



MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN (MAPA)

NEWSLETTER: JANUARY 2014

"MAPA WISHES YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2014!"



Afghanistan Mine Action National Symposium

The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan and Department of Mine Clearance, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organised the Afghanistan Mine Action National Symposium to discuss the achievements of the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) and the remaining challenges ahead. Representatives from the Afghan Government, the international community, civil society, the media and other interested parties attended the Symposium.

During the Symposium, Mr. Mohammad Sediq Rashid, Director of MACCA, announced that MAPA had made significant progress since its establishment in 1988; over 20,000 hazardous areas had been cleared, benefiting almost 2,400 communities in 122 districts. "78% of the known contamination has been addressed as a result of MAPA's hard work, with an 80% reduction in civilian casualties," said Mr. Mohammad Sediq Rashid.

According to Afghanistan's 2013 Extension Request to the Mine Ban Treaty, the Government of Afghanistan is obligated to remove all of the remaining mines and explosive remnants of war by 2023. These hazards are currently impacting upon the livelihoods and safety of over 1,500 communities in Afghanistan. Ms. Abigail Hartley, Programme Manager at UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), said that this could be achieved for a total cost of USD 534 million over ten years and that the first year of the Extension Request is proceeding on target: "This budget will ensure the clearance of all known minefields and battle fields, along with other activities such as survey, coordination and project management," Ms Hartley said.

Dr. Mohammad Abas Baseer spoke on behalf of H.E. Mohammad Karim Khalili, the 2nd Vice President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, referencing the Afghan Government's commitment to mine action as a priority area: "Mine action is at the fore front of the priorities of the Afghan government. I reaffirm the full support of the Afghan government to this programme and its stakeholders, who have worked tirelessly to save lives over these past 24 years."

H.E. Mr. Mark Bowden, the UN's Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) in Afghanistan, addressed the symposium: "The UN is committed to strengthening Afghan institutions and political processes, to move away from supply-driven assistance and to support agreed national priorities and national budgetary systems. What we do and the way we work must always reinforce Afghan efforts."

H.E. Mr Bowden urged all those present to maintain their support to ensure that Afghanistan reached mine-free status by 2023, which, he said, would be a "monumental achievement".

Canadian Ambassador visited MACCA regional office

As a major donor to the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), the visit of Canada's Ambassador to Afghanistan, Ms Deborah Lyons, to MACCA's West Regional Office in Hirat Province on Wednesday 22nd January 2014 was met with enthusiasm by all MAPA partners. Ambassador Lyons was accompanied by the First Secretary for Humanitarian Assistance, Ms Taslim Madhani, along with Mr Jason Planp and Mr Marion from the Canadian Embassy. The delegation was warmly received by MACCA's Area Manager in the West, Mr. Noori, and his team.

The regional heads of MACCA's implementing partners (HALO Trust, ALSO, Handicap International, ARCS, OMAR WRA, and

EODT) were present at the meeting and briefed the visitors about their current projects, achievements and donors. In general, they thanked their donors, in particular Canada, for funding their current projects and appealed for continued funding so that the remaining hazards in the region could be released.

As the Area Manager, Mr Noori thanked the Ambassador for her country's support and briefed the honourable guests on demining activities in the region generally, as well as the achievements and challenges the programme has faced in the area.

Ambassador Lyons thanked all the presenters for their interesting and comprehensive presentations and expressed her enthusiasm for the activities and achievements of the Mine Action Programme in the region. Ambassador Lyons stated that Canada is well aware of the importance of the Mine Action Programme and considers it to be a high priority that should be supported. Ambassador Lyons promised that she would not only encourage her own country to support the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan but would also call on her fellow ambassadors to allocate funds to the programme in order to release the remaining mine/ERW hazards to release safe land for the region's communities. (Continues on Page 2)



H.E. Mr. Mark Bowden, the UN's DSRSG in Afghanistan is addressing to Mine Action Stakeholders

MAPA is supported by the following donors to the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action administered 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) ...

The Canadian Government has been one of MAPA's major donors. Canada has donated more than USD 135.4 million since the beginning of the programme in 1989 and has funded demining operations in 11 provinces and 17 districts, saving lives in 50 different communities and benefiting around 33,000 people. These funds were also used to support mine action operations through coordination, planning, in order to reduce the impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) on impacted communities across Afghanistan. Canadian support also contributed to increased protection for communities by promoting awareness and safe behavior through mine risk education. This combination of clearance and risk education supported by Canada has helped to reduce the number of mine and ERW casualties in Afghanistan year on year. In addition, the support of Canada has released agricultural land for further cultivation and grazing.

