

NATIONAL MINE RISK EDUCATION STANDARDS FOR VIETNAM

Based on a request from UNICEF Country Office Hanoi, Vietnam for the development of National Mine Risk Education Standards (NMRES) for Vietnam, the GICHD conducted a two-days workshop in Hanoi from 5 to 6 December 2007. Some 33 participants representing the mix of Vietnamese mine action organizations were invited. Major stakeholders included the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs (MOLISA), the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), the Technology Center for Bomb and Mine Disposal (BOMICEN) of the Ministry of National Defense, the Center for Youth Union, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Vietnam Assistance for Handicapped, Vietnam Veterans of American Foundation (VAAF) and representatives of the RENEW project in Quang Tri province.

The workshop was not only aimed at developing agreed NMRES for Vietnam but also at bringing all mine action stakeholders in Vietnam together to discuss the need for a national authority who could coordinate the development process, endorse and enforce national mine action standards in Vietnam.

Vietnam currently lacks a formal National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) or a National Mine Action Center. The BOMICEN established in September 1996 is licensed to work as a leading unit and a major advisory agency of the Vietnamese Ministry of National Defense in dealing with landmines and explosive remnants of war. UNICEF has been instrumental for MRE activities in Vietnam as a donor and as a coordinating body.

As the existence of a NMAA is the essential body for developing, approving and enforcing NMRES, the participants discussed how they could come-up with NMRES in the absence of a NMAA. As a result, participants unanimously recommended that MOLISA should play the role of the NMAA for MRE, and should take the lead on the development of NMRES. In the workshop, the requirement for various MRE standards were discussed the content of which are based on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), but includes local MRE situation. At the end, participants agreed on one NMRES document with nine chapters: These were:

1. management and responsibilities;
2. needs assessment;
3. planning for MRE;
4. data collection and information sharing;
5. MRE messages;
6. MRE materials;
7. monitoring MRE;
8. evaluation of MRE; and
9. community liaison.

The development of a chapter on the accreditation of MRE organizations was not considered to be necessary at the time and has been postponed until the establishment of a NMAA.

A Review Board overseeing the development of NMAS for MRE was established to which most MRE organizations in Vietnam are members. The participants agreed to produce a first draft to the Review Board by 21 January 2008. The Review Board will provide comments on the draft by 21 February 2008, and a final draft will then be produced and discussed at a Review Board meeting planned on 30 April 2008. At the time of writing this article, the draft NMRES has been produced and circulated to all members of the Review Board for comments.

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