



Speakers Biography

Subteniente Miguel Lopez Arias, Second Lieutenant of the Chilean Armed Forces

Second Lieutenant Miguel Lopez Arias is currently assigned, to the Regiment N°6 “Matucana” (Battalion of Engineers “Azapa”) in the city of Arica, as section commander of the demining section. Since April 2004, Second Lieutenant Lopez Arias has been actively involved in the GICHD managed field test of the mine action Handheld Survey Data Collection system in Chile.

Second Lieutenant Lopez Arias graduated from the Military School Libertador Bernardo O’Higgins of the Chilean Armed Forces in January 2002. After his graduation he successfully completed officer training and joined Regiment N°6 “Matucana”, of the city of Arica. In addition he has completed a course on minefields, after which he joined the Battalion of Engineers “Azapa“. He has also been involved in the application of IMAS in reference to Mine Action Operations He holds a BA in Project Administration from the University Diego Portales.

Mohamed Ahmed, Regional Coordinator for Africa and the Middle East (focus on Middle East and North Africa)

Mohamed Ahmed is the GICHD regional coordinator for Northern Africa and the Middle East. He is mainly responsible for maintaining contact with IMSMA users within the Northern African/Middle Eastern region. He provides technical and training support, assists with operational support for IMSMA and its integration. He also acts as the GICHD liaison officer and maintains close working relationships with IMSMA hosting nations, potential partners, regional UN agencies and NGO organisations active in Mine Action within the region.

Prior to joining the GICHD team, Mohamed was the Chief Mine Information Officer of the MACC SL UN Component. He has an MSc in Rural Planning and International Development from the University of Guelph (Canada), a Humanitarian Assistance Diploma from the City University of New York (Hunter College) and Post-Diploma in Geographic Information Systems from Niagara College. In addition to having worked with the UN MACC project from the onset, Mohamed has been involved in the humanitarian demining efforts that have taken place in Lebanon since July 2000.

Alan Arnold, Mine Action Information Systems Programme Manager

Alan Arnold is the GICHD's Programme Manager for Mine Action Information Systems. He manages the strategic direction and day to day operations of the Centre's activities in support of mine action information management. His responsibilities include policy development, budgetary control and technical and operational oversight of the IMSMA project, the GICHD Regional Support Centres, maXML and the Handheld Field Data Collection project. His work includes close co-ordination with the Centre's partners in the United Nations and other international and national bodies in matters relating to information management integration and support.

Prior to joining the GICHD Alan served as the Project Manager and Technical Director for a wide variety of commercial and public sector technology projects. His background includes training in electronics maintenance, software development, programming and business disciplines. He has served as a programmer, database administrator, system administrator and network engineer.

Alan holds a Master of Science Degree in Systems Management from the University of Southern California. He completed his undergraduate work in Computer Science and Business Administration at the University of Maryland. Alan is a member of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).

Simon Berger, Regional Co-ordinator in Latin America

Simon Berger is mainly responsible for maintaining contact with IMSMA users within the Latin America region. He provides technical and training support, assists with operational support for IMSMA and its integration. He also acts as the GICHD liaison officer and maintains close working relationships with IMSMA hosting nations, potential partners, regional UN agencies and NGO organisations active in Mine Action within the region.

Simon first began working in Mine Action when he joined the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) development team at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, Switzerland in February of 2000. During this period Simon provided field support and training to IMSMA users during the installation and set-up of the system. Simon started his professional career as an electrician while attending high school. This early start helped to prepare him for his studies at the college level. He earned his Bachelor's Degree for work on the Mathematic Modelling of Dynamic Systems as it applies to energy generation and control technologies. After college Simon took up a position with one of Switzerland's biggest power-supply utilities. He continued his studies in the area of Physical Geography and Remote Sensing at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland), the Universidad de Cantabria (Spain) and the Universidad Nacional de Cuyo (Argentina). His work on 3D- Simulation of Phenomena in the Atmosphere resulted in the award of a Masters Degree in Climate Science

Ben Blumenthal, Regional Coordinator for Africa and the Middle East (focus on South and Central Africa)

Ben Blumenthal is one of the two regional coordinators in Africa and the Middle East. His focus is on South and Central African countries. He is mainly responsible for maintaining contact with IMSMA users within these regions. He provides technical and training support, assists with operational support for IMSMA and its integration. He also acts as the GICHD liaison officer and maintains close working relationships with IMSMA hosting nations, potential partners, regional UN agencies and NGO organisations active in Mine Action within the region.

Prior to joining GICHD Ben worked as a project manager for a consulting company in Switzerland where he was responsible for the planning and implementation of projects in the IT environment. Ben holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of St. Gallen (HSG) in Switzerland. He wrote his thesis on the Israeli security conception and worked as a research assistant at the Centre for International Studies at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich.

Thomas Bollinger, Regional Coordinator for Eastern Europe & Central Asia

Thomas Bollinger joined the GICHD in 1999 and is currently mainly responsible for maintaining contact with IMSMA users within the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Region. He provides technical and training support, assists with operational support for IMSMA and its integration. He also acts as the GICHD liaison officer and maintains close working relationships with IMSMA hosting nations, potential partners, regional UN agencies and NGO organisations active in Mine Action within the region. In addition to these tasks Thomas is also responsible for logistic support in Geneva.

