

# MASG

## Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

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## **1. Unofficial Minutes of the Mine Action Support Group Meeting, 19 March 2004, Geneva**

1. After welcoming the different speakers, the chairman introduced the subject of the day's meeting, Mine Action (MA) and Peace Processes. Sri Lanka and Sudan, two countries in which MA programmes have a confidence-building dimension were to be the focus. The agenda for the meeting was adopted.
2. In his introductory presentation Martin Barber (UNMAS) highlighted the most important elements contained in the Presidential Statement adopted by the Security Council on 19 November 2003. During the 7<sup>th</sup> Program Directors Meeting a workshop on this link has produced the following conclusions: Mine Action must be part of the initial peacekeeping planning phase (as it is currently the case with Burundi and Sudan); Troup-Contributing Countries need to be trained in MA prior to deployment; the Memorandum of Understanding needs to be revisited; flexibility has to be maintained if the makeup of a mission needs to be changed, etc. MA can play a positive role in peace building, but all sides to the conflict must be on board.
3. Dan Kelly, Program Manager of UNMAS Afghanistan, talked about the role that MA plays in the DDR-process in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan, 100'000 combatants are to be demobilized, of whom 8'000 are to be reintegrated as community based deminers. The pilot phase has started in the last months in three locations – with a total of about 400 deminers in Kunduz, Parwan and Kabul. The deminers of the “Mine Action for Peace” program receive training, medical coverage, insurance, employment for 13 months and more. The key to the success of the program is the community mobilization.
4. In the discussion following the two presentations Ambassador Dahinden (GICHD) recommended that a DDR component be included in the Rapid Response Plan for Angola. Sayed Aqa (UNDP) and Kristian Berg Harpviken (PRIO) both pointed out that in Afghanistan the focus should be on the reintegration of combatants into economic activity, and not so much on reintegration into the villages since many combatants fought out of their communities. Aleu Ayieny (SPLM) also argued for capacity-building and economic perspectives for demobilized soldiers. The chair closed the discussion with the quote of an Afghani soldier: “We were blind. We thought carrying weapon is the only way that we can earn money and feed our family. We realized that there is such a great respect for us if we clear mines and safe the life of the people.”
5. Dr. Kunasingham (Secretary of the National Steering Committee for MA) illustrated the character of Sri Lanka's MA program: The National Steering Committee, located in the Prime Minister's office was established in June 2002. It coordinates the activities of the local MA offices and elaborates a national policy. A tiemframe towards the ratification of the Ottawa Convention is being considered. Priority of the government-owned MA program is the resettlement of IDPs. Judy Grayson, chief advisor for mine action in Sri Lanka (UNDP), confirmed that in Sri Lanka MA contributes mainly to resettlement and reconstruction. She highlighted areas where MA plays a confidence-building role: Communities have to negotiate where demining and resettlement should take place; MA has a symbolic component because it conveys the impression that mines are not necessary anymore; in the eyes of the population the army is doing something constructive; the government sends PPE

to the other side via the NGOs; minefield records were handed over. More advocacy is still necessary: Mines have not yet been mentioned in the ceasefire agreement.

6. According to Gamal Gorashi (Sudan) the hopes are high in Sudan. The MA program is unique and very advanced compared to the other dimensions of the peace process. Aleu Ayieni (SPLM) called the program an excellent confidence building measure: the population is being prepared through concrete steps for the moment when the peace-agreement will be signed. Jim Pansegrouw (UNMAS) explained that MA has three facets in Sudan: peacebuilding; promotion of the goodwill between the parties; promotion of the peace process. Current commitments of the parties: OLS Security Protocol (1998); Memorandum of Understanding between the UN, the government and the SPLM (2002); Ottawa Convention (government); Geneva call (SPLM); Nuba mountains agreement; Draft Policy Framework. Key issues: information exchange (is not yet formal, but the information is on IMSMA); Marking; MRE and Victims assistance. The general attitude of the people involved is very positive.

7. The working assumption of Kristian Berg Harpviken (PRIO) is that mine action is important for peacebuilding and has potential. General recommendations: Peacebuilding is about process, the outcome is difficult to predict; Code of Conduct; Interventions should not trigger or exacerbate new conflicts; Need for local engagement; Aim of peacebuilding must be fundamental and sustained change; MA is not peacebuilding by default, it can also have negative impacts (unintended or unrecognized). Analysis and impact assessment have to be the start of every project. (Please find attached the complete presentation).

