



## MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN (MAPA)

NEWSLETTER: MARCH 2014

" HAPPY NEW YEAR 1393 "



*Most of all I wish you all a happy New Year 1393!*

*As we start the New Year, the achievements of last year and the challenges of New Year cannot be over-emphasized. As last year the challenge of Mines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) in Afghanistan was reduced to up to 78% and there were 80% reduction in casualty rate all over the country.*

*In relation to MACCA's support to globally, in 1392, MACCA has sent many of its experienced professionals to the different mine action programmes around the world, including Tajikistan, Colombia, Bosnia and Cambodia to share experience and knowledge in various fields of mine action. In addition, MACCA's advocacy efforts persuaded many donors to contribute to the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan.*

*Despite significant progress the remaining challenges are nerve-racking. Still over 4,300 hazards, covering more than 510 Sq Km of land remain contaminated in more than 1,600 villages of the country. Most shocking challenge is that still we have up to 37 victims per month because of mines and ERW in the country.*

*At this point we call upon our gallant people to continue their support in making Afghanistan a country free of Mine and ERW. Also we humbly request our generous donors to continue their support and assistance in achieving our goals; and everyone else in the donor community to consider supporting the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan.*

*I wish you peace, good health and prosperity in 1393.*

*Mohammad Sediq Rashid  
Director - Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan*

### UNMAS AND MACCA SPONSOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL TEAMS

To support Afghan women and raise awareness on mine action, the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) and the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) distributed football uniforms to 192 female football players on Wednesday March 19th, 2014.

This ceremony was held at the Afghanistan Football Federation (AFF) and attended by Mohammad Yusuf Kargar, AFF Technical Vice President; Hamid Elmi, AFF Senior Advisor; Hajar Abulfazel, AFF Head of Women's Football Committee; Abigail Hartley, UNMAS Programme Manager; Noorullah Elham, MACCA Sr. Public Information Officer; as well as the players and managers of the women team.



Afghan Women's Football teams in support of Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan

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#### **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.

Mr. Mohammad Yusuf Kargar, the AFF Technical Vice President, declaring his gratitude said: "We greatly thank MACCA and UNMAS for their decision to support our women teams. It is a big concern for all of us knowing that every month around 37 people lose their lives or get injured because of mines and explosive remnants of war. Our doors will always be open to mine action colleagues and we will always advocate for this life-saving programme." Mr. Kargar added: "Football in Afghanistan is not just a sport anymore, but it brings with itself a message of unity, peace and security. Thus, we will also try to make our people and the world aware of the danger of mines and ERW to ensure that we have played our role in saving the lives of innocent children, women and men."



Abigail Hartley, the UNMAS Programme Manager with Afghan Women's football teams' representatives

Abigail Hartley, the UNMAS Programme Manager in Afghanistan, congratulated the women's football team managers, noting that: "We are all women working in a man's world. You inspire me and I hope I can encourage you." She went on to explain: "In Afghanistan, every month around 37 people die or are injured because of mines and ERW. Still over 4,300 hazardous areas remain in more than 1,600 villages of this country. This contamination directly affects women and this is why we are taking steps to increase awareness of the problem."

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of the uniforms to the female football players and the exchange of contacts for future collaboration. Both sides agreed to continue working together towards an Afghanistan free of mines

and ERW.

## JAPAN PROVIDES 3.6 MILLION DOLLARS TO SUPPORT MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Japan donated US\$ 13.3 million to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action at the end of February, US\$ 3.6 million of which will support mine action in Afghanistan. Maintaining its strong support for humanitarian demining, Japan is the leading donor to the United Nations efforts to eradicate landmines and Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

The contribution will benefit over 1,500 Afghans living in 15 communities through the removal of 38 hazards over an area of 2.5 square kilometres in the provinces of Kabul, Parwan, Baghlan, Paktya and Nimroz. The contribution will also result in Kabul New City and the district of Zaranj in Nimroz being declared entirely free of all recorded hazards. The contribution will also support the coordination of mine action in the country, allowing the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) and the Afghan Government's Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) to plan and prioritize mine action activities, accredit and assure the quality of implementing partners and maintain the Afghan mine action database, among other functions.

