

Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 16-20 September 2002

Statement by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

Presented by Mr. Martin Barber, Chief, UNMAS

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- I thank you for giving us the opportunity to brief you on our work in support of the implementation of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention.
- At the 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly last fall, we presented the *United Nations Mine Action Strategy for 2001-2005*. The strategy was developed through consultation with 11 United Nations departments and agencies, mine-affected and donor countries, and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. It articulates the United Nations' vision for the future and defines short- and medium-term objectives in support of this vision. The strategy is built around six goals, and sets out specific measurable and time-bound objectives for the work of the UN system. We have received valuable comments on the strategy from 13 UN Member States.
- Before highlighting some of the practical steps we have taken to implement these objectives, Mr. President, I want to applaud the focus you gave in your opening remarks to the need to work together, in partnerships. Every activity we are undertaking involves partnerships, and we need to nurture and develop them actively.

Information management

- We recently completed a study on the information system needs of mine action programmes in cooperation with the GICHD. The results of this study form the basis for our planned work in this area. They are available in hard copy from UNMAS and electronically at www.mineaction.org
- Information systems for mine action include a web-based network, known as E-MINE (electronic mine information network). E-MINE is a public and freely accessible website (www.mineaction.org), designed to support the planning and coordination of global mine action activities. It contains electronic links to other websites, including the site of the Department for Disarmament Affairs that manages reports from States Parties in accordance with Article 7. E-MINE also contains information on mine action needs and investments, the progress of mine action programmes, the status of stockpile destruction programmes, the location of mined areas and information on technology initiatives.
- A reporting template, to enable reports from field programmes to be semi-automatically generated through the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA), is under development in cooperation with the Geneva International

Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). This initiative is part of a coordinated response, with the ICBL, to requests from the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Awareness and Mine Action Technologies, for better information about progress in meeting our common targets.

Rapid response

- Building on the lessons learned from humanitarian emergencies such as Kosovo in 1999 and Eritrea in 2000, the United Nations has developed a Rapid Response Plan. The plan consists of two fixed components—a Fact Finding Team and a Coordination Team—and a number of optional capabilities (including emergency survey, Manual/Dog Mine detection teams, Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team, Mechanical equipment and Mine Risk Education) that can be deployed depending on the situation, and will be made available on a standby basis by partner organizations.

Assistance to national/local authorities

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the focal point within the UN system for building national capacities for mine action as well as addressing the socio-economic impact of mines and unexploded ordnance, and will report on progress in meeting this goal.

Quality management

- The first set of International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) were issued in October 2001. The standards will progressively cover areas not yet addressed such as mine risk education, mechanical clearance and mine dog detection.
- The IMAS review board, which UNMAS chairs, plans to review one third of the IMAS in 2002. However, mine action organizations which wish to suggest a review of any specific standards, can request the Review Board to do so at any time.
- The translation of an IMAS extended glossary, which will include IMAS 4.10 Glossary of mine action terms and definitions and IMAS 1.10 application of IMAS, into all UN official languages and some other widely used languages is expected to be completed by the end of 2002. Other parts of IMAS will be translated as required by national programme directors, and subject to the availability of funds.

Coordination and resource mobilization

- Coordination on resource mobilization issues between the UN and donors has continued through the Mine Action Support Group in New York under the active Chairmanship of Belgium. A notable initiative of the group in 2002 has been the

organisation of visits to mine affected countries for donor representatives to gain more direct insights into individual country programmes. Three visits have taken place, to Eritrea, Ethiopia and Afghanistan.

- The work of the Steering Committee on Mine Action (SCMA) has been revitalized. In 2002, it has met three times. In addition to the UN agency members, the Steering Committee includes the ICRC, the GICHD, the ICBL, and a number of NGOs. While attention has been focused on improving coordination at the headquarters level, it is clear that more work is needed in relation to UN-NGO coordination at field level. The Committee met yesterday and decided to give special attention to this issue in the coming year.
- UNMAS has been pleased to contribute to the work of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-economic Reintegration by facilitating a consultative process to identify priority areas in which the Standing Committee could make a difference. A full report will be presented during the victim assistance segment of this meeting.
- UNMAS also welcomes the calls of several States Parties to promote regional and sub-regional initiatives for mine action. We would be happy to support such initiatives.

Advocacy.

- A UN public advocacy strategy is expected to be completed by the end of 2002. The strategy will provide the UN system with a road-map for increasing public awareness on the impact of landmines on affected countries. Our partners are being consulted intensively on this strategy to ensure that UN efforts are complementary to those of governments and NGOs.
- A CD-Rom is being issued at this meeting entitled 'Landmines: The World Takes Action'. Mr. Sergio Vieira de Mello, the new High Commissioner for Human Rights, will launch the CD-Rom and a related briefing package on Thursday, 19 September 2002, at 14.15..

Conclusion

- We believe that the *United Nations Mine Action Strategy for 2001-2005* has allowed us to remain focused on specific and achievable objectives, helping the United Nations make a significant contribution to the implementation of the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention during the past year.
- So far in 2002 four countries, Afghanistan, Angola, DRC and Sri Lanka, in which landmines were being laid routinely by more than one party to the conflict, have taken significant steps towards a peaceful resolution of the conflicts and towards eliminating the use of anti-personnel mines. This is tremendously good news and

gives us great encouragement to assist those States to deal with their remaining problems, and to continue our efforts to bring an end to the use of AP mines in the few other countries where they are still being laid.

- Finally, Mr. President, I want to pick up one of Jody Williams' challenges – “Are we making best use of resources?” As we enter what one colleague has called “the second generation” of mine action programmes, we need to demonstrate continuously that we are getting the best possible value for money, with the resources which are confided to us.
- Thank you, Mr. President.