Stephen L. Egbert, Associate Professor University of Kansas

Stephen L. Egbert holds a joint appointment as Associate Professor in the Department of Geography and Associate Research Scientist in the Kansas Applied Remote Sensing (KARS) Program at the University of Kansas. He has over 23 years of experience in applying remotely sensed imagery and related geospatial technologies to earth resources issues. At the University of Kansas, he teaches courses in physical geography, remote sensing, and geographic techniques. In addition to his teaching duties, Dr. Egbert currently serves as a research investigator for projects funded by NASA, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the Kansas Division of Water Resources. He also serves as the Kansas state director of the Kansas consortium for AmericaView, a national organization sponsored by the U.S. Geological Survey to promote the use of remotely sensed imagery in research, education, and outreach. His research interests focus primarily on the development of multi-seasonal imagery classification methodologies to map and characterize land cover and the 3D visualization of remotely sensed imagery for landscape understanding and analysis.

Sangi Fati, Operations Officer of CAAMI

Mr. Fati has been the operations officer of the National Mine Action Coordination Centre (CAAMI) since 2002. Prior to taking up this post he had held the rank of Colonel and was chief of staff of the Armed Forces in Guinea Bissau. Mr. Fati holds a law degree.

Stefan Kallin, Independent Consultant for SWEDEC

Stefan Kallin is a former EOD officer in the Swedish Armed Forces now working as an independent consultant for SWEDEC. In his current post he fulfils the duties of EOD IS Senior Technical Advisor. Stefan has been working with the development of the SWEDEC EOD IS system since 1995 as Assistant Project Manager, Technical Manager and Programmer. He is currently working with the development of the EOD IS-SURVEY subsystem.

John Kostelnick, PhD candidate at the University of Kansas

John Kostelnick is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography at the University of Kansas (USA), a graduate research assistant at the Kansas Applied Remote Sensing (KARS) Program, and an instructor at Haskell Indian Nations University. His research and teaching interests include cartography, geovisualization, GIS, and the cultural geography of the United States. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Geography from the University of Nebraska—Lincoln and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from Iowa State University.

Ananda S. Millard, IMSMA Training Coordinator

Ananda S. Millard is the Training Coordinator for the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). She is the focal point for IMSMA training activities at the GICHD office in Geneva. This includes caring for training endeavours in Switzerland and providing support to the Regional IMSMA Support Staff. Her principal responsibilities include the development, and production of training materials as well as training itself and relevant administrative tasks. In addition, she performs the tasks of Regional Coordinator for countries where a full time Regional Coordinator is not in place.

Prior to joining the GICHD, on October 15th 2002, Ananda was a Senior Researcher at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), where she was part of the Assistance to Mine-Affected Communities (AMAC) project. She has fieldwork experience from conflict and post-conflict zones, primarily in rural settings. In addition to her research on issues related to humanitarian mine action, she was closely involved in the development of research methodologies for work in conflict and post-conflict situations, including the development and implementation of approaches to local capacity-building. Ananda is fluent in Spanish and has a working knowledge of Portuguese.

She holds a PhD from the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford, UK. An MA in International Conflict Analysis from the University of Kent at Canterbury and a BA in International Studies from Norwich University VT.

Claude Peffer, EOD Luxemburg

Claude Peffer has worked as a EOD/demining professional for the Luxembourg Army since 1986. In addition to his disposal work (World Wars 1 & 2 ordnance) and other collateral activities (such as MRE), he was deployed in Iraq and Croatia as an EOD operator, and in Bosnia as the EOD Technical Advisor in support of HQ SFOR. More recently, he also acted as an international expert to assess Swiss Fortification Guard members during their pre-deployment training as EOD supervisors.

Jean Paul Rychener, Stockpile Destruction and IMSMA Implementation Officer

Lt.Col. Jean-Paul Rychener is responsible for operational aspects of IMSMA and stockpile destruction. As a French speaker, he also provides assistance when working with Francophone countries and dealing with French translations of GICHD publications.

Lt. Col Rychener is a senior engineer officer seconded by the French MoD, he has a 28 years experience of operational matters and staff work, including mine and UXO disposal. He took part in abroad missions in several countries such as: Guyana, Chad, Central African Republic, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iraq, Bosnia Herzegovina with UNPROFOR, IFOR and SFOR, recently in Eritrea and Ethiopia with UNMEE. Prior to joining the GICHD in July 2002, he was deputy commander in a French Foreign Legion Engineer Regiment.

Sandi Šaban, CROMAC

Mr. Sandi Šaban holds a Bachelor of Computer Science from Zagreb University. In 1997 he began working for the UN Mine Action Centre Croatia, first as a GIS Specialist and later as Mine Action Information Systems Manager. He is a member of the Technical Advisory and Expert Group on the Project of Geographical Information Systems for Mine Action in South-Eastern Europe. Prior to his work in mine action he held the post of Information Technology Training Officer in the UN Civilian Police Support Unit.