Mines and ERW continue to pose a direct threat to human lives in Hirat and in Afghanistan as a whole. In addition, the economic and social impact of the mine/ERW problem is hampering development in the country, for example, by blocking access to agricultural land, grazing areas, water resources, roads, and preventing the development of housing. The MAPA has a coordinated plan and technically-capable personnel to achieve the goal of a mine-free Afghanistan by 2023. It simply needs the support of donors such as Canada to realise this goal.

Enjeel District of Hirat is announced cleared of Mines & ERW

Enjeel District in Hirat Province was successfully declared free of all known mines and ERW. The district was handed over to the local authorities, community elders and development councils during a ceremony at the conference hall of the Enjeel District Development Council on Monday, 20th January 2014.

Enjeel is one of Hirat's most densely populated districts and includes the central and surrounding parts of Hirat City. The most impacted communities were Enjeel centre, Nawbadan, Qala-i-Shater, and Qal'eh-ye Mulla Abdullah. The release of this land not only contributed to the physical safety of Enjeel's residents but also to those of the surrounding communities who had to travel through the impacted areas as they commuted to Hirat.

The handover ceremony was attended by representatives from 181 communities in Enjeel District, as well as the provincial adviser, the district governor, the district police chief and representatives of demining NGOs. Haji Bashir Ahmad Bahadari, the Head of the Enjeel District Development Council, opened the handover ceremony and expressed his appreciation for MAPA's achievements in the District and the close cooperation of all involved.

Mr Sharif Shah, MACCA Operations Assistant, presented the achievements of MACCA's West Regional Office in Hirat Province, in particular in Enjeel District. He thanked the implementing partners that contributed to the clearance of mines and ERW in Enjeel, as well as the communities, Shura members, and local authorities for their consistent support for demining operations in the area.

Mr Abdul Latif Rahimi, Western Operations Manager at the Halo Trust (HT), one of the implementing partners, presented the Halo Trust's achievements and future plans. He thanked his staff for their valuable services in the area. He also expressed his gratitude to the local communities, Shura members, and local authorities for supporting his personnel and their demining operations.

Haji Ghoryani, District Governor, also expressed his appreciation for the demining operations in Enjeel. He called on those present to support mine action in their relevant communities. Mr Sayed Shafiq, the Head of ARCS Hirat, also thanked MACCA for its services and for properly categorising and prioritising the tasks to be completed during clearance. Mr Sayed Abobakar, Community Administrator, referred to the honesty and integrity demonstrated by demining personnel during clearance operations.

The mine and ERW problem in Enjeel heavily impeded the development of the area. Aside from the psychological impact for the population, who can now use their homes, streets, canals and grazing lands, without fearing for their safety, the district will also benefit economically thanks to the clearance. The provincial and local authorities have now approved various development and socio-economic projects to be implemented in the near future. For example, the World Bank's has initiated a 5-year project to build new and larger gardens and renovate previously damaged gardens. Smaller gardens will be built for women to grow vegetables. Similarly, the World Food Programme (WFP) has started a 3-year project called "Kitchen Garden" in five villages (Hindowan, Karta, Chaghara, Kabyan, and Ghizan Chashma), which will create jobs for 200 women.

Quote of the Month

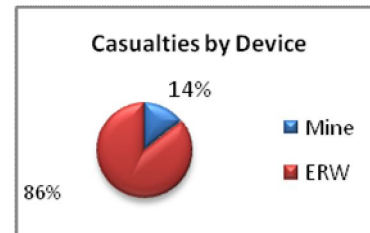
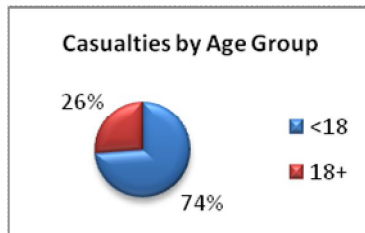
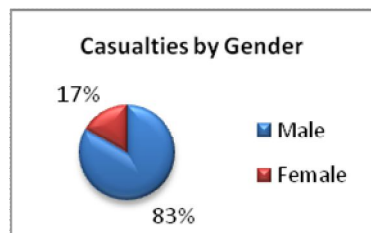
"I was very impressed to see firsthand the great work that the MACCA regional office in Herat is carrying out with the support of Government of Canada and MACCA's implementation partners. Demining activities in the western region of Afghanistan has shown immense progress. It was impressive to hear about their work on mine clearance, and the important victim assistance and mine risk education programmes."

Deborah Lyons, Ambassador of Canada in Afghanistan.



CASUALTIES DURING JANUARY 2014

During this month, 42 civilian casualties due to Mine and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were recorded in Afghanistan.



