



MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN (MAPA)

NEWSLETTER: FEBRUARY 2014



MACCA Shares Experience with Bosnia

Bosnian firm MacroHard Mechanic invited the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) to share its knowledge and expertise in managing mechanical demining in Afghanistan. As part of MACCA's continual contribution to global mine action programmes and services, Mr. Khalil Ahmad, the MACCA Mechanical Officer, was appointed to visit MacroHard Mechanic and share his mechanical demining experience in a three-day technical workshop in Bosnia. Among other things, participants in the workshop discussed the productivity of the mechanical demining machines, attachment modification, and national and international mechanical demining standards.

On the first day, Mr. Ahmad delivered a presentation on two issues. The first issue was related to how mechanical demining operations are carried out by organisations in Afghanistan. The second issue discussed was mechanical mine clearance international standards and attachment modification for the purpose of anti-tank mine clearance. The workshop focused primarily on quality assurance and quality control for machines and on communicating the experience of field operations to the manufacturers in order to create better products. Mr. Ahmad and MACCA's efforts to provide such valuable expertise to MacroHard Mechanic was deeply appreciated and the company requested more visits and knowledge sharing in the future.

Mr. Khalil Ahmad visited various departments at MacroHard, and also visited a minefield near Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, where he had the opportunity to discuss the Afghan demining experience with the Bosnian demining teams working there. Similarly, in the last few months, MACCA has sent many of its experienced professionals to different parts of the world, for example, in Tajikistan, Colombia and Cambodia, to share experience and knowledge in several fields of mine action.

Great strides have been made in recent years in the development of modifications for existing demining machines. Not only can such modifications improve productivity when used correctly, they also eliminate the need for purchasing brand new demining machines. Mechanical clearance can greatly accelerate demining and technical survey operations, particularly when used with other demining methods. UN Mine Action Services and MACCA keep a close eye on developments in this field in order to find new approaches and opportunities to increase the cost effectiveness and productivity of the programme. Visits such as Mr. Ahmad's mission to Bosnia are vital in this regard.



Khalil Ahmad, the MACCA Mechanical Officer (2nd at left) with MacroHard Mechanic officials

MACCA at the UNMAS Operations and Funded Workshop at Uganda

The UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) facilitated an Operations and Quality Assurance Workshop for the staff of its project, MACCA. The workshop was held in the UN Re-

gional Training & Conference Centre (RTCC) in Entebbe, Uganda, from 10 to 15 February 2014. The course was organised and sponsored by UNMAS as part of its strategy to continually improve and develop the skills of operations and quality assurance officers. The course was also aimed at promoting standardization across UNMAS systems and procedures and to exchange best practices and lessons learned across the mine action programmes in mine/ERW-affected countries.

Representatives from MACCA included Mr. Abdul Samy, MACCA Regional Office Manager for Southern Afghanistan, and Mr. Ghousodin Safi, Senior Quality Management Associate at the QM Department of MACCA HQ in Kabul.

The training workshop covered a wide array of subjects such as:

- * Mine Action Standards and Accreditation of Mine Action Organizations;

Continues on Page 2

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.

(Continued from Page 1) ...

- * Monitoring of Mine Action Organizations, QA Data Management, Completion and Handover,
- * Incident and Accident Investigation, Reconnaissance and Assets Management;
- * Tasking and Prioritization, Implementation plan, Land Release and Detectors Testing.



Abdul Samy receiving Workshop Certificate

In addition, the participants from Afghanistan shared the existing "Mine Action Organization Accreditation Procedures" and "Land Release Approach" in Afghanistan, which was very well received by the course instructors and participants.

MACCA, with the direct support of UNMAS, is continuously working

towards developing its capacity in different fields of mine action. The Management Information System at MACCA is the best in the country. The coordination system established by MACCA and managed by experienced staff avoids duplication of effort and enables the programme to implement quality assurance activities in areas that are often inaccessible to other organizations.

In conclusion, improving operations and quality assurance is an important element of the work of MACCA and UNMAS in Afghanistan. The exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices in workshops such as this one will continually enhance our humanitarian mine action efforts and services, as well as ensuring that the programme achieves the goal of a mine-free Afghanistan by 2023.

