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Geneva International Centre for
Humanitarian Demining
Centre International de
Démunage Humanitaire - Genève



Report on proceedings of Informal Dialogue on Mainstreaming Mine Action into Development Geneva, 13 June, 2005

Background

The genesis of the informal dialogue lies in the Nairobi Plan of Action, 2005-2009, which highlights the need for mine action to be integrated more into the development process, rather than to be solely labelled as an element of humanitarian assistance. Actions #40 to #50 outline the expectations on both mine affected countries and state parties in a position to assist, and they clearly assume that all parties will make the necessary political, financial and material commitments to ensure continued success.

Since most official donor agencies have not been present at meetings of States Parties of the Ottawa Convention, and have largely viewed mine action as an issue to be dealt with by those concerned with small arms and munitions, it is hoped that making an effort to include them in conversations about ‘mainstreaming’ will be an effective way to begin the process.

Introduction

Ambassador Stephan Nellen, Director of the GICHD (Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining) summarized the initiatives in which the Centre had been involved, which had furthered their interest in mine action as a development issue:

- Study on ‘Socio-economic approaches to mine action’;
- ‘Guide to socio-economic approaches to mine action planning and management’;
- regional workshops to train national mine action managers and their international advisors;
- research project to examine how mine action programs have been linking with development planners, managers and practitioners at the national, sectoral and community levels in mine affected countries;
- broadening the scope of evaluation activities to include developmental effectiveness, impact and sustainability;
- work toward the establishment of an international mine action standard for evaluation based on principles enumerated by the DAC;
- review of 10 years of mine action in Mozambique.

The fundamental principle underlying all these activities is that the primary responsibility for devising and implementing solutions to contamination problems in any country rests with the government of the mine-affected country.

Dr. Catherine Bragg, Director-General, HAPS, CIDA explained that this dialogue is intended to broaden the concern about landmines and other explosive remnants of war as obstacles to development in post-conflict situations. After the Nairobi Summit mine affected countries are being asked to include mine action in their priorities and plans, and donor countries to consider mine action within their broader cooperation activities. The problem posed is whether we can go further in making these initiatives and the recommendations of the Nairobi Summit Action Plan more of a reality. We must acknowledge the pervasive nature of mines and ERW (Explosive Remnants of War) throughout the continuum from crisis to development and take them into account when planning in mine affected countries. The intention is not to replace what has been done to date but to add value and complementarity in the right situation, in the right place, at the right time.

Proceedings

A presentation by the GICHD delivered three key messages:

- it is not an issue of **either** humanitarian assistance **or** development but of recognising that mine action contributes to both, albeit the relative priorities change over time;
- we are reaching a transition point at which mine action will have to compete with other development priorities for funding and impacted countries will have to argue for removal beyond the “mine safe” category;
- once mine action is just one issue among many, will the donors continue to support the development of core capacities?

A discussion of current practice among donors followed. Donor mechanisms run the gamut from purely humanitarian to purely developmental, and all stages between, but the majority still leaned toward the humanitarian label. The significant points raised were:

- mine action and development can benefit from closer coordination
- in order for donors to support mine action, it must be a priority in the development plans of the affected country; national ownership and national capacity are issues
- is mine action in competition with other sectors or is it complementary
- stability of funding and long-term funding allow proper planning
- mainstreaming will be a slow process as development practitioners do not yet have the skills to make appropriate mine action decisions
- reconstruction and development of infrastructure place heavy demands on mine action
- a number of donors are integrating mine action into agriculture and other development programs, and victim assistance into health and other ministries

During the lunch hour there were presentations by the UNDP and GICHD, giving their views and activities towards ‘mainstreaming’:

UNDP feels in many instances there is a lack of information on which to make the case for mainstreaming or to prove that it is a good investment. The mine action and development communities must strengthen links and ensure that mine action is included in national development plans.

The Centre is providing operational assistance by maintaining the IMSMA (Information Management System for Mine Action), the IMAS (International Mine Action Standards) and

seeking to improve evaluation processes. It provides research on issues such as legislation, socio-economic linkages, and studies on various modes of demining (manual, mine dog training). It also provides support to the Treaty.

In the afternoon session the group turned to the issues involved in linking with development – country ownership, national development plans, donor issues, organizational structures, the role of civil society, information needs, UN agencies, earmarking.

The international organizations all mentioned the issue of earmarking funds as limiting their scope of action, while admitting that unearmarked funds required longer approval times and stricter accountability. The question was raised whether donors would accept, e.g., health or education proposals which included mine action components for funding. When countries ask for assistance, they should be asked where mine action fits into their development plans and what priority they attach to these measures. Donor coordination and information sharing with international organizations is crucial. Capacity which has been developed in a country should be built into development sectors, such as agriculture and infrastructure development.

Civil society emphasized the importance of multi-year funding to allow longer term planning and felt that dedicated funds were much easier for them to access. They admitted they had not stayed as closely in touch with development organizations as they might have.

