

MASG

Mine Action Support Group Newsletter

Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations

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1. Agenda for the MASG-Meeting 17 May

**10am-12pm at the Swiss Mission
633 Third Avenue, 29th Floor**

Agenda :

1. Welcome address by the Chair
2. Adoption of the agenda
3. Thematic Presentations on Mine action and Non-state actors:
 - Elisabeth Reusse-Decrey, President of Geneva Call
 - Gerard P. McHugh, OCHA, on “Humanitarian Negotiations with Non-State Armed Groups”
4. Discussion
5. Country Briefing: Somalia (Sayed Aqa, UNDP)
6. Discussion
7. AOB
 - Gender Guidelines for mine action (UNMAS)
 - Portfolio funding update (UNMAS)

2. Updates

2.1. Update from UNMAS

POLICY, TREATY IMPLEMENTATION, INFORMATION AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Policy Coordination

The Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA) met to: discuss the 10th Meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts to the CCW in Geneva on Protocol V, cluster munitions and mines other than anti-personnel mines (see below); monitor the mine/ERW threat in various countries; implementation of the 2001-5 UN mine action strategy, and the development of the next five-year strategy; the development of a UN communications strategy; and the status of revision of the UN inter-agency policy on mine action.

Treaty Implementation

UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF attended the 10th session of the Group of Governmental Experts of States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), held in Geneva from 7 to 11 March 2005. Martin Barber, Director of UNMAS, delivered a statement to the Group on behalf of the three UN bodies. The statement expressed hope for a rapid entry into force and implementation of Protocol V, for further regulations of MOTAPM (mines other than anti-personnel mines) and on measures to stop the humanitarian and developmental impact of cluster munitions and their accompanying sub-munitions. Mr. Barber offered UN technical assistance if required by states to implement it, and urged States Parties to take the steps needed to develop an appropriate instrument on MOTAPM. He also highlighted the need for states to strengthen international humanitarian law currently governing the use of cluster munitions and their associated sub-munitions, and that an additional legal instrument within the CCW framework could achieve this aim. UNMAS, UNDP and UNICEF also proposed definitions for cluster munitions and sub-munitions together with explanatory notes in order to assist the States Parties to the CCW in their discussions. The text of the proposal was circulated as a working paper.

On 31 March, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS) discussed cluster munitions. It was agreed that all interested ECPS members would attend an IACG-MA principals' meeting on 10 May to agree on recommendations for the Secretary-General's consideration on the matter.

TECHNOLOGY

The Executive Committee of the International Test and Evaluation Project (ITEP) met in March and endorsed the ITEP Work Plan for 2005. ITEP requested UNMAS to forward this Work Plan to the mine action programmes. ITEP members continue to work towards completing field trials with dual sensor detectors in 2005 and if sufficient information on dual sensors is available by the end of the year, comparative field trials may be conducted. The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) produced the first full draft report of the Manual Demining Study which was requested by UNMAS. Final agreement on IMAS amendments is being sought from IMAS Review Board members.

New pledges/earmarking and contributions in the VTF

Pledges/earmarkings:

10/03/2005	Japan	\$ 295,341	Sudan (P05-SU21)
21/03.2005	Germany	\$ 300,000	Sudan (P04-SU08)
21/03.2005	Germany	\$ 794,100	Sudan (P04-SU09)
30/03.2005	Germany	\$ 249,730	Eritrea (P04-ER09)
31/03/2005	Canada	CAN\$ 10,000,000	Afghanistan (various)

Contributions Received:

07/03/05	Ireland	\$52,496.00	TSZ (P04-ER09)
24/03/05	Canada	\$229,809.59	DRC (P04-DC04)
24/03/05	Canada	\$410,374.26	Core Costs (P04-GL01)
24/03/05	EC	\$15,831,600	Afghanistan (various)
25/03/05	Japan	\$6,999,981	Sudan (P05-SU21)

DEVELOPMENTS IN UNMAS-MANAGED PROGRAMMES

AFGHANISTAN

The Government of Afghanistan and the UN Mine Action Centre prepared to participate in the National Development Forum to be hosted in early April, to ensure that mine action concerns are integrated into discussions. The new round of funding agreements with implementing partners was finalised, commencing as of 1 April 2005 and running through March 2006. They will be initially supported by major contributions from the European Commission and the Government of Canada.

An UNMAS-implemented pilot project launching the Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes was conducted, providing briefings and consultations with all elements of the programme (MAPA) on gender mainstreaming and integration of gender concerns into the work of the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan. The Government and other partners were also briefed on explosive remnants of war, and Protocol V of the CCW. The briefings were welcomed by all participants and requests for follow-up action are being actioned.