8. In the ensuing discussion, the American representative warned that legitimacy can be given to non-state actors by providing them with mines and having them take them out again. Japan stated that it considers MA an integral part of peacebuilding. Austria pointed out that the army needs to be involved in the process, while Germany welcomed Sri Lankas timeframe towards Ottawa. Judy Grayson emphasized that while MA was an important part of a ceasefire agreement, the contributions of MA to peacebuilding should not be too formalized. MA is neutral and should not be politicized. Kristian Berg Harpviken acknowledged the fundamental dilemma, according to which MA needs to be neutral. However it is too simple to say that MA is not about politics. Martin Barber acknowledged that much analysis remains to be done, especially concerning impact and impact assessment. The chair closed the discussion with the remark that seeing the two Sudanese representatives together at the meeting was the proof of how effective MA can be. However, the question of what role MA plays in a peace process is still open - is it humanitarian or also political? The discussion of this subject inside the MASG will be continued at the September meeting.

9. Under AOB the chair informed that the evaluation in Angola is being carried out by two experts from 9 April to 1 May. The fieldtrip of the MASG is taking place from 17 to 21 May; UNDP and the chairmanship are currently developing a program.

10. The next MASG meeting is taking place on 22 April 2004 [new date!] at 9.30am at the Swiss Mission. The topic will be Mine Action and the International Financial Institutions, and Portfolio shortfalls.

The meeting was closed at 13:10 p.m.

## **2. Agenda for the MASG Meeting on 22 April New York**

### **1. Welcome Address by the Chair**

### **2. Adoption of the Agenda**

### **3. Mine Action and Development**

- Introduction to the topic (UNDP)
- Experiences and lessons learned in Afghanistan (UNDP)
- Comment (UNICEF)
- Comment (World Food Programme)

### **4. Discussion**

### **5. Mine Action Portofolio Shortfall**

- UNMAS

### **6. Update on Nairobi Review Conference**

- Representative of the Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN
- Comments by UNMAS and UNDP

### **7. AOB**

### **3. UPDATES**

#### **3.1 Update from UNMAS**

##### **Policy Coordination**

###### **General policy**

From 15 to 19 March, the Seventh International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisors was held in Geneva. The new format, which included separate meetings for each of the participants' categories on the morning of the first day and an increased focus on working groups and work shops, aimed at increasing participation by the conference participants and was welcomed by the National Directors, UN Programme Managers and the members of the Steering Committee on Mine Action.

Participants particularly welcomed discussion on the following topics: 1) strengthening the normative framework for mine action (Protocol V of the CCW and the emerging Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) in view of the upcoming Review Conference, 2) gender integration in mine action, 3) donors' recommendations on measuring the impact of mine action interventions and overviews of donors' mine action programmes and priorities.

##### **Portfolio Process**

Portfolio updates have been provided by field coordinators in view of the official revision of the Portfolio which will be online and on CD-ROM by late April 2004. To request copies, please call +1-212 963-9407 or email [dpko-mines-portfolio@un.org](mailto:dpko-mines-portfolio@un.org).

##### **Advocacy and treaty implementation**

A survey on existing practices in gender and mine action has been launched at the field-level as well as with international partners. A questionnaire devised to develop baseline data will enhance the little data available on the topic. On 10 March, the Steering Committee on Gender and Mine Action discussed the interim findings of the UNMAS gender consultant based on a literature review and her recent field visits to Eritrea and Yemen. On 20-27 March, the consultant carried out a field visit to the UN-supported mine action programme in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

##### **Information**

The Information Unit began work on UNMAS' annual report 2003. It also sent requests to all programme managers planning to attend the International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisors to bring along sample IMSMA quarterly reports that may be uploaded to E-MINE. The unit also organized, in cooperation with the Mine Action Information Centre of the James Madison University, an analysis of about 280 new lessons learned in mine action to determine which should be considered for possible inclusion in the International Mine Action Standards and which would be made widely available online to the mine-action community. Preliminary findings from the analysis were shared with participants at the Geneva meeting.

