

**Statement of Sayed Aqa, UNDP Mine Action Team Leader, on the Status of UN Mine Clearance Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education & Mine Action Technologies
5 February 2003**

The United Nations, in line with the provisions of the Mine Ban Treaty, continues to implement the key objectives of its Five-Year Mine Action Strategic Plan in the area of mine clearance, survey and marking, and mine risk education. All United Nations agencies, including UNMAS, UNDP, UNICEF and UNOPS, have worked closely over the past year to integrate their field operations, where appropriate, to ensure a streamlined, effective approach to addressing the landmine problem in humanitarian emergencies and development contexts. The UN mine action agencies have also worked closely to establish effective resource mobilization strategies, including developing streamlined reporting systems.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS (2002)

- The UN is currently implementing 53 mine action projects or providing assistance to national and local authorities in more than 30 countries. These projects are undertaken in the context of emergency humanitarian threats and long-term development needs. Capacity building and empowering mine-affected countries to manage the landmine problem on their own are central to the assistance provided by the United Nations.
- **Establishment of Ten (10) New Programmes:** The UN has initiated ten (10) new mine action programmes in the past year. These include three UNMAS programmes in immediate post-conflict situations (Afghanistan, DRC and Sudan), three UNICEF mine risk education programmes (Burundi, Lebanon and Vietnam), and four UNDP mine action programmes (Angola, Iran, Sri Lanka and Ukraine).
- **Transition Strategy:** The UN is currently drafting a 'transition strategy', which aims to identify a process for managing the transition of capacity building projects to local authorities once the need for full-time external assistance is no longer required.
- **Initiation of Landmine Impact Surveys:** All UN mine action agencies have jointly supported the UN's partnership with the Survey Action Center and other key organizations in undertaking Landmine Impact Surveys that will provide data for long-term strategic planning. In the past year, several surveys have been initiated or the groundwork has been laid for surveys in Afghanistan, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eritrea, Somalia and South Lebanon, among others. UNMAS' quality management system forms an integral component of these surveys, ensuring consistent implementation of surveys around the world.
- **Completion of Socio-Economic Impact Study:** Together with GICHD, UNDP has completed its socio-economic impact study, which is intended to assist mine action centers and mine action organizations in improving their priority setting and operational performance. The study is based on two underlying premises: first, the objectives of a national mine action programme should support a country's overall development effort, and second, the true measure of success of mine action is based on its lasting impact on the local population and not simply how much land is cleared and how many people have been educated about the dangers of mines.
- **IMAS:** The UN has produced a set of international mine action standards (IMAS) that have been integrated into all UN- and government-managed programmes. Each UN mine action agency works with its counterparts in the field to ensure effective application of these standards.
- **Management Training:** The key to the UN's national capacity building efforts is to encourage national ownership and sustainability of mine action programmes, including mine clearance and mine risk education projects. An integral part of this effort is training national staff to more effectively manage their respective programs. As part of its broad effort to strengthen national capacities, UNDP has been expanding its successful mine action management training courses, which train national staff in effective management practices. To date, the courses, implemented in collaboration with Cranfield University, have trained over 300 managers from 20 mine-affected programmes.
- **Mine Action Exchange:** UNDP has recently developed a Mine Action Exchange programme to foster exchanges of mine action personnel from different country programmes. To date, staff from five mine-affected countries have participated, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Croatia and Mozambique

- **National Legislation Study:** UNDP, in partnership with GICHD, has completed its initial study on the development of national legislation to establish national mine action authorities. The results of the study have been compiled into an information kit and are now being translated into several languages. Training workshops are planned for key stakeholders.
- **Handover of Croatian Programme:** The UN is preparing to handover the Croatian mine action programme to national authorities, after a seven-year assistance project to the country.
- **Assessment and Monitoring Missions:** The UN has undertaken several assessment and monitoring missions in the past year, including to Afghanistan, Eritrea, Mauritania, Sudan and Tunisia.
- **Mine Action Integration:** The UN mine action agencies are working together to integrate mine action into the broader development agenda. Particularly in an environment where funding is becoming increasingly scarce, it is hoped that mainstreaming mine action will stabilize, if not increase, the amount of available funding.
- **Rapid Response Teams:** The development of UNMAS' rapid deployment teams to address emergency clearance, survey and marking needs has been a significant addition to the UN's ability to respond to crisis situations. Equally, UNICEF's 'flying teams', or roster of skilled people who can be rapidly deployed to provide emergency technical assistance in crisis situations, have been a significant contribution to its mine risk education efforts.
- **UNICEF Mine Action Strategy:** To complement the UN's Five-Year Mine Action Strategic Plan, UNICEF has recently developed its own mine action strategy, which it will be releasing at this week's Intersessionals. The strategy is intended to address UNICEF's mine action objectives and broader mandates. It also seeks to bring a rights-based approach to mine action.

KEY CHALLENGES (2003)

- **Resource Mobilization:** Resource mobilization continues to be a major challenge for all UN agencies and national mine action programmes. The UN is actively encouraging donors to consider multi-year funding of mine action projects, which will enable programmes to incorporate a longer-term perspective into their planning activities. Increased provision of resources, where possible, by mine-affected countries will also be encouraged.
- **Integration of Mine Action into the Development Agenda:** The UN mine action agencies will continue to promote the integration of mine action into the broader development agenda. Mainstreaming mine action will be a significant challenge, particularly in an environment in which it has traditionally fallen in 'the gap' between emergency relief and the long-term development context.
- **Strategic Planning and Long-term Response:** The UN recognizes that strategic planning is essential to ensuring an effective response to long-term mine threats. In addition to facilitating planning and prioritization processes, strategic planning also provides a roadmap to donors wishing to provide a long-term response to the mine problem in any given country. The UN will continue to actively incorporate such strategic planning processes into the activities of new and existing mine action programmes.
- **Emergency Responses:** Timely response to humanitarian emergencies cannot be over-emphasized. Provision of adequate resources during emergencies is vital. It is equally important to lay the ground for long-term development solutions from the outset of an operation.
- **National Ownership:** As the UN advances the cause of national ownership of mine action programmes, it will seek to incorporate its new 'transition strategies' into new and existing projects.
- **National Coordination Centers:** Mine Action Centers play a vital role in effective utilization of resources. All key players, including donor countries, have an important role to strengthen mine action coordination mechanisms and introduce measures to fund only those projects that are developed in consultation with mine action centers.
- **Reporting:** The UN is drafting new, streamlined reporting guidelines for mine action programmes, to ensure comprehensive and timely reporting to donors. The challenge will be to effectively incorporate these new reporting formats into existing country programmes.

The UN's continuing achievements are due to the active support of donor countries and the strong will and cooperation of mine-affected countries. On behalf of the UN, let me thank all donors and mine-affected countries for their commitment to our global challenge. We look forward to continuing our successful partnership.