

Linking Mine Action and Development Contact Group Meeting

Meetings of the Standing Committees of the APMBBC - Geneva

Tuesday, 3 June 2008

Summary of Discussions

Co-chairs: Dr. Mohammad Haider Reza, UN Mine Action Center for Afghanistan and Ms. Anne Woodbridge, Canadian International Development Agency

Approaches and lessons learned from linking mine action with development

Dr. Mohammad Haider Reza emphasised the importance of linking mine action with development by describing the situation in Afghanistan where the presence of mines/UXO threatens community safety and food security, prevents the return and reintegration of IDPs and refugees as well as the reconstruction of roads and other vital infrastructure. An important opportunity and key challenge relates to effective coordination between different actors such as governments, donors, humanitarian and development NGOs and other actors. Mine action must be reflected in national and regional country plans. Much progress has been made since the early years of mine action, as more attention is being given to the socio-economic benefits of mine/ERW clearance and to ensuring mine action effectively promotes development and poverty reduction. However, further consideration must be given to how mine action can actively promote peace building.

Anna Miller, Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) presented CPAR's experience, as a small/medium-sized development NGO working in mine-affected Northern Uganda (http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/contact_group/Presentation-LMADCG-CPAR-June2008.pdf). Concrete examples of entry points for integrating mine risk education (MRE) and victim assistance (VA) into development programming were given as were lessons learned. The Northern Ugandan context is unique in that two development NGOs (CPAR and AVSI) providing health and food security related assistance got involved in MRE and survivor assistance before a national coordinating authority was in place and before the arrival of demining organisations. Some of the entry points for integrating mine risk education and survivor assistance into development programmes discussed were:

- Participation in regular meetings with the Mine Action Working Group to share information and provide mutual debriefings about mine action and development activities in mine-affected areas. This involves other development NGOs as well as UN agencies, military, police and local authorities.
- CPAR staff involved in mine action programming also sit on UN-led Clusters related to child protection, health, water/sanitation
- CPAR MRE coordinator also involved in peace-building projects
- Standard Operating Procedures and Health and Safety section of CPAR's human resource manual and framework includes MRE core messages

Lydia Good, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) emphasised the importance of mine action not being carried out in isolation. An increasing number of mine-affected countries have integrated mine action in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and National Development Plans, and have established inter-ministerial committees, which indicates that some governments see mine/ERW contamination as a broader issue. One structural aspect which may facilitate greater linkages is the existence of an inter-ministerial committee dealing with mine action as is the case in Laos. It was highlighted that some donors such as the EU have recently made a policy shift and are now obliging a link between mine action and development. While encouraging integrated mine action and development, UNDP also stresses the importance of donors funding mine action during conflict situations. The value

of demonstrating commitment and national ownership by committing financial and in-kind resources was also discussed.

Marie Nilsson, Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines (SCBL) presented the new SCBL publication “Gender and Landmines – from Concept to Practice” (<http://www.scbl-gender.ch/index.php?id=5>). The report includes recommendations and suggestions for further research. Marie highlighted three ways in which gender plays an important role in relation to LMAD:

- How land is handed over (e.g. ensuring women and men benefit equally and have equal say in how land will be used, land title/inheritance issues)
- Feminisation of poverty (income generating activities often target men)
- Employment opportunities (female deminers become role models)

Sharmala Naidoo, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) provided an update on GICHD’s LMAD guidelines for humanitarian and development NGOs (http://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/contact_group/Presentation-LMADCG-GICHD-Sharmala-June2008.pdf). The draft guidelines will be finalised and launched during 9MSP along with the guidelines for National Mine Action Centres and official development cooperation agencies. Sharmala outlined the core messages aimed at humanitarian and development NGOs:

- Find out which part of the country are contaminated and what the mine action programme is doing about it
- Assess the needs of mine-affected communities and consider working with them
- Work with mine action organisations, e.g. share information, coordinate, partner
- Apply lessons learned from the development field

Feedback on the draft guidelines (available at <http://www.gichd.org/operational-assistance-research/linking-mine-action-and-development/guidelines/>) is warmly welcome.

Plenary discussion

Earl Turcotte, Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is encouraged that discussions have moved on from the question of whether there is a link between mine action and development, to how genuine synergies can be made. He asked about UNDP projects which have integrated mine action and development, on the financial contributions made by mine-affected states and on the causal effect between mine action and positive development outcomes. *Lydia Good* replied that it is difficult to quantify the contributions of mine affected states as they are often in-kind and that further studies would also be needed on development projects mainstreaming mine action. *Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani*, Government of France, questioned how different partners can be brought to the same level of understanding of LMAD and what the role of commercial companies should be. Regarding funding, *Ulrich Tietze*, UN Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) for Egypt, mentioned that when demining is part of an economic development project as is the case for an initiative in Egypt, some donors may not be willing to fund it. The advantages or disadvantages of establishing links between profit and non profit organisations must be explored further.

Paul Hannon, Mines Action Canada, mentioned that the guidelines need to demystify mine action for the development community. *Sharmala Naidoo* replied that indeed there is a tendency for development NGOs to perceive mine action as technical and therefore difficult to engage in. The guidelines emphasise that development NGOs need not acquire technical mine action expertise but access this expertise by working with mine action organisations. *Anna Miller* also pointed out that looking at the international mine action standards and core IMSMA or MRE documents could be useful in getting accustomed to mine action terms and

approaches. *Olaf Jurgenson*, UN CTA for Jordan pointed out that while much has been done to demystify mine action, greater outreach to key decision-makers within mine-affected states is needed, to make the case that mine/ERW contamination is a developmental priority, reflect mine action in development plans and demonstrate commitment through the provision of financial and in-kind support. *Denise Allen*, World Vision, referred to CPAR's experiences in Northern Uganda and suggested that the LMAD guidelines for NGOs include guidance on whether and how to engage with the military.

William McDonough, Organisation of American States, questioned the efficiency of looking at gender issues on the clearance level. He referred to the case of Latin America where mine clearance is often carried out by the military, and largely by men. Colombia was given as an example where men conduct clearance and where there are opportunities to involve women in development initiatives post-clearance. *Marie Nilsson* replied that arguing that it is impossible to involve women in clearance, that is too costly, etc. is a typical cultural argument. The inclusion of both genders often leads to better results. For example a technical survey conducted in Jordan showed that males and females identified different areas of contamination. If both groups hadn't been consulted, less complementary and relevant data would have been collected.

Nicholas Lanza, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), emphasised the importance of sharing experiences among practitioners and that the SDC is interested in further cooperation on this matter, particularly in terms of how survivor assistance can be integrated into development. He mentioned that the latest Swiss Mine Action Strategy includes support for linking mine action and development.

Aneeza Pasha, Handicap International - France, asked whether any research had been conducted regarding possible conflict between community-level priorities and broader government priorities.

Jesus Domingo, Philippine Mission, asked about the implications of the new cluster munitions treaty for LMAD, and about how discussions on linking mine action with development fit within the frame of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence. *Lydia Good* clarified that mine action includes cluster munitions/ERW so the treaty won't have a tremendous impact on the ongoing work of the mine action community, and that LMAD discussions fall within the frame of the Geneva Declaration.

Conclusions and Next Steps

Anne Woodbridge, Canadian International Development Agency requested feedback on the future focus of the LMAD Contact Group, in particular suggestions for the next meeting during 9MSP. Please email suggestions to Anne (ANNE.WOODBRIDGE@acdi-cida.gc.ca) or Sharmala (s.naidoo@gichd.org).