### **New contributions in the VTF 1 through 31 March 2004**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Date received</b>	<b>Amount/Earmarking</b>
EU	05 March 2004	\$1,952,000 (Afghanistan P04-AF04)
EU	05 March 2004	\$488,000 (Sudan P04-SU09)
Roots of Peace		11 March 2004 \$70,000 (Afghanistan P04-AF04)
Canada	18 March 2004	\$45,000 (DRC P04-DC03)
UAE	18 March 2004	\$520,910 (Lebanon (P04-LE03)
Japan	18 March 2004	\$409,836 (unearmarked)
Canada	23 March 2004	\$125,626.36 (Gender P04-GL03)
Japan	26 March 2004	\$3,181,804 (Afghanistan P04-AF04)
Canada	29 March 2004	\$8,650 (Sudan P04-SU05)

### **New confirmed pledges obtained during the month of March:**

Canada	\$441,176	Sudan (P04-SU10)
Canada	\$441,176	Sudan (P04-SU10 and P04-SU32)
Canada	\$1,865,671.64	HQ Coordination (P04-GL01)
UK	\$1,800,000	Sudan (P04-SU08)
UK	\$1,800,000	Sudan (P04-SU10)
UK	\$3,700,000	Afghanistan (P04-AF02, P04-AF04, P04-AF05)

### **New contributions in the VTF 1 through 28 February 2004 (reported in March only)**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Date received</b>	<b>Amount/Earmarking</b>
Belgium	04 February 2004	\$248,617.89 (Afghanistan P04-AF04)
Canada	09 February 2004	\$77,850 (Sudan P04-SU05)
New Zealand	19 February 2004	\$246,660 (HQ Coordination P04-GL01)
Canada	26 February 2004	\$50,000 (Eritrea/Ethiopia)

## **UNMAS-SUPPORTED PROGRAMMES**

### **Iraq**

UNMAS recently contracted two consultants from the Praxis Group to evaluate the UN's response to the mine action needs of the crisis in Iraq. The report offers recommendations that will assist with the review of the UN Mine Action Rapid Response Plan (RRP) which would enhance the response to future crises. The evaluation report will be the primary supporting document for a workshop to be held at the Swedish Rescue Services Agency (SRSA) Training College in Rosersberg Sweden on 1-2 May 2004. The workshop will involve approximately 20 participants from UN humanitarian and mine action agencies, international organizations and mine action NGOs.

Minetech continues its operations in southern Iraq where its efforts are coordinated by the Regional Mine Action Centre established by the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA). In recent meetings with UNMAS, the NMAA requested that Minetech continue its activities until additional operational capacity is established in southern Iraq.

## **Afghanistan**

The general security situation in Afghanistan remain tense, and security restrictions remain in place in the southern provinces of Ghazni, Zabol and areas of Oruzgan, as well as the eastern provinces of Paktika and Paktia. Assets previously deployed in these areas remain relocated to other sites to enable continued operations in safer locations. The Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACA) continues its close monitoring of the security situation.

Negotiations with NGO implementing partners have now been completed for the continuation of their funding past the end of March 2004. The new funding modality is based on an "up to" annual budget and covers 12 months. This annual budget will be implemented on a 3-months basis, provided that funds are available.

## **UNIFIL - Southern Lebanon**

The United Arab Emirates-funded Operation Emirates Solidarity (OES)/Area 5 continues to effectively clear minefields in the Marjayoune and Jezzine areas. Since project initiation in May 2002, a total of 4,865,000 square meters of contaminated land has been cleared and handed back to the communities of southern Lebanon, with 70,000 mine/UXO items already located and destroyed. Clearance operations are progressing well, with some difficult sites nearly at completion stage. Once these sites are completed, the remaining targets should be finished rapidly. BACTEC teams are maintaining good clearance standards and now have fine-tuned the clearance methodology, deployment and integration of assets on all sites. While discussions with the Government of the UAE are underway to seek further support for OES, detailed planning for Area 6 is ongoing. Information and data collected from the Lebanese Armed Forces are being rationalised with existing IMSMA data. The past three months have seen a consolidation of the majority of the targets, and a realistic initial target list is now emerging.

The first Post Clearance Review report of the first section of the OES-cleared areas was finalised and distributed by the Mine Action Coordination Centre in southern Lebanon to embassies and UNDP. The objective is to allow potential donors to make funding available for rehabilitation and development needs identified in the report. Post clearance data for the last cleared area, OES 5, will commence over the next few weeks following spring planting, as this will provide more visual land use details.

## **MONUC - Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**

Locally-recruited deminers of the Swiss Foundation for Demining (FSD) mobile emergency mine/UXO clearance teams started working at the end of January 2004 in the Bunia area (Ituri District). They will operate through July 2004, thus allowing the Mine Action Coordination Centre-DRC to address the emergency humanitarian requirements identified in the Ituri District and to conduct emergency technical surveys. An advanced team of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF) recently deployed to start emergency survey activities in mine-affected areas, starting in Ituri.

