

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE, MINE AWARENESS AND
MINE ACTION TECHNOLOGIES, GENEVA, 29 JANUARY 2002**

**Statement by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)
Presented by Mr. Martin Barber, Chief, UNMAS**

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies, Gentlemen,

- First, I would like to thank the Standing Committee for this opportunity to present an update of the activities that the United Nations plans to undertake during the coming months and years.
- I would also like to thank the ICBL for their comprehensive overview of the status of the implementation of the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Treaty in the field of mine clearance, mine awareness and mine action technologies. We would welcome a closer dialogue with the ICBL Working Group on a number of points they have revised.
- At the last Standing Committee Meeting in May 2001, we mentioned that the United Nations would prepare a five-year strategic plan for mine action activities. We felt that there was a need for such a strategy both to articulate the United Nations' vision for the future, and to define short- and medium-term objectives to be attained in support of this vision. We wanted to develop an approach that would enable the United Nations to strategically address mine action challenges both at the national and global levels, rather than simply react to immediate problems.
- I am pleased to announce that the document *United Nations Mine Action Strategy for 2001-2005* was presented to the General Assembly last Fall and was 'noted with appreciation' in the Resolution on Assistance in Mine Action. The Strategy was developed through consultations with the 11 United Nations mine action departments and agencies, representatives of mine-affected and donor countries, and relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.
- The Strategy is a planning tool for the United Nations. It is built around six broad goals that we feel are relevant to the whole mine action community. Within each broad goal, there are specific objectives that must be attained by the United Nations within a given timeframe. Within the UN family, a lead office or agency has been identified for each objective. We will shortly issue a table showing which agency is the lead for each objective. Goals and objectives cover the following areas:
 - a. Information management

- b. Emergency Response
 - c. Assistance to National/Local Authorities
 - d. Quality Management
 - e. Coordination and Resource Mobilisation
 - f. Advocacy
- I will focus my intervention on some specific future activities that we plan to undertake within five of these goals. The specific points relate to E-MINE, the Emergency Response Plan, the Landmine Impact Surveys, IMAS, resource mobilization.

Information

- In September 2001, on the occasion of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention in Managua, Nicaragua, UNMAS launched E-MINE, a website that provides a gateway to up-to-date mine-related data. It can be accessed at www.mineaction.org
- E-MINE was developed as a support to global mine action efforts. It replaces the original landmines database established by the United Nations in 1995, and involves a number of UN and other partners.
- A comprehensive content management system has also been developed as part of E-MINE, allowing for the administration, update and contribution of inputs on a regular basis.
- In 2002, E-MINE will be further developed, building on a large number of mine action databases, information systems and websites, including:
 - The Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) developed by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining;
 - The Stockpile Destruction Resources Site and the Database of Mine Action Investments developed by the Government of Canada for UNMAS;
 - The International Mine Action Standards website managed by James Madison University;
 - The database developed by the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs (DDA) to manage the reports submitted by States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Treaty under its Article 7;
 - The databases established by UNMAS to manage documents and projects related to mine action, as well as lists of experts, expert agencies and national points of contact on mine action;
 - The Landmine Monitor initiative of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines.

Emergency Response

- Two recent humanitarian emergencies—Kosovo in 1999 and Eritrea in 2000—highlighted the need for a system to be in place, which would allow us to respond in a timely and effective manner to the mine action components of humanitarian and peacekeeping emergencies. An Emergency Response Plan (ERP) is therefore being developed by UNMAS in consultation with our UN mine action partners.
- The ERP will address the immediate mine action priorities of a humanitarian emergency and will not attempt to plan beyond this stage of an operation. However, it will provide the resources, and create an environment, which will allow longer term planning to occur.
- The plan will consist of two fixed components available on call (a Reconnaissance Team and a Mine Action Coordination Team) and a number of optional capabilities (including emergency survey, mine detection dogs, Multi Skilled Clearance Teams, Mechanical Equipment and Mine Awareness) that can be deployed at short notice depending on the situation.
- The Emergency Response Plan will be presented to the Meeting of the Steering Committee on Mine Action in February. Further development of the plan will occur during a review process in which planning component will be rehearsed. This will allow UNMAS to validate the emergency response plan, and then to develop specific contingency plans for countries likely to require emergency assistance. All logistical and contractual arrangements will be completed by December 2002.

Assistance to National and Local Authorities

- Under this heading, I want to focus on the Landmine Impact Surveys. Seven Landmine Impact Surveys are being planned for the following countries: Vietnam, Somalia, Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Lebanon. The UN Strategy requires that 15 are completed by 2004.
- The Landmine Impact Survey process is based on a set of protocols established by the Survey Working Group. This group first met as a result of the Ottawa conference in 1998 and drafted a set of principles for the content and guidelines under which landmine impact surveys would be undertaken. The global landmine problem, however remains poorly defined. The overall purpose of Landmine impact surveys is to give an accurate representation on the number and distribution of mine affected communities within the surveyed country and the level of impact of the mines on each community. The surveys are strong on defining community impact, but weak on identifying square metres of different area. Without information about impact, it is impossible to

develop effective strategies that will minimize the human and economic costs which landmines inflict.

- More specifically, Landmine Impact Surveys provide:
 1. Accurate information for strategic planning and resource mobilization in support of Mine Action Centres;
 2. Baseline data on which to measure progress and performance, and as a basis for quality assurance;
 3. A platform to support multi-sector programming and research efforts
- Recent surveys completed in Mozambique, Yemen, Chad and Thailand have led to the further refinement and development of the survey process. Integration of the landmine impact survey process into comprehensive development plans is a major challenge for the future.

Quality Management

- The Inter Agency Coordination Group for mine action endorsed 22 International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) in September of last year. By adopting these standards, we are introducing a goal for professional organizations and national authorities to aim for and to try and achieve.
- However, we still face a number of challenges with the introduction of IMAS. The mine action community must ensure that these standards are practically applied and where necessary provide relevant feedback to ensure they are continually kept 'alive'. We are all responsible as the implementers of mine action programmes or mine action practitioners to ensure that the mine action community achieves the level of standard that is expected of us.
- Thus to ensure the relevance and responsiveness of IMAS, in 2002, we will:
 - Translate all the standards into the six UN official languages.
 - Conduct the first review of some of the current standards;
 - Finalize some existing draft standards and include the new Mine Risk Reduction Education standards.
 - Develop new standards for information systems, training, contracts and mechanically assisted clearance; and

- Support the adoption of the International Standards at the national level.

Resource Mobilization

One of our objectives is to ensure that mine action programmes are adequately funded. This is not a donor conference, but I would like to make two points.

1. On 28 February, here in Geneva, we will launch the 2002 Portfolio of Mine-related projects.
2. Most of the money going in to the Afghanistan programme seems to be new money, which would not otherwise be available for mine action in other countries. Nevertheless, it is important that our justified enthusiasm for Afghanistan does not lead us to overlook the needs of other countries.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I have presented a few of the activities that UNMAS plans to undertake in 2002 and beyond. These activities will be conducted within the framework of the *United Nations Strategy for 2001-2005*. The Strategy applies not only to UNMAS, but also to all United Nations mine action implementing departments and agencies. UNMAS will continue to coordinate with them to ensure that all objectives comprised in the Strategy are achieved by 2005.