"Japan has been a constant supporter of mine action in Afghanistan. 2014 is an important milestone for the country and with this generous contribution, Japan's commitment to the stability and development of Afghanistan is clear. Continuing support from the donor community is needed though to ensure that Afghanistan is mine free by 2023," explained Abigail Hartley, the Programme Manager of the United Nations Mine Action Service in Afghanistan.

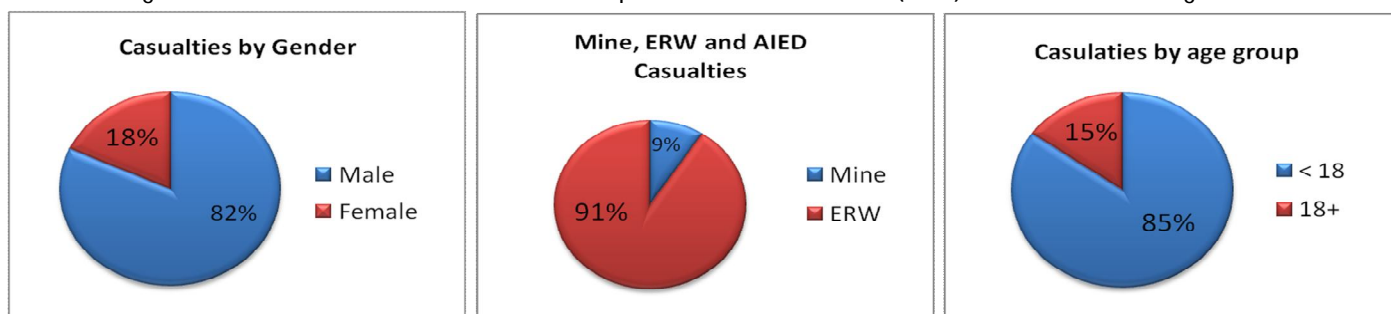
"Despite the significant progress we have made, many people particularly children are at risk of being killed or disabled by landmines and ERW. This generous contribution from the people of Japan will not only save lives, it will also contribute to the peace and stability of our war-torn country," added Mohammad Sediq Rashid, the Director of MACCA.

The Government of Afghanistan welcomed the contribution, with Mohammad Shafiq Yosufi, Director of the DMC saying, "I would like to thank the Government and the people of Japan for their generous support, which extends beyond mine action to the fields of governance, security, infrastructure development, rural development, and culture.

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## CASUALTIES DURING MARCH 2014

During this month, 33 civilian casualties due to Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) were recorded in Afghanistan.





I can say for sure that this particular contribution will not only save life and limb but will enhance the livelihood opportunities of mine and ERW affected communities.”

Japan has provided over US\$ 123 million to the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan since 1991. Its support has led to the clearance of over 22,000 hazardous areas, the destruction of over a million anti-personnel mines and over 16 million items of ERW. The accident rate has dropped from as many as 25 casualties per day in 1993 to 37 casualties per month in 2013.

## With UNMAS and MACCA's support, ALSO Enables Women and Children with Disabilities to Graduate

The Afghanistan Landmine Survivors Organization (ALSO) held a graduation ceremony for 770 women and 280 children with disabilities, who had successfully completed basic literacy, tailoring and other training courses. The training courses were funded by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and coordinated by the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA).

ALSO was established in July 2007 as a non-profit, non-religious, non-government organization to empower persons with disabilities in response to their needs. ALSO is a woman-led organization that understands and supports disabled women's social and economic needs in Afghan society.

This programme trained 57 women with disabilities in basic literacy and tailoring, on completion of which they received graduation certificates. 450 women, who are newly victims of landmines, received counseling and peer support services in Kabul, Mazar-e-Sharif, Hirat, Bamyan and other provinces. Of these women, 257 women received medical, psychological and physical rehabilitation services. 280 boys and girls were trained in English, computer skills, basic literacy, mathematics, and sports.