Assessment missions recently conducted by the MACC/DRC, along with UN agencies and local NGOs, in the Equateur, Kasai and Kivus Provinces, have identified hundreds of mine/UXO victims, showing that the problem is more serious than initially anticipated, and that significant mine action assets are required as soon as possible to address the urgent humanitarian needs in those regions. A UNICEF MRE specialist has been co-located within MACC/DRC to develop an MRE plan of action.

MONUC is concentrating its efforts in eastern DRC, and has identified the re-opening of major roads as a key priority. Mechem of South Africa is still continuing verification and clearance of

the road Bunia-Beni (Ituri); the operation is expected to be completed by mid-May 2004. Mechem will then address additional requirements as identified by MONUC in Ituri, starting with the road Ika Barrier to Fataki (Ituri District).

### **Sudan**

In the process of establishing the National Mine Action Office (NMAO) to its required capacity, a new Government of Sudan (GoS) director was appointed by the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), and will take up office at the NMAO as of 1 April. The former director, Mr. Gamal Gorashi will remain as assistant to the newly appointed director. A national counterpart to the Survey and Training officer has also been recruited. Access to Darfur continues to be a problem for the NMAO. A recent request to the GoS to permit a Survey and Training officer to conduct assessments in the area were denied.

Mechem is now fully operational following its accreditation for road clearance in South Sudan. Formal written approval was also issued by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) for Mechem to proceed with road clearance operations on the route from Narus to Kapoeta. On 25 March, Mechem road clearance teams crossed the start line for mine clearance on the said route.

The Swiss Demining Federation (FSD), contracted to carry out technical survey operations, deployed its team leaders in South Sudan and the Nuba Mountains on 10 March and 15 March respectively. Clearance operations in the Nuba Mountains continue throughout the month of March, with all organizations except for RONCO in operation. Detailed planning is underway to confirm survey priorities with both the GoS and the SPLM. Danish Church Aid (DCA) training manual teams for Operation Safe Innocent Lives (OSIL) and JASMAR have deployed for operations in Kauda and the Morro valley areas.

In the South, FSD under a contract with UNOPS, have been awarded temporary accreditation for 2 survey teams. Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) applied for accreditation for the training and deployment of 300 manual deminers in the Yei area. The WFP-contracted survey teams have surveyed and produced a total of 83 DA reports since their deployment in February. On 20 March, a minor incident occurred in which a UXO was initiated by a grader operated by the German Gesellschaft fuer Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) contractors north of Padak. The contractors have been deployed by WFP to re-construct several roads, led to a grader operating north of Padak initiating a UXO. There were no injuries, and the equipment was undamaged.

### **UNMEE - Eritrea**

An MOU has been signed with the Ethiopian Mine Action Office to field a three-person Mine Risk Education (MRE) team in areas adjacent to the Temporary Security Zone (TSZ) on the Ethiopian side for a three-month period. This presents an opportunity to assist vulnerable groups in the area to develop mine risk reduction strategies. In addition, the Mechem contract for route clearance operations in Eritrea was extended for a further 30 days in response to needs in the country.

### **Senegal**

Following a request from the Government of Senegal, UNMAS conducted an inter-agency assessment mission to the Casamance region from 21 to 29 March 2004. Conclusions and recommendations are being shared with the Government.

### **3.2 Update from UNDP**

The following is a summary of UNDP's key achievements, objectives and funding issues for March 2004, presented by region.

#### **AFRICA REGION**

##### **Eritrea**

###### **Key Achievements**

- Continuation of joint operations with RONCO mine-detection dogs to clear land in the Temporary Security Zone between Ethiopia and Eritrea.
- Field operations by the six explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) and mine-risk education (MRE) teams in different locations across the country.
- The Landmine Impact Survey teams were deployed for the last time in March, and by the end of the month approximately 97 percent of planned work was complete.

###### **Key Challenge**

- To maintain UN advisory teams in place to continue the capacity building of the Eritrean Demining Authority (EDA) and EOD Headquarters; continue the operation of three large mine clearance teams and 6 MRE teams; conduct analysis of the national disabilities survey.
- To equip, train and employ five small mine clearance teams, two EOD teams, 1 technical survey team, and a Post-Clearance Impact Assessment team; establish two regional offices; and implement a victim support project to improve emergency access to clinical and community services.