Besides its routine mine action operations, the MAPA provided emergency assistance, including emergency survey activities during the recent floods, and mine clearance in support of the Kam Air crash site investigation.

SUDAN

After an extended debate, the Security Council passed a resolution on 24 March authorizing the establishment of the UN Mission in Sudan, or UNMIS (S/RES/1590). The Council authorised a strength of 10,000 military personnel and a civilian component, including civilian police. In paragraph 4 (c), it mandated UNMIS, *"To assist the parties to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in cooperation with other international partners in the mine action sector, by providing humanitarian demining assistance, technical advice, and coordination."* UNMAS has been conducting joint planning with the mission to establish clearance priorities, including a humanitarian ring road and logistical supply areas.

The Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) have granted permission for the deployment of demining capacity in the city of Juba. Training of national deminers has started, and operations in Juba will commence shortly.

UNMAS HQ programme and policy staff conducted a technical mission to the national and two regional mine action offices (Nuba Mountains and Rumbek), as well as, Nairobi. A range of planning issues were discussed, including support to UNMIS, expansion and recruitment of staff, funding and mine risk education activities. UNICEF HQ officers were also on mission in Sudan and met with MRE representatives in Khartoum, the Nuba Mountains and Nairobi. Local partners responded enthusiastically to the intended deployment of a UNICEF MRE officer for Sudan to help coordinate country-wide MRE activities.

Japan contributed \$7 million this month for Emergency Mine/UXO Survey, Clearance and Mine Risk Education in Wau, Malakal and Juba. These areas are expected to experience large returns of refugees and internally displaced people. UNMAS is participating in the OCHA-led Returns Task Force to ensure that returnees receive MRE information and that clearance is prioritised along return routes.

2.2. Update from UNDP

April 2005

To reduce the length of the UNDP contribution to the MASG monthly newsletter, henceforth each of our country offices will submit a report every three months as opposed to every month. The country offices have been divided into three groups based on region, with one group reporting each month. Country offices have been encouraged to submit reports more often if an achievement, challenge, or funding shortfall needs to be brought to the attention of the donor community.

The following is a summary of key achievements, challenges, objectives, and funding issues for UNDP-supported country programmes. With the exception of Iraq, these reports are from UNDP country offices in Africa.

AFRICAN REGION

Angola

Key Achievements

- A project aimed to provide support to Vice Governors, who have been charged with the coordination of mine-action activities in their respective provinces on behalf of the National Mine Action Authority (CNIDAH), has seen significant advances in the degree of cooperation among key stakeholders and in the implementation of comprehensive plans at the provincial level.
- The Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) is 60 percent complete, with a completion target of October 2005.

Key Challenges

- The design and implementation of a comprehensive National Strategic Plan will be the key focus for the National Mine Action Authority during 2005.
- Lack of access and infrastructure remain a key impediment to all transition and development activities in the country.

Funding Update

- Funding agreements between the EU and UNDP have recently been or are being finalized. This will largely support four projects through late 2006 and beyond.
 - » Consolidation of Support to the National Mine Action Authority's Capacity at the Central and Provincial Level. The project will focus on capacity building and developing or improving processes and management systems within the National Mine Action Authority
 - » Rapid Response Fund (RRF) for Mine Action. The RRF will provide mine-action operators (from all pillars) with a rapid response mechanism to meet the emergency needs of vulnerable communities and urgent or unforeseen tasks restricting the development of humanitarian operations. The RRF will provide initial financing, to a maximum value of US\$ 200,000 per project, in support of interventions of less than six months duration.
 - » Implementation of the Ottawa Convention through the Disposal of Stockpiled Anti-personnel Landmines in Angola. This project aims to ensure Angola's compliance with Article 4 of the Ottawa Convention by supporting the identification and destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel landmines.
 - » Support to Operators. A recently completed tendering process provides nationwide financial support for operators conducting comprehensive mine-action activities. The initiative effectively divides the country into five functional regions. Thus far HALO Trust, InterSOS, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and People Against Mines (MGM) have successfully bid on the project. A fifth region will be re-tendered as no suitable partner was found in the initial tender process.
- The LIS is due to be completed by October 2005. Current funding, kindly provided by the US Department of State and the Italian Government, will support the project through June 2005. Completion of the project is essential to the future planning and comprehensive management of mine action within the country.

Chad

Key Achievements

- The last newsletter summarized the results of mine action since the beginning of operations, as published by the High Commission for National Demining (HCND). The data pertaining to the period 16 September 2000 to 28 February 2005 is summarized in the table below.