Life completely changes for any person who acquires a disability. In a society such as Afghanistan, the lives of women and children with disability are severely affected if they are disabled. In this situation, training and mentoring sessions such as the ones provided by ALSO bring hope and joy to the lives of those affected. As one of the par-

she highlighted the needs of persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities for tailoring program and added that Afghan women with disabilities are not either allowed to work outside of home, or due to the physical and attitudinal barriers, they cannot work outside of their homes as freely as required, so with home-based tailoring work, women are able to increase their income and improved their skills.

UNMAS is committed to supporting people with disabilities. As part of this strategy, UNMAS funds training projects such as those implemented by ALSO. Coordination and technical support for the ALSO training courses was provided by MACCA, which is an UNMAS-funded project.

## Mine Contaminated Water Project cleared

Mine action is not only saving lives in Afghanistan; it is also often essential to ensuring that key infrastructure projects can be implemented, thus facilitating the country's development. Over 120 square kilometres of contaminated areas impact on national development infrastructure projects (highway and road networks, airports, mines, transmission lines, new settlements, etc.), delaying their delivery if the minefields are not removed.

The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) works closely with key ministries to determine any overlap between recorded hazards and the projects the ministries would like to implement. In addition, mine action partners operate across all of Afghanistan's regions and have an excellent day-to-day working relationship with officials at a provincial, district and community level – both formally and informally – which ensures a good flow of information on new hazards.

One example of this successful collaboration is the clearance of land to enable a water pipeline in Samangan Province in northern central Afghanistan which started in 2012. Aybak city, located along the Kabul-Mazar highway, is the centre of the province. Drinking water is a major challenge for people living in Aybak and neighbouring areas. To tackle this issue, the Government of Afghanistan decided to commission the construction of a water pipeline in Samangan. The first phase of the project was designed to transfer water from the Khoram Sar Bagh reservoir to Aybak city. The 450 mm HDPE pipe would extend for approximately 38 km and supply water to more than 7,000 families.

Work on the pipeline stopped early on due to the discovery of an anti-tank mine during the excavation process. The contaminated area had previously been used as a military post and was located close to a residential area. MAPA was informed of the situation and was requested by the Provincial Authorities to survey the area and start mine clearance. Based on the survey information, the area was found to be contaminated by anti-tank mines.

In the end, three hazardous areas were cleared covering 2,842 square metres. The Water Pipeline Project will continue for one more year. Thanks to this project, more than one hundred local have found jobs and over 7,000 families will have access to clean drinking water. This is an example of how mine action can support development initiatives to enhance the well-being of communities.



Farzana - Training participant



Mrs. Amina Azimi—Executive Director of ALSO

ticipants of the sessions, Farzana, mentioned during her speech: “Before joining the training courses, I was crying and weeping behind the closed doors. But now I am happy that I am not a burden on anyone else, I can do tailoring, through which I can earn a living. At the conclusion she thanked UNMAS for its generous support for persons with disabilities, in particular women with disabilities as well she expects to continue its generous support for persons with disabilities in Afghanistan.”

At the end of the ceremony, Mrs. Amina Azimi, Executive Director of ALSO, thanked UNMAS and MACCA for their generous support and cooperation. The event kicked off with speeches. Amina AZIMI from ALSO spoke about its achievements and challenges in Afghanistan,