The bilaterals felt that they should be more open to multi-sectoral approaches – to including mine action in sectoral projects such as education or basic health care, where mine risk education or victim assistance is an issue. The source of the money doesn't matter – it is the end use that counts. Some donors are still carrying out projects which do not appear in national development plans but this is decreasing. We should share more information – ask why developing countries are not reaching the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). A check list of what development agencies should be in a position to do was suggested and is annexed to this document.

Conclusion

This dialogue was a first attempt at bringing donor countries around a table to exchange views on ways to follow up on the points in the Nairobi Plan of Action which touch on development and mine action. In this sense, it can be qualified as a success. Fourteen governments, the European Commission and several multilateral institutions got together to exchange on the subject.

Linking mine action to development is recognized as a concept and a valid approach, among others, for furthering assistance to mine-affected countries. It was agreed that it would benefit from being better understood and defined by development practitioners as well as professionals dealing with landmines and ERW. The value in pursuing this pragmatic approach is that mine action in development offers possibilities that complement stand-alone efforts and those funded under humanitarian programs. It became clear that participants see linking mine action to development as an integral part of an effort to eradicate landmines and ERW along the continuum from relief to development.

Among the numerous ideas exchanged during the meeting, the need to enhance our capacity to highlight the development link to mine action and to provide development practitioners with sufficient and accurate information on mines as obstacles to development and the attainment of MDGs was stressed. Developing convincing arguments based on national country plans and ownership is critical. Mine action 'business cases' could be seen as a helpful tool.

Advocacy and policy dialogue at the broader multilateral level would also help foster a greater appreciation for the developmental character of mine action. Providing the right messages to encourage multilateral development organizations to address contamination issues would be constructive.

At the conclusion of the meeting, it was agreed around the table that the dialogue should be continued, at least with a second meeting, at which information requirements and case studies could be discussed to identify best practices in this field.

Annex 1

INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES
13-17 JUNE

**INFORMAL DIALOGUE ON MAINSTREAMING MINE ACTION IN
DEVELOPMENT 13 JUNE, 2005**

WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION HEADQUARTERS AT 7BIS AVENUE DE
LA PAIX, GENEVA, ROOM C1

AGENDA

- 11h00 Greeting of participants by the co-chairs, Ambassador Stephan Nellen, Director of GICHD and Dr. Catherine Bragg, Director General Humanitarian Assistance, Peace and Security, CIDA
- 11h20 Roundtable discussion on donor reaction to and experience in integrating mine action into development programming
- 13h00 Participants from Development agencies are invited to a lunch in Lake Room. (Due to space constraints, by invitation only)
- 14h00 Presentations during lunch by UNDP, GICHD on mine action

Afternoon Session: Exploring Possible New Avenues for Mainstreaming

- 15h00 Exchange of ideas on how best to link mine action in the context of the Nairobi Plan of Action 2005-2009 and the regular development activities supported by international development agencies*
- 16h30 Summary and the way forward: Ambassador Nellen
- 16h50 Conclusions

* A paper which might serve as a basis for discussion will be distributed with this agenda

ANNEX 2: Checklist of possible approaches to mainstreaming

1. **Create an environment** whereby agencies are aware of the problem and can put in place mine sensitive measures to cope with the problem
2. **Have access to essential information** about the relative danger of investing aid in areas that are suspected of being contaminated.
3. Be able **to tap into a network of information on mine contamination** as a first step. This can include dissemination of good practices and evaluative results.
4. Have access **to landmine impact surveys** detailing the physical threat and the **effect on populations** they see as **potential beneficiaries of cooperation**.
5. It may be necessary to build particular **country case studies** and rationales for being involved or not in mine action.
6. **Develop strategies or modalities** for integrating mine action where this is a precondition to other types of development activity, humanitarian assistance and peace-building efforts.
7. **Explore using different channels of aid**, seeking the optimal approach for each situation. In doing so, a donor country can also succeed in diversifying its sources of funding.
8. Explore **with development NGOs** and other organizations of **civil society** the possibility of incorporating mine action in their activities. This is especially interesting for victim assistance.
9. Include mine action in **consultative processes** whether they are bilateral or multilateral. Advocacy and policy dialogue on the importance of mine action in humanitarian, peace-building and development issues.
10. Building mine action components into **agency development frameworks** for particular partner countries
11. Introduce third generation of projects: **mine action as a component** of a development project vs. stand alone in a development programme.
12. A corollary to this would be to improve the level of **coordination between donor agencies**, both specialized and general development.
13. At the **multilateral level, development agencies could play a role in influencing multilateral organizations** to take mine action into consideration in looking at country programmes. IFIs can be encouraged through executive directors to take a close look at how financing can play a role as well.

Annex 3 - Participants' list

Informal dialogue on Mainstreaming Mine Action into Development, 13 June 2005

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