

# Linking Mine Action and Development Contact Group Meeting

Meetings of the Standing Committees of the APMBC  
Geneva, Tuesday, 26 May 2009

## Summary of Discussions

**Chair:** Anne Woodbridge (Canadian International Development Agency)

### **The legacy of ERW in Afghanistan and broader human security and development challenges**

*Dr Mohammed Haider Reza (Mine Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan)* discussed how landmines/ERW impede development in Afghanistan, for example by negatively affecting economic development, the delivery of government services and the return of refugees. Mine action is a key enabler for security and development in Afghanistan. The power supply to Kabul has improved as a result of clearance along power supply routes between Uzbekistan and Kabul. The Kabul University campus, unusable seven years ago, is now operating and producing graduates as a result of clearance of the campus. Clearance of the Aynak copper mine in Longar, south of Kabul will commence shortly, with the Afghan Ministry of Mines committing \$2.6 million for demining, the first time the Government of Afghanistan has allocated funding from its core budget for mine action.

[https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma\\_development/practitioners-network/wk-may2009/LMAD-Wk-ISF-MACCA-Gva-May2009.pdf](https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/practitioners-network/wk-may2009/LMAD-Wk-ISF-MACCA-Gva-May2009.pdf)

### **From Humanitarian Mine Action to Human Security**

*Adam Komorowski (Mines Advisory Group (MAG))*, explained how MAG, traditionally focused on humanitarian mine action, has in recent years broadened its scope to work on wider human security issues. MAG first got involved with small arms and light weapons (SALW) issues during the mid-1990s by supporting demobilisation efforts in Cambodia and Angola, countries where it was already working on mine action. MAG started off by helping to destroy surplus and abandoned weapons and ammunition, and have since found that many countries also require assistance with safe storage. Stockpile management is becoming a serious issue in Africa and elsewhere. MAG has since established a Conventional Weapons Management and Disposal Programme through which the organisation:

- > Assists with the safe storage of arms and ammunition, collection and destruction of surplus arms, and training and capacity development of national police and militaries in countries like Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq and the Sudan
- > Provides technical support to the Nairobi-based Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) for the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa.

[https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma\\_development/contact\\_group/Slides-LMADCG-MAG-Komorowski-May2009.pdf](https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/contact_group/Slides-LMADCG-MAG-Komorowski-May2009.pdf)

### **Mine action as a confidence/peace-building tool**

*Chris Clark (UN Mine Action Service)*, outlined how mine action supported peace-building efforts in Sudan, promoting confidence between the Government of Sudan (GoS) and the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). In 2002, a Tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Government of Sudan (GoS), the SPLA and the UN allowing for emergency demining of key routes between North and South Sudan in the Nuba

Mountains. Joint demining training brought people from opposite sides together and helped strengthen mutual trust and confidence.

[https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma\\_development/contact\\_group/Slides-LMADCG-UNMAS-Clark-May2009.pdf](https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/contact_group/Slides-LMADCG-UNMAS-Clark-May2009.pdf)

### **Experiences and lessons learnt from promoting community safety and reducing armed violence in Somaliland**

*Anette Christoffersen (Danish Demining Group (DDG)), part of the Danish Refugee Council, originally started out as a mine/ERW clearance operator. However, in many of the conflict-affected countries in which DDG works work, they receive requests from mine/ERW-affected communities to assist them with broader community safety problems, often in relation to SALW. Somaliland for example, has the third highest SALW ownership rate after Yemen and the USA, with communities among the poorest and most armed in the world. Although initially working in Somaliland on mine/ERW clearance, DDG recently initiated a community safety enhancement project. The project involves working with local communities and peace building NGOs to promote the safe storage of firearms, provide firearms safety education, deliver training in conflict management and resolution, and strengthen trust between local communities and the police. As opposed to previous failed attempts at forced disarmament, the project is focusing on addressing the demand for SALW and the root causes of community insecurity.*

[https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma\\_development/contact\\_group/Slides-LMADCG-DDG-Christoffersen-May2009.pdf](https://www.gichd.org/fileadmin/pdf/ma_development/contact_group/Slides-LMADCG-DDG-Christoffersen-May2009.pdf)

### **Plenary Discussion and Conclusions**

*Bob Eaton (Survey Action Center) noted the important contribution that mine action has made to clearing roads and facilitating access within Afghanistan. Arianna Calza Bini (Swiss Campaign to Ban Landmines) emphasised the need to highlight and promote the involvement of women in mine action activities. Chris Clark and Adam Komorowski explained that both UNMAS and MAG are committed to gender equality. Earl Turcotte (Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade) explained how a holistic approach to mine action, including SALW, has been adopted by Canada, for example in Afghanistan where Canada has supported the destruction of mines and surplus SALW. He encouraged the international community to adopt such an encompassing approach at every level, from field operations to the diplomatic and policy levels. Gary Milante (World Bank) explained how the World Bank is conducting research on the impact of landmines on socio-economic development and called for collaboration and examples from experts in this field.*