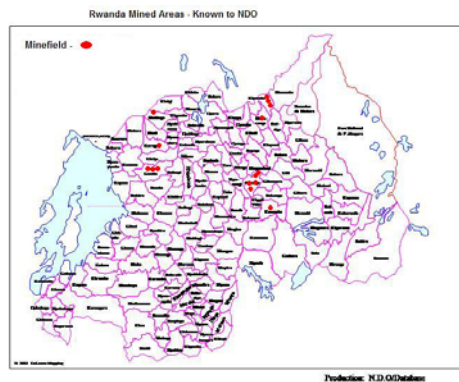


HISTORY

- Entered into force for Rwanda in 2000 when she became a state party
- However problem of land mines date as back as 1990 when the liberation war began.
- The problem worsened in 1994 genocide because mines were available in the hands of unruly militia.
- Landmines were used indiscriminately to terrorize and kill innocent civilians. This method of mining has frustrated demining efforts.
- Mines also used during insurgency war of 1996-1998 in the north west of Rwanda.



MINE ACTION ACTIVITIES (ADDRESSING THE THREAT)

- Rwanda National Demining Office (RNDO) created in 1995.
- Mandated to clear mines, liberate land, and restore hope to people still struggling with the consequences of war and genocide.



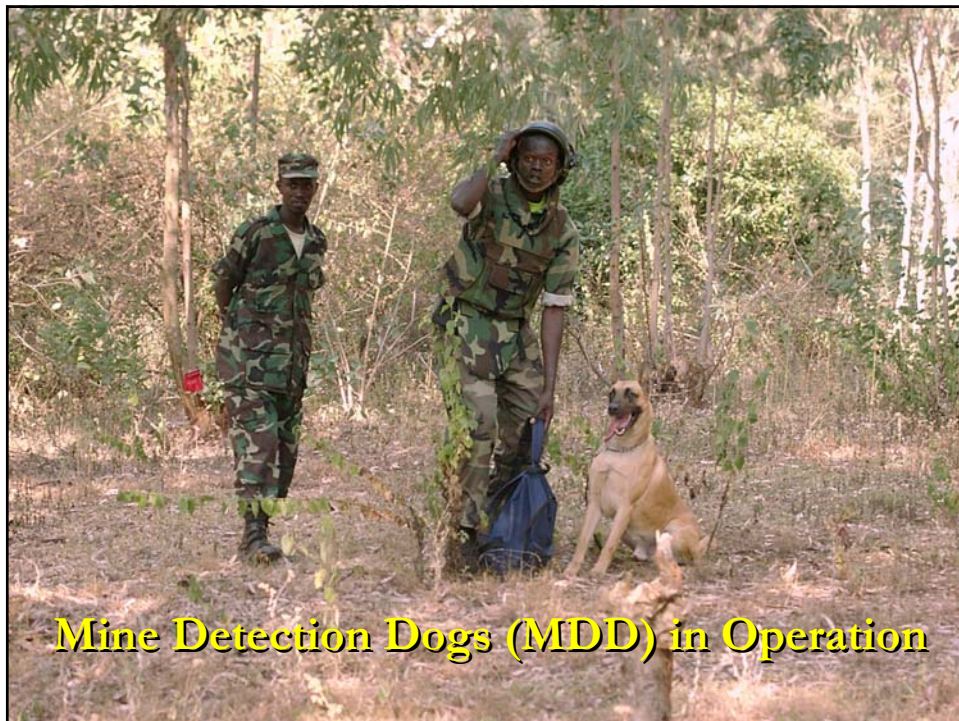
MINE ACTION ACTIVITIES (APPROACH)

- A Demining force trained in manual demining techniques including the use of MDD's and mandated to clear all the land .
- Mine awareness/ mine risk education conducted, face to face , over the radio and in newspapers.
- Laws prohibiting importation, use, transfer and possession of small arms and ammunitions were enacted.
- Programs to assist the disabled to include land mine victims were put in place





Mine risk education in progress



Mine Detection Dogs (MDD) in Operation

CHALLENGES AT THE BEGINNING OF DEMINING OPERATIONS

- Little or no reliable information on the location of the mines or mine field, the size and densities and this affected planning.
- Inaccessible terrain; hills, swamps, terraces that could give way (slide), poor roads, etc.
- Soils with high metal content, affecting the rate of clearance.
- Thick vegetation that was virtually impossible to penetrate manually.





PROGRESS TO DATE

- More than 1,000,000 m² cleared and resettled.
- 34 small and medium minefields cleared and returned to communities for social economic activities.
- More than 1000 acres of tea plantation cleared and returned to production.
- 35,000 mines and UXO destroyed country wide .
- Intensive awareness campaigns in the years of 1996-2001 resulted in the reduction of mine-related victims.
- Several Commercial centers cleared and reopened.
- More than 100 Km of commercial roads verified to allow their repairs.
- Demining force increased to 234 and trained to IMAS



WORK REMAINING

- 16 mine fields remain uncleared
- These are estimated to be about 885,930 sqm.
- Remaining areas are good agricultural land, currently not in use due to the threat of land mines.
- Clearance of these will be challenging thus require good logistics support.

Challenges to date.

- Thick vegetation that cannot be effectively cleared without mechanical assistance.
- Lack of comprehensive data on the type and density of mines and mine fields affected planning.
- Lack of funds for to support demining operational costs
- Some mine fields not accessible by vehicles, either because of steep hills or being in remote areas.
- Increase in mine victims especially in year 2005: need for survival forces people to venture into known danger areas.
- Minefield marking material removed by people as they require them for home.
- Consistent reports of UXO; some have proved to be individual mines in areas that were not initially considered dangerous.(the consequence of indiscriminate mining by genocides in 1994)

CURRENT LANDMINE THREAT IN RWANDA



PLANS

- The Government has increased the demining force by 150 persons to 237. This force increment had been suggested during 2003 national land mine impact survey.
- We are deploying to high priority areas of Nyabihu Rubaya Jali mine fields.
- TAs from MAT (Mines Awareness Trust) will be deployed to Rwanda in May 2006. They have secured a contract for 12 month.
- Plans are underway once the TAs deploy to conduct technical survey of all our mine fields. However this may take some time.
- Estimated period: 3 years. Realistic timings will be done once technical survey is completed.

PRIORITIES FOR ASSISTANCE

- Vegetation clearing assets that will take into consideration the challenging terrain in Rwanda.
- Funds for mounting expenses of demining operations
- MRE Funding to re-sensitize the population to avoid careless behavior which have resulted in accidents
- Need for technical survey to reduce the perceived threat to actual contaminated areas. This will allow realistic planning and free areas will be put to productive use.
- Land mine victims and other disabled people need more than artificial limbs. Need skills and capital that can help them generate income for themselves.



CONCLUSION

Rwanda believes that her 2009 clearance deadline is still achievable provided we get the necessary support.

We therefore once more wish to call upon the international community to assist Rwanda declare herself land mine free.

Thank you for your attention!