International military bases for increasing civilian protection or causing tragedies?

17th January 2013, it was a beautiful sunny winter day. The sun was shining on the snow on fields in Zaywalayat village.



Area near military base in Zaywalayat village, Maydan Wardak

Children were playing near a military base. Suddenly a huge explosion shocked everyone in close by areas.

Anyone who heard the explosion rushed to the blast site. On the field people found two children covered in blood. Another tragedy took the lives of two innocent children age 13 and 7 on the spot.

Between 2009 -2010 International Security Assistance Force-ISAF established a military base in residential area of Maydan Wardak Province, Jalraiz district in Zaywalayat village. At first the residents of the village were very happy and excited for ISAF's presence in their area. People were hoping that due the presences of international forces their village will be protected from any unwelcome events, unexpected harming and will bring stability in the village.

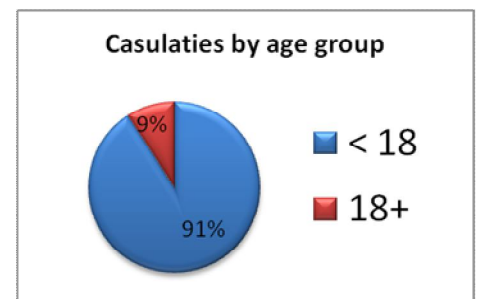
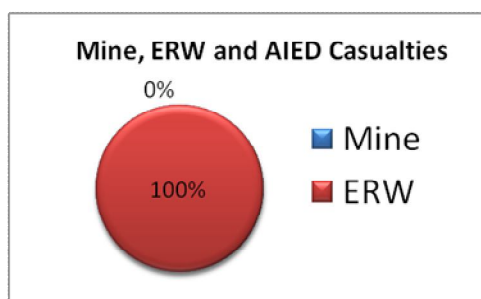
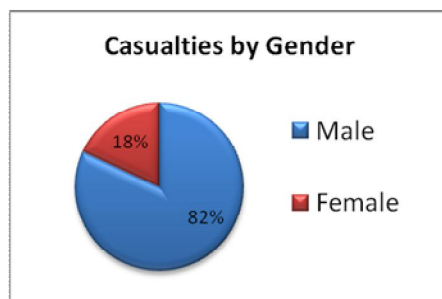
The spread of ERW till now caused six lives of innocent children. In the village since last 3 years this is the third tragedy people are facing. Last year 3 girls aged 17, 14 and 10 were injured during sweeping and gathering tree leaf in a garden located almost 200 meters away from the base. During mid of last year the ISAF forces withdrew from the village and the base was handed over to the National Army but a huge number of ERW are left in surrounding areas.

The father of the recent victims mentioned to the Mine/ERW MRE team that "There are huge numbers of ERW in the surrounding areas which made our daily activities fearful and difficult, at the moment as the ERW are covered by snow, few days later when snow are flowed away, we will be able to see a lot of ERW on the surface of the ground."

The other villagers along with the relatives of recent victims, requested to the Mine/ERW team to convey the message to the related mine action and government authorities to help them by removing these threats and prevent such tragedies on the children and adults. Also the villagers added when the snow is melted in the area, children will most likely go around the military base and the chances of such tragedies gets higher.

CASUALTIES DURING FEBRAURY 2014

During this month, 11 civilian casualties due to Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were recorded in Afghanistan.



