



Conference Report

Full Name:

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction - Intersessional Work Programme 2000-2001

Standing Committee on Mine Clearance and Related Technologies

Date and Venue:

May 8-9, 2001, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), Geneva, Switzerland

Type:

Periodic conference within the framework of the Mine Ban Convention.

[... The Intersessional Work Programme was created with the aim of facilitating the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty and the fulfillment of its obligations. The Standing Committees meet twice a year to deal with the key themes of mine action; they are hosted by the GICHD.]

Source: GICHD (<http://www.gichd.ch/mbc/index.htm>)

NOTE: only the sessions dealing with mine clearance and related technologies were attended.

Summary of the Most Relevant Topics and Presentations:

A. Standards and Criteria:

I. *International Mine Action Standards (IMAS)* – Adrian Wilkinson, GICHD (project manager):

First proposed at the Copenhagen conference (1996), first version by UNMAS (UN Mine Action Service), management then taken over by GICHD. Target date: Sept. 2001. ISO (International Standards Organization) standard language adopted. Some will require new procedures, others minimal adaptations. New IMAS were presented and the importance of the standardization effort underlined.

Corresponding Website: <http://www.mineclearancestandards.org/> (ample documentation available)

A number of *Technical Notes for Mine Action (TNMA)*, currently 5, of advisory nature, have also been released. A **GICHD study on mechanical clearance** is also ongoing (ref. Ian Mansfield, UNMAS).

Discussion: Mostly around two points, i.e. how “mandatory” the standards are or should be, and on the impact of the standards on the field (which level of adaptation effort will be necessary in practice?).

B. Measures of Impact and Benefit:

I. *Socio-economic analysis in mine action* – Ian Mansfield, UNMAS:

Presentation of the following just completed study, which will be available from the GICHD Website and on CD:

“*A Study of Socio-Economic Approaches to Mine Action*”, Geneva, March 2001, 188 pp., ISBN 92-1-126139-2, UN Sales No E.01.III.B.8. Contacts: UN Development Programme (UNDP), Emergency Response Division, Mine Action Team, One United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, USA (<http://www.undp.org/erd/mineaction/>), and GICHD (<http://www.gichd.ch>).

Focus on three different case studies: Kosovo, Mozambique, and Laos. The report proves that a (mine action) cost/benefit analysis can be carried out and that actually a net benefit can be proven (even when only the economic benefits are considered). Usefulness of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) was also stressed, for ex. in Kosovo.

III. *Landmines Impact Surveys* – SAC:

Update on new surveys by the Survey Action Center (Level I surveys), especially those which will be accumulating over the next couple of years. Extensive survey activity, of primary importance to evaluate the landmine contamination problem size and characteristics, set priorities, etc.

Corresponding Website: <http://www.landminesurvey.org/>

C. Technologies for Mine Action:

Individual Presentations:

1) *Pascal Collotte, European Commission, Directorate General (DG) Information Society (DG INFISO)* – B4 Unit, Brussels:*

Presentation of ongoing R&D projects financed by the EC within the IST framework of the 5th Framework Programme (9 projects launched in 2001, 16.5 MEURO over 3 years), as well as still ongoing projects started during the previous (4th) Framework Programme. Aims:

“Involve the industrial community in cost shared actions; Minimize the time to market; Integrate multi-sensor solutions, strengthened by data fusion and machine learning techniques; Improve circulation and clarity of the information; Validate prototypes thus helping setting a common methodological framework and defining testing procedures.”

Focus is on Stability Pact (Balkans) and Middle East regions. Similar presentation available from <http://eu-mine-actions.jrc.cec.eu.int/>

[*DG INFISO: Information Society: Telecommunications, Markets, Technologies - Innovation and Exploitation of Research. Corresponding Website: <http://www.cordis.lu/ist/ka1/b4home.htm>]

2) *H. Schleijsen, TNO Physics and Electronics Laboratory, The Netherlands:*

Overview of TNO activities in humanitarian demining related R&D during the past years. Technical opportunities and local capabilities (ex. 6 lane test area) highlighted.

Short/Mid term research topics: Neutralisation, protection, metal detectors: participation in the International Pilot Project for Technology Co-operation (IPPTC) with testing of 70 commercial models in 4 types of soils (report will be available soon); extraction of information on quantities such as target depth, shape, type and amount of metal.

Corresponding Website: http://www.tno.nl/instit/fel/os/prg/the_mine_detection.html

3) *Alois Sieber, European Commission, Joint Research Centre, Ispra, Italy:*

Apparently no practical results have emerged after 5 years of R&D; several reasons were analysed (R&D technology driven; often discussed in isolation; not supporting improvement of existing technologies, e.g. mechanical). A solution was proposed in the form of an “Integral approach” (need for a “Global Business Plan”: specific, measurable, achievable, result-oriented, time focused goals).

Corresponding Website: <http://demining.jrc.it/>

4) *R. Suart, CCMAT (Canadian Centre for Mine Action Technologies):*

Importance of **Testing and Evaluation** (T&E), and details of the ITEP (International Test and Evaluation Program) work. Inventory of T&E capabilities in the Balkans underway. Users should establish requirements for R&D.

Corresponding Website: <http://http://www.ccmat.gc.ca/>

Forum Discussion (selected topics):

- “Bottom-up” vs. “top-down” approach. V. Joynt (Mechem, ZA): End users should specify the objectives, not “dictate” the technologies.
- *Operational needs studies* by GICHD about to be finished. Study on mechanical equipment ongoing (Ian Mansfield).
- Some good improvements are being achieved in existing technologies. New technologies are often presented too technically for a general audience (Paddy Blagden, GICHD).
- It is a Mine Ban Treaty obligation (art. 6) to provide information on technologies to the UN database (Paddy Blagden).
- Currently no individual with responsibility/authority to know what’s going on in various countries. **PROPOSAL:** each country to appoint a specialist with a number of responsibilities, e.g. reporting, and also with enough authority to have access to military institutions (Paddy Blagden).

D. Coordination, Planning and Prioritisation:

I. *Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA)* – Alan Arnold, Thomas Bollinger (GICHD)):

New issues in training (decentralisation) and deployment (list of new countries).

Corresponding Websites: <http://www.gichd.ch/imsma/index.htm> (<http://www.gichd.ch/docs/imsma/index.htm>), <http://www.imsma.ethz.ch/index.html>

III. *UN Coordination (UNMAS)*:

Database of Mine Action Investments: 17 donors have entered data so far (US, EC and Japan apparently not yet present), 8 of which updated it for the year 2000. The DB allows tracking of investment also by type (R&D included). Total investments for the year 2000 (listed in the DB): 220 M\$, of which 40% through the UN. Mine clearance: 56%, R&D 2% (but provisional data, see above)!

Requirements for assistance have however grown even faster than total mine action investments.

Corresponding Website: <http://webapps.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/mai/>

Additional Comments:

Individual presentations will be available from the GICHD Website, in the pages dedicated to the Ottawa treaty.

The ICBL (International Committee to Ban Landmines) presented a *Website dedicated to collecting information about all available resources on landmines*. Subdivision into Text, Websites and Audio-Visual material. Searches by keywords or categories/subcategories are possible. Comments and inputs welcome.

<http://www.icbl.org/index/>

References:

<http://www.gichd.ch/sc/index.htm>

http://www.gichd.ch/sc/agendas_mine_clearance.htm

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