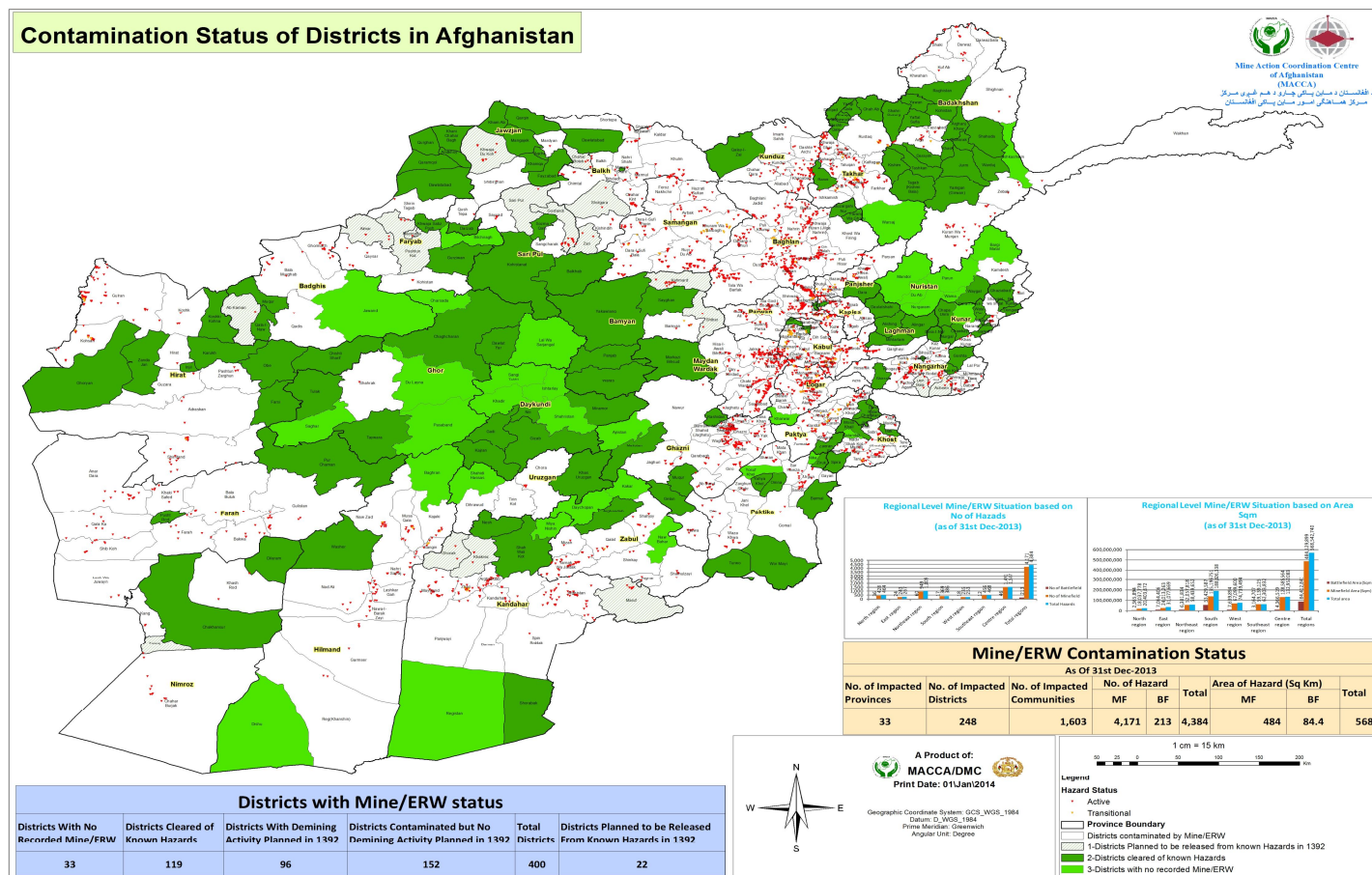
## MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

### 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	519	32	-1.6	3,958	296.7	998	48.1	2,960	248.6	25.21	16.2
AT + ERW	1,248	252.1	260	36	-9.4	1,508	277.7	392	43.1	1,116	235.5	25.99	15.48
BF	179	33.5	139	180	0.4	318	213.9	74	59.8	244	154.2	23.27	27.94
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,866</b>	<b>551.9</b>	<b>918</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>-10.6</b>	<b>5,784</b>	<b>789.3</b>	<b>1,464</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>4,320</b>	<b>638.3</b>	<b>25.31</b>	<b>19.13</b>

### Contamination Status of Districts in Afghanistan



## MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS IN 1392 SO FAR

- \* 19,644 anti-personnel mines, 763 anti-tank mines, and 730,188 ERW destroyed.
- \* 314 communities cleared of known mines and ERW.
- \* 322,891 women and girls, and 378,159 men and boys received Mine/ERW risk education throughout the country.