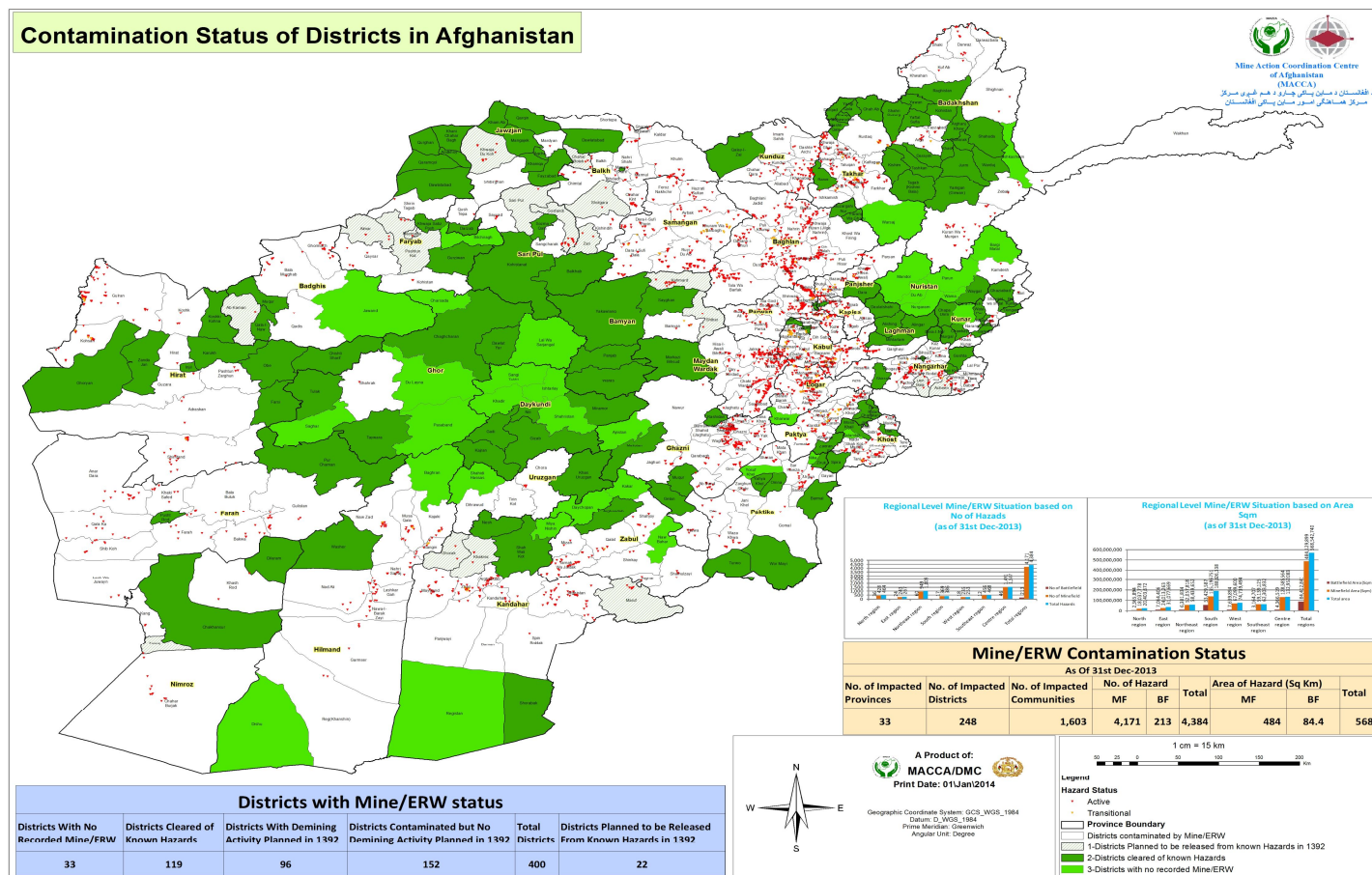
MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

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 January 2014		Resurvey results up to end of January 2014	Current target as of end of November 2013		Hazards processed from April to end Nov 2013		Remaining hazards at the end of November 2013		Progress at the end of Nov 2013 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	484	27.6	-1.6	3,923	292.4	952	44.7	2,971	247.7	24.27	15.28
AT + ERW	1,248	252.1	228	24.1	-5.8	1,476	270.4	363	41.4	1,113	229.0	24.59	15.30
BF	179	33.5	186	156.2	0.4	365	190.1	71	59.2	294	130.9	19.45	31.16
Total	4,866	551.9	898	207.9	-7.1	5,764	752.8	1,386	145.3	4,378	607.6	24.05	19.30

Contamination Status of Districts in Afghanistan



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1392 SO FAR

- * 18,846 anti-personnel mines, 713 anti-tank mines, and 729,056 ERW destroyed.
- * 297 communities cleared of known mines and ERW.
- * 287,231 women and girls, and 336,623 men and boys received Mine/ERW risk education throughout the country.