##### **Mozambique**

###### **Key Achievement**

- With support from Italy, Switzerland and Austria, two regionally based Quality Control teams were identified and a six-week training programme (theory and practice) was developed. Working together with UNDP and RONCO, the training will be held in the central region and commence in April. This will be a key contribution to mine action in Mozambique, as the Government has never had full-time quality assurance capacity at its disposal.

###### **Key Challenges**

- Addressing funding shortfalls and resulting decreases in mine clearance rates. The Government's National Demining Institute will systematically address these matters at a mid-term review of the National Plan in July, where greater emphasis on employing more mine detection dogs and machines will be introduced. In addition, work has already begun on an inter-ministerial project to address MRE and survivor assistance, which will be completed in time for the conference.

###### **Funding**

- A funding agreement between the EU and UNDP was recently finalized, which will continue the capacity building process at the National Demining Institute (IND). The direct beneficiary of the project will be the IND, which will gain knowledge, skills and tools through the project, which in turn will allow for the better delivery of a comprehensive national mine action

programme. The main activities of the project will focus on: 1) improving planning and evaluation through the introduction of techniques used in the general development sector; 2) restarting and implementing a national mine-risk education program; and 3) training and deploying a southern region quality control capacity. These three activities are core elements of the Government's founding Decrees for the establishment of the IND and appear as central themes in the 2002-2006 National Mine Action Plan (NMAP).

## **Sudan**

### **Key Challenges**

- Recent developments include the implementation of a project for capacity building of national mine-action structures in Sudan. This project will focus on national and local capacity building, enabling the Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army to develop the capacity to plan, manage and coordinate mine-action activities in their respective areas. The project is implemented through the United Nations Office for Project Services.

### **Key Objective**

- An advocacy seminar was held in Khartoum from 13 to 17 April 2004. This is a joint undertaking of UNDP Sudan, UNMAS, the National Mine Action Office and the Humanitarian Affairs Commission of Sudan. A senior mine-action official from Yemen will assist with the facilitation of the seminar.

## **ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

### **Sri Lanka**

#### **Key Achievements**

- The demining programme helped facilitate Sri Lanka's national parliamentary elections, which were held on 2 April 2004, by enabling voting by citizens in areas that were previously mined or deemed unaffected by the presence of mines.
- All clearance agencies continued work throughout March without interruption.
- HALO Trust and the Swiss Foundation for Demining (FSD) completed survey activities and continued clearance work in Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya.
- Two new contingents of humanitarian deminers from the Sri Lanka Army (SLA) completed training with the support of RONCO.
- Mine detection dogs donated by the Marshall Legacy Institute arrived in the country and they and their SLA handlers are currently undergoing training.
- The Japan Center for Conflict Prevention (JCCP) began clearance on its first site in Sri Lanka.
- Mines Advisory Group completed training in Batticaloa and now has its teams fully deployed in the region.
- Norwegian People's Aid and the Danish Demining Group handed over several sites in Jaffna, Trincomalee and the LTTE-controlled areas of the Wanni for reconstruction and resettlement. Both groups have begun work on new tasks.

## **Funding Update**

- All of the clearance agencies mentioned in this update require additional funding for planned expansion in 2004 and to continue work in 2005.
- Australia continued its support to the humanitarian resettlement and reconstruction programme with an additional AUD 1 million to UNDP, 70 percent of which is intended for the FSD project in Mannar and Vavuniya. The remainder will be utilised for UNDP's capacity building project and provision of central mine action services to the Sri Lanka mine action programme.

## **ARAB STATES REGION**

### **Iraq**

#### **Key Achievements**

- Since January 2004, UNDP has worked with the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and other stakeholders to establish a strategy for UN mine action support in Iraq. The principal objectives include: 1) assisting the NMAA in the development of its national management capacity and establishment of an indigenous and sustainable mine action programme in Iraq; and 2) addressing the humanitarian and developmental problems related to Explosive Remnants of War.
- The Deputy Director-General of NMAA, the Deputy Director of the Iraq Mine Action Centre, and the C7 Task Manager attended a senior management course in Amman; and the Director-General of NMAA and C7 Task Manager participated in the Seventh International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisors in Geneva.