Mine clearance	1,306,194 m ²
Battle area clearance	4,480,171 m ²
Anti-personnel mines destroyed	13,247
Anti-tank mines destroyed	5,127
Unexploded ordnance (UXO) destroyed	137,201
Total weight	797 tons

- The results of the technical survey carried out by MAG in March 2005 were made available at the beginning of April. The study focuses in particular on water access and ammunition caches.
- Thanks to Canadian funds received in 2004 through UNICEF, an Italian consultant was recruited in March 2005 to be responsible for mine-risk education (MRE). She arrives on 12 April 2005.
- Thanks to a generous Swiss contribution, there has been no disruption in the post of Administration, Finance, and Logistics Officer. The new in-kind officer arrived in Chad on 1 March 2005.

Key Challenges

- The start-up of operations in Fada continues to be postponed due to financial difficulties.
- The contract of the Swiss in-kind Advisor in Information Systems and Technology and Databases ended in January 2005. To date, no replacement has been found. This post is of strategic importance now that the results of the technical survey are available.

Key Objectives

- For the short term, the key objective remains resource mobilization, in terms of obtaining the government's contribution and engaging other external donors.
- The renewal of the contract between MAG and UNOPS for demining activities in Wadi Doum. The present contract runs until 24 April 2005.
- The start-up of demining operations in Fada.
- The national mine-action director, the head of the information services for the HCND, and the Chief Technical Advisor (CTA) will participate in the workshop on the socio-economic approaches to mine action taking place in Nairobi, May 2005. The workshop will be a particularly useful in light of the restructuring of the HCND being carried out by the newly appointed national mine-action director.

Funding Update

- The government is expected to start paying its 2004 contribution in April 2005, and UNDP has decided to fund US\$ 500,000 to be used for the renewal of MAG's contract. The project did not receive any external funds for 2005. A minimum of US\$ 2 million has to be mobilized in order to pursue mine and battle area clearance (BAC) until the end of the year.
- The start-up of the operations in Fada depends on the availability of funds, which would allow the signing of a new contract among UNOPS, HCND, and MAG.

Ethiopia

Key Achievements

- Five months' experience of integrating mine-detection dogs (MDD) and mechanical assets with manual clearance units has produced very favorable results in productivity.
- Demining assets have been favorably reorganized, with the result that clearance accomplishments in the past six months exceeded those of the previous 24 months.
- Strategic planning is ongoing and plans for 2005 include training and equipping additional clearance units, which will more than double the number of manual deminers in the field.

Key Objectives

- Begin reorganization of a national Mine Action Coordination Center.
- Redeployment of assets for concentrated demining of high-impact areas.
- Completion of a Landmine Impact Survey verification mission to allow for LIS certification.

Key Challenges

- Transition from the Ethiopian Mine Action Office to the Ethiopian Mine Action Coordination Center for increased operational efficiency through enhanced command and control of inherent assets and accreditation and monitoring of all national mine-action activities.
- Continue refinement of procedures through intensive quality assurance at all levels of mine-action activity.

Funding Update

- UNDP assistance is currently funded by a contribution from the Government of Norway. Proposals have been submitted to the governments of Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Positive indications have been received from Canada, Germany, and the Netherlands.

Uganda

Key Achievements

- The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Department for Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, took over the coordination of the mine-action program at policy level (Inter-Agency Technical Committee, chaired by the OPM Permanent Secretary).
- The mine-action document “Technical/Advisory Assistance to the Ugandan Mine Action Program (Part One)” will be signed this month.
- The International Mine Action Advisor has been fielded since 1 Feb 2005.
- Two international NGOs—the Association of Volunteers in International Service (AVSI) and Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR)—are conducting mine-risk education and victim assistance activities in Gulu, Pader, Lira, and Kitgum, primarily in camps for internally displaced people (IDP).
- AVSI is running a prosthesis workshop in Gulu for the northern part of Uganda.
- A needs assessment conducted by Mines Awareness Trust (MAT) and Anti Mines Network—Rwenzori (AMNET-R) in the Kasese district, western Uganda, resulted in identification of 57 dangerous areas.

Key Objectives

- Establishment of an integrated Mine Action Program including a Mine Action Center and regional center.
- Introduction of a mine/UXO victim/incident surveillance network within the Ministry of Health.
- Clearance and BAC training of up to 50 members of the Uganda Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) in the Nairobi International De-mining Training Center in summer 2005, funded by the Government of the United Kingdom. UPDF personnel will be equipped with metal detectors, personal protective equipment, and other necessary demining tools.
- A three-month pilot test of clearance/BAC teams in Kasese. This will take place after the teams have completed their training, and precede their deployment to northern Uganda.
- Begin targeted needs assessments in mine/UXO-affected districts in northern Uganda prior to the deployment of clearance/BAC teams. The international NGO Mines Awareness Trust and a local NGO will carry out this work (approximately two months per district).