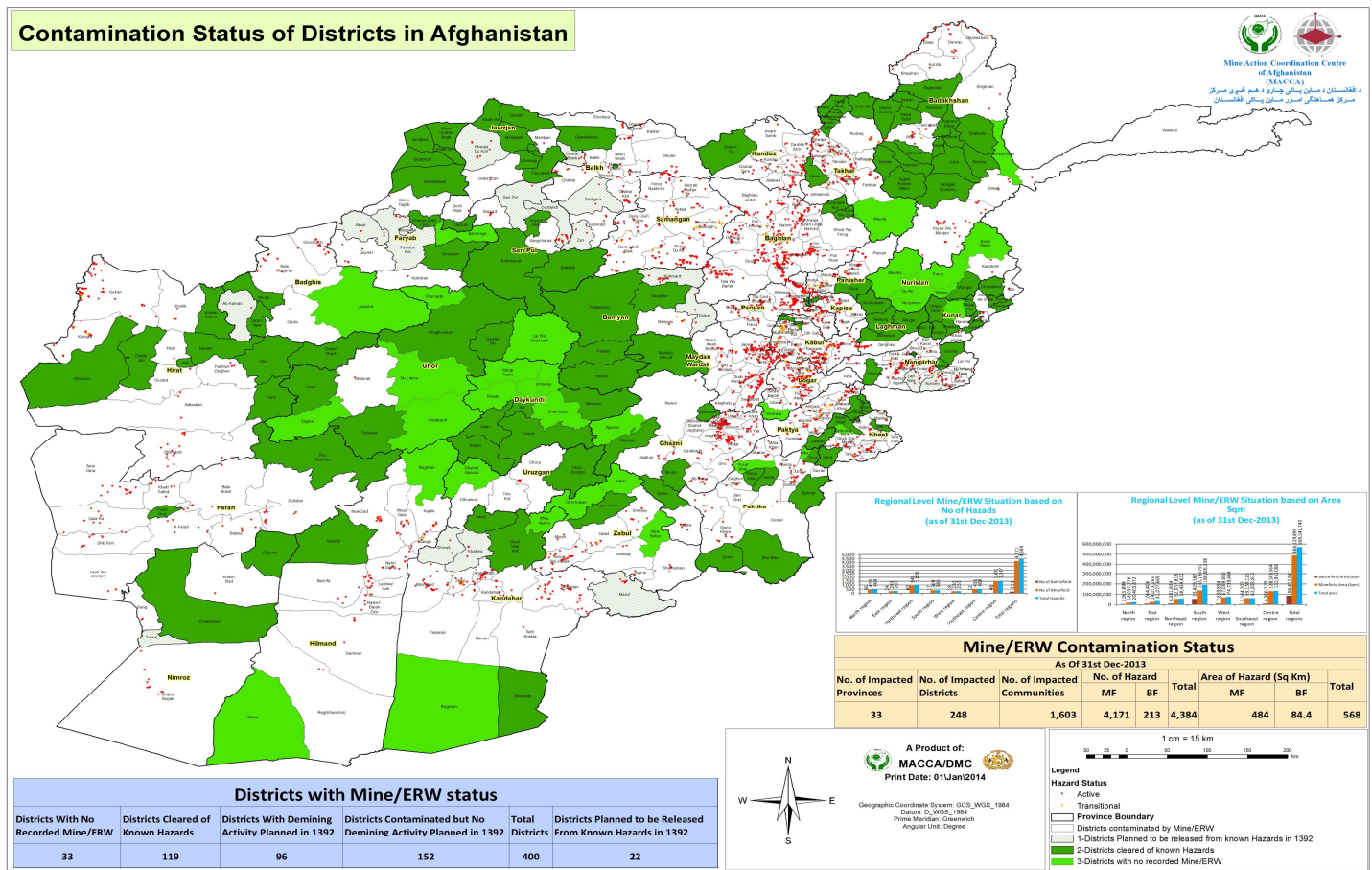
MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

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)	3439	266.4	457	24.5	-1.8	3,896	289.1	919	42.9	2,977	246.2	23.59	14.85
AT + ERW	1248	252.1	207	21.7	-4.0	1,455	269.8	341	39.3	1,114	230.5	23.44	14.55
BF	179	33.5	114	119.7	0.8	293	154.1	65	49.8	228	104.3	22.18	32.31
Total	4866	551.9	778	166.0	-4.9	5,644	713.0	1,325	132	4,319	581	23.48	18.51

Contamination Status of Districts in Afghanistan



MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1392 SO FAR

- * 18,242 anti-personnel mines, 689 anti-tank mines, and 663772 ERW destroyed.
- * 257 communities cleared of known mines and ERW.
- * 260,222 women and girls, and 303,092 men and boys received Mine/ERW risk education throughout the country.

