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Senior Mine Action Managers Course at JMU Trains 19 International Participants

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(Harrisonburg, VA—June 10, 2010) Nineteen senior managers from 12 countries affected by explosive remnants of war (ERW) are participating in a residential, five-week "Senior Managers Course" (SMC), presented and delivered by the Mine Action Information Center (MAIC), a division of The Center for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) at James Madison University, with funding from the U.S. Department of State. This marks the sixth course held at JMU, with a total of 125 senior managers from 36 countries trained. Representatives from Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Sudan and Tajikistan, as well as many other mine-affected countries, have participated in this course. SMC participants hold various positions in coordination, education, victim assistance and demining with mine-action centers around the world. The course runs from May 17 through June 17.

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"Thanks to the JMU College of Business and our friends and partners from around the world, including the UN and the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining, for providing its talented professors and experts to make this training the most comprehensive senior management training for ERW and mine-action personnel in the world. What the participants are learning will help them save many lives from being destroyed by explosive remnants of war and landmines for generations to come," says Ken Rutherford, CISR Director.

As part of its commitment to making the world safer from ERW, the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs provides a grant to fund the SMC. PM/WRA has identified a need for trained managers in host-nation organizations that deal with landmine and ERW clearance. JMU has been hosting the course since 2004 when the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) awarded the university a contract for the first such course. PM/WRA took over sponsorship of the program in 2009.

The SMC provides a unique opportunity for leaders from around the world to unite and exchange information on post-conflict research, specifically addressing the safe and effective removal of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. Participants of the program also benefit from social activities and interaction with the community while becoming emissaries for the United States. Harrisonburg and the surrounding community benefit from the SMC directly through cross-cultural interactions and indirectly through showing support for a worthy international humanitarian project.

"The seminar is a unique and valuable opportunity to achieve capabilities in humanitarian mine action and explosive remnants of war management skills and strategic planning procedures. It is also an incredibly valuable way of sharing best practices and experiences, as well as networking with the participants from different countries and backgrounds," says Dorijan Maršić, Director, International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance.



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Classes, which combine lessons from business research and accounts from landmine operators, are taught by university professors and subject-matter experts. The knowledgeable faculty from JMU's College of Business, as well as directors of several international nonprofit organizations and government agencies, teach participants to: develop personal skills for effective management, master business management practices and application, and enhance their knowledge of mine-action challenges, techniques and requirements. Over the remaining weeks, the participants will attend daily sessions concluding with a week-long management case-study team exercise to apply the skills that they have learned.

The interactive format of the course allows participants to learn not only from the instructors and lecturers but also from the different perspectives of one another. Knowledge learned from the workshop can then be shared with others in the field upon the participants' return to their respective countries. Additionally, the participants will acquire the added benefit of increased resources and contacts to draw upon in promoting action for the removal of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

The program's success and the increasing challenges involved with the removal of landmine and other explosive remnants of war, is prompting the organizations partnering in this venture to continue and possibly expand the program. MAIC (maic.jmu.edu) will offer its course again in May of 2011 and will partner with the Jordanian government to conduct a course in Amman, Jordan, in October 2010. The Center for International Stabilization and Recovery at James Madison University combines knowledge with action to provide products and services to organizations and individuals on the front lines of humanitarian crises and post-conflict environments. CISR develops and strengthens local capacity through field program development and management; conference planning and management; curriculum development and training; monitoring, measuring and evaluating programs and projects; publishing; and Web site development and hosting. The Center also conducts strategic planning for collaborative humanitarian assistance projects around the world, such as in Cambodia, Colombia, and Jordan.

CISR is the outgrowth of JMU's MAIC, a public policy center founded in 1996 to deal with research, education and training surrounding the issue of landmine remediation. Designated a "Center of Excellence" by the United States Department of Defense, the MAIC is an objective information resource regarding international efforts to combat the effects of landmines and explosive remnants of war.

For more information, visit maic.jmu.edu or contact Dr. Suzanne Fiederlein, Senior Research Associate, at +1.540.568.2715.

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