#### **Key Objectives**

- Among the initiatives currently in the planning stages are: 1) a strategy meeting with the NMAA, the CPA, the US Department of State and the UN in May; 2) a Mine Action Exchange programme for two or three senior and middle managers from NMAA in May-June in Yemen; and 3) a six-week mine action middle management course in Arabic for 6 to 10 participants from the NMAA, to be held in June or July in Amman.
- A major objective is the establishment of a national mine action implementing organization.

### **3.3 Update from Unicef**

Thirteen country offices from across the seven (UNICEF) global regions sent staff members from their mine action, emergency, and child protection programmes. As part of the workshop, the colleagues also had the opportunity share information from their country programmes, hold discussions on data gathering, international mine action standards for mine risk education (MRE) and hold valuable meetings with experts from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

UNICEF continues to provide overall coordination, capacity building initiatives and technical support for MRE activities for the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan.

During the first quarter of 2004, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education in a winter teacher-training programme that provided training and MRE materials to over 26,000 primary school teachers. This training focused on MRE and child focused teaching methodologies. Ministry of Education personnel were trained for provide the institutional capacity to sustain this programme.

UNICEF is currently supporting the capacity development of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for MRE implementing agencies to maintain high quality programmes and monitor activities throughout the country. Focusing first on the community based programmes, training will be provided to the MRE agencies implementing throughout the country. External quality assurance (QA) activities have begun but will be strengthened through the deployment of four QA specific teams for the four major regional areas by mid 2004.

UNICEF is providing technical assistance to the implementing agencies to develop new updated and standardized methodologies and materials for the returnee programme. The programme is implemented with assistance from the UNHCR at encashment centres near the Afghanistan border areas of Iran and Pakistan. This new programme will particularly target the non-literate populations that are returning to Afghanistan.

UNICEF is also developing mass media programmes in both MRE and Victim/Disability Assistance. The MRE campaign will include radio, TV, print media and school and community activities. This programme aims to promote communication mechanisms for the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan providing vital safety information to assist communities and families to lead safe lives within their current environments. Victim/disability awareness and advocacy activities will be developed and implemented to increase awareness of the needs and abilities of those with disabilities and encourage inclusive attitudes and policy development.

UNICEF continues to develop new MRE training and community based initiatives through partnerships with government, Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan implementing agencies and other assistance agencies. MRE has been included in religious leaders' training programmes, demobilisation and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants, and youth reintegration programming.

### **Burundi**

After the main rebel group the CNDD FDD has signed a comprehensive peace agreement, fighting has ended in most parts of the country and there is clear evidence that IDP's and refugees are going to go back and to try to resettle.

With regard to the repatriation movement that is going to intensify and become more systematic in the very near future, UNICEF Burundi and Tanzania offices are coordinating to ensure joint planning in MRE. An operational consequence of this resettlement is the greater need for an increased presence of sensitizers in host communities.

On-going MRE activities continue to focus on the most affected areas, targeting at-risk communities and schools. Therefore, sensitization activities in different communes and training of teachers are on-going. The national structure is in the process of identification and training of additional partners at provincial level to ensure a greater coverage and a more sustainable field presence where the communities are more at risk. Faith based organisations and national and international NGOs are strongly encouraged to be part of this network. This structure will become progressively a coordinating body rather than an implementing one. A first meeting has been organised on 27 February to discuss how, when and with whom a steering committee could be established. Government high ranking civil servants, UN agencies, and international and national NGO were all part of this very important meeting.

The new political situation the ratification of the Ottawa treaty by the Burundi Government and finally the signature by the main rebel group the CNDD FDD of the Geneva Call deed of commitment has created an avenue for the implementation of more holistic and comprehensive mine action in Burundi. Some actors in marking and de-mining have now expressed an interest to be present in Burundi. This has resulted in the need for greater and stronger coordination in this area.

### **Chad**

In response to emergency needs for MRE among the Sudanese refugees in eastern Chad, UNICEF has increased its mine action capacity in Chad, with the addition of a newly arrived MRE consultant. UNICEF will be undertaking activities to assess the situation and conceive a plan of action to develop MRE materials for the refugee population, giving priorities to the most affected areas. Further, UNICEF will be working with the High Committee for National Demining (HCND) in the MRE activities for the refugees and also designing an emergency MRE programme for the refugee schools and develop training for the refugee Sudanese teachers who will be teaching the refugee children.

