victim Assistance (VA).

Mine action activities reach out to almost every corner of the country. Within this context, the Government of Afghanistan and the United Nations currently are working in partnership to implement this vast undertaking through joint responsibility for the coordination, including planning, management, and quality assurance, of all mine action activities in Afghanistan.

Afghans are living in 2,140 contaminated communities throughout the country. An estimated 697 square kilometers of land containing 5,362⁽¹⁾ hazardous areas with different types of-

anti-personnel and anti-tank mines or littered with countless pieces of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) still requires clearance⁽²⁾. Seventy-five percent of these impacted communities are found in 12 of the country's 34 provinces⁽³⁾.



Mine Risk Education for School Students Through Mobile Circus in Eastern Nangarhar Province

JANUARY – NOVEMBER 2008 – MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENT SUMMARY

- * 3, 223 hazardous areas (346,000 000 m²) were cleared, cancelled or closed
- * 448 communities were declared impact free
- * 82,144 AP mines, 851 AT mines, and 2,402,395 ERW were destroyed
- * 591,076 women and girls and 869,089 men and boys received MRE throughout the country

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⁽⁴⁾.

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.

¹The number of hazards is higher than the original benchmark figure noted on this report, because hazards become more defined through survey. A suspected hazardous area is likely to be recorded as one or more smaller minefield hazards after the survey process is completed.

²Data is as appears in the nationwide contamination database on 15 November 2008 and encompasses field activities and assessments that occurred through the end of November 2008. Figures including victim data will fluctuate in the future as additional data is received from the field offices and implementing partners

³ These provinces are Kabul, Parwan, Baghlan, Ghazni, Wardak, Kandahar, Herat, Nangarhar, Paktia, Takhar, Balkh, and Samangan.

⁴ Mine Action in Afghanistan, the Way Ahead, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Saur 1385 (May 2006).