### **Colombia**

UNICEF, together with UNDP and the Antioquia's governor's bureau, has started a series of regional workshops with the purpose of integrating humanitarian mine action in the development plans of the 125 municipalities within the department. The workshops are also intended to illustrate to the new municipal and departmental administrations their responsibilities in mine action at a local level and the available resources for the improvement of the municipal and departmental situation regarding landmines and UXO.

As noted briefly in the March newsletter, the Colombian Government on 1 March destroyed a total of 4,692 antipersonnel landmines, in line with the commitment acquired by the National Government as a State Party to the Mine Ban Convention. In the frame of this event, the National Authority announced its intention of destroying all the stockpiled landmines before the Review Conference for the Mine Ban Treaty, to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November 2004. The Colombian Armed Forces will only retain 986 landmines for training purposes, as established in article 3 of the Treaty.

## **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

UNICEF is working on the development of an MRE country strategy to better tackle the mine/UXO problem. For this purpose, UNICEF has increased its capacity with the addition of an MRE consultant and is working in collaboration with the various mine action agencies functional in DRC especially the MACC. The vastness of the country and inaccessibility of many areas to humanitarian organisations makes mine action efforts particularly challenging, thus the need for a cohesive, integrated approach to MRE and mine action in general. UNICEF is exploring means of capacity building grass root structures to provide MRE at the community level.

UNICEF is also developing MRE materials that will be used in community based MRE. The materials which include posters, pamphlets, brochures, and videos which are being developed in cooperation with Handicap International -Belgium. Draft posters will be distributed to field personnel for feedback and evaluation before the production of the materials in April 2004.

UNICEF will be conducting MRE training for members of Mechem and the Swiss Foundation for Demining in April. The personnel will be trained on community liaison and data collection. The personnel will be trained in basic techniques of direct presentation in MRE and questionnaire and discussion methods for needs assessment.

UNICEF is also organising community based MRE 'train the trainer' training in May 2004 for various local NGOs that are working in the most affected communities and which are usually part of the affected community. This training will focus on the dissemination of the correct messages and teaching methodologies as well as data collection to contribute to the IMSMA database.

## **Eritrea**

During the reporting period, UNICEF-Eritrean Demining Operations MRE Teams targeted 11,488 persons, which included 3,528 children. This data does not include all of the figures from Tessenai and Mendefera, because the teams are currently in remote areas. The EDO MRE teams reported 3 instances in which they located UXO, and have informed the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) in order for the EOD cell to take further action.

Both the UNMACC MRE teams were conducting MRE activities around Senafe Sub-Zoba up to 10 March, after which they moved to Shambiko and Laelay-Gash in Gash-Barka region. The UNMACC's MRE Team-1 also reported the discovery of mines and UXO, including one suspected minefield and remains of three air-dropped bombs, which were reported to the MACC EOD cell for disposal.

Two hundred twenty-nine teachers participated in the MRE training-of-trainers for teachers in Barentu, Tesseney and Mendefera. Teachers and schools have been chosen by Ministry of Education in cooperation with the Eritrean Demining Authority from highly affected areas in the country. During the trainings the Ministry of Education presented the UNICEF MRE curriculum for extra curricular activities in primary schools. The curriculum will be distributed in different languages to the participants. The training itself involved not only the Ministry of Education, but the Eritrean Demining Authority, two NTC MRE instructors and UNICEF.

Several meetings between UNICEF and "War Child" Netherlands, have resulted in the identification of three activity areas/projects of cooperation: 1) Psycho-social support to mine survivor children and children with disability; 2) Training of EDA and EDO MRE staff as well as

UNMACC MRE teams to raise awareness about the psycho-social development of children and the effects of war on child development and 3) Safe play areas in mine-affected communities.

### **Ethiopia**

UNICEF Ethiopia, with the assistance of the Italian Government and the US Department of State, is continuing to build the capacity of the regional and national counterparts through training, procurement of materials for implementing MRE and development of a surveillance system.

Twelve new community liaison staff recruited by the Ethiopian Mine Action Office are presently receiving MRE/ community liaison training and will be deployed to the field immediately after the training is completed. Senior MRE management in EMAO also received Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) training on utilising IMSMA in the context of MRE from the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining IMSMA representative.

The UNICEF technical officer is in contact with the U.S. Centres for Disease Control and World Health Organisation seeking assistance with the development of the surveillance system for victim data collection, MRE activity data collection and dangerous areas. Development of this system will be with the communities, regional authorities and EMAO. The Italian Government and the US Department of State are providing funding for the procurement of materials that will assist in the development of this system.

### **Iraq**

UNICEF has been providing technical support and guidance to the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) in Iraq to develop the MRE core curriculum, strategies, guideline and other documents for the programme. UNICEF is also working with Handicap International to implement an MRE project in Baghdad, which provides direct MRE to at-risk populations, as well as provides training-of-trainer courses for teachers and social/community workers.

A needs assessment survey, which UNICEF has organised and supported in Baghdad, has identified risky areas and populations in over 650 sites due to contamination of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW). Data from the survey is currently being analysed by the Iraqi Central Statistic Office (CSO) and final results will be released soon.

Presently, UNICEF in close coordination with the Ministry of Education is preparing plans for integrating MRE into the teacher training programme that will be implemented later in 2004. Currently, UNICEF is in discussions with the Ministry to agree on the nature and scope of MRE in the teacher training programme.

Further, within the framework of United Nations mine action assistance to Iraq, UNICEF has assumed the responsibility in March as the deputy task manager for the mine action cluster. UNDP is the task manager for the cluster.

### **Nepal**

UNICEF is working with its partners on three major activities concerning mine action: development of a mine-action strategy including development of an integrated MRE programme; development of an advocacy campaign concerning the use of mines, UXO and improvised explosive devices (IEDs); and improving mine safety knowledge of staff and counterparts.

The first meeting to coordinate and integrate MRE was held on 29 March and comprised representatives from various UN, and international and national NGOs. Organisations shared examples of work that sister offices had produced in other countries, and discussed short and long-term priorities. The second meeting will concentrate on the development of materials for production and distribution.

A briefing for the 30 partners in the “National Coalition for Children as Zones of Peace” is scheduled as a prelude to the preparation of an advocacy campaign and as an initial step in the development of an integrated mine-action strategy.

UNICEF has recently initiated the UN Landmine and UXO Safety Project for its staff and is organising the distribution of the information to other UN partners in Nepal. It is also working with UN field security staff to translate the booklet into Nepali and to produce a leaflet specifically on the threats in Nepal.

### **Sri Lanka**

The second MRE Technical Working Group meeting for 2004 was held in Vavuniya on 23 March. Participants from all MRE agencies in the north and east took part in the meeting. The agenda included clarification on the quality assurance process, the adaptation of the International Mine Action Standards on MRE (IMAS MRE) to the Sri Lankan context and a session on how to identify the location of villages on a map without using GPS.

The day before the meeting, all partners were invited to monitor an MRE activity conducted by Community Trust Fund in Ganesh Purahm, where around 60 families resettled in a former front line area of the Sri Lankan Army. The MRE activities are carried out in coordination with the demining operations in the area and as part of the community liaison role of the MRE NGO. As part of the monitoring exercise, all the MRE TWG participants were required to use the Quality Assurance form, and the recommendations were presented in the working group meeting the following day.

As part of the MRE in-school programme, students' activity sheets (78,888) were distributed to all zone education departments in the north and east. This method of this durable flipchart activity sheets is being practiced for the first time within the Sri Lankan school classrooms as a matter of saving material production.

Training for teachers is continuing in the districts of Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar, Kilinochchi, Mulativu, Batticaloa and Trincomalee. To date nearly 6,000 teachers were participating in the MRE training programme in both Singhala and Tamil (in primary and secondary schools).

A new contribution by the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) of 300,000 EUROS has arrived to support MRE and community based rehabilitation.

### **Sudan**

Mindful of the large numbers of displaced people expected to return to southern Sudan in anticipation of a peace agreement, UNICEF has increased capacity with the recent appointed a national assistant project officer (APO) to focus specifically on MRE and returnees.

The APO has been seconded to UNMAS and will work closely with the UNMAS MRE co-coordinator, southern sector.

A major task this month will be an MRE needs assessment for returnees, with the initial piloting of the assessment tools planned for the first week of April. Once the tools have been piloted and adjusted, UNICEF will work with both national and international partners, including UNMAS and UNHCR to implement the needs assessment and from that plan, an appropriate programme.

Another UNICEF focus, with UNMAS, will be providing landmine safety training to humanitarian workers. In addition, UNICEF has recently incorporated landmine and UXO injuries into its routine epidemiological data collection, which in the future should become an important planning tool for the health services in the allocation of resources and planning of appropriate services for landmine/UXO survivors. The environment module of UNICEF's life skills curriculum is also nearing completion and includes MRE messages.