Key Challenges

- Ongoing insurgent activities in parts of northern and northeastern Uganda are endangering mine-risk education, victim assistance activities, and clearance and needs assessment operations in this part of the country.
- Equipment and procedures of UPDF engineers during ad-hoc clearance/BAC operations in northern Uganda should be substantially improved.

Funding Update

- For 2005 the EU has pledged Euro 1 million for mine-risk education and victim assistance (re-integration) activities in western and northern Uganda and for targeted needs assessments in up to four mine/UXO-contaminated districts in northern Uganda.
- UNDP began the EU-funded project with an initial disbursement of US\$ 200,000. The German Government funded the position of the Mine Action Advisor.
- Mine clearance/BAC in Kasese and the northern districts has a shortfall of US\$ 750,000. These funds are needed to equip and make five survey/clearance/BAC teams (vehicles, GPS, radios, large loop detectors, medical equipment, etc.) fully operational during the pilot test (October–December 2005) and all of 2006.
- If funding needs are not met by July 2005, the survey/clearance/BAT operations will be delayed, which could retard the return and resettlement of IDP in northern Uganda.
- Funding shortfall for targeted needs assessments in other northern districts amounts to US\$ 250,000.
- Funding shortfall for two Quality Assurance Teams (equipment and operations) amounts to US\$ 175,000 for 2005/2006.

ARAB STATES REGION

Iraq

Key Achievements

- The UNDP Mine Action Team continued to provide mine-action institutional management and technical advice to the Iraqi National Mine Action Authority (NMAA).
- The UNDP-funded Technical Advisors (TAs) completed a needs analysis and continued to compile development plans for institutional management and technical support to the NMAA. A draft Strategic Plan for the provision of TAs to the NMAA is being developed by UNDP and will be discussed and finalized in the Mine Action Coordination Meeting on 6 and 7 April 2005.
- The development of a local clearance NGO in Basrah by Danish Demining Group (DDG) continued. The trained DDG explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) teams continued with clearance activities. A total of 8,278 square meters of battle area was cleared (subsurface clearance) and seven BLU-97 bomblets were destroyed in the field. The cleared area will be a tomato field estimated to yield 11,000 kg of tomatoes yearly (two seasons) and will create employment for three farm workers. A total of six days of field operations was lost because DDG was not allowed to operate from the regional mine-action centers' south compound. This matter has since been resolved.
- The LIS team leader, contracted through Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAF), continued with surveys in the Sulaymaniyah governorate, where in the first half of March some 138 villages were visited and 13 were identified as contaminated. In the south, surveys are continuing in Al Samawah and Al Nasariya governorates. To date, some 146 villages and 128 farms have been documented with surface contamination.
- Several meetings/conversations took place with mine-action partner agencies working inside Iraq to enhance cluster coordination and to support mine-action implementation in Iraq. Participating were the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), MAG VVAF, InterSOS, DDG, RONCO, and Mine Tech International (MTI). The meetings also provided an opportunity to get an updated picture of the situation inside Iraq, particularly concerning mine-action projects and activities.
- The Mine Action Technical Advisor traveled to Kuwait and Basra to attend the Southern Iraq Reconstruction and Coordination Group Meeting and to meet with counterparts in Kuwait. It is reported that the security situation in Basra has improved; however, the threat from roadside improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and kidnapping is ongoing, particularly in Basrah City.

Key Challenges

- The security situation continues to be a challenge to conducting effective mine-action activities in the greater part of Iraq. All Cluster 7 operational activities inside Iraq are continuing, although it is not always possible to work in the high priority areas.

Key Objectives

- Continue to provide management and technical advice to the NMAA and other stakeholders.
- Conduct a Mine Action Coordination Meeting with NMAA on 6 and 7 April 2005.
- Conduct a Senior Mine Action Advisor/Cluster Manager mission to Kuwait and Basra, 17–19 April 2005.
- Conduct a monthly cluster meeting on 25 April 2005.
- Attend the Mine Action Equipment Exhibition in Amman, 4–7 April 2005.
- Participate in the follow-up meeting for the Emergency Field Coordination Training Course (23 November–5 December 2004) in Geneva on 18 and 19 April 2005.
- Hold meetings with mine victim assistance stakeholders and counterparts.

Funding Update

- A one-year extension of the LIS team leader at a cost of US\$ 300,000 is critical. US\$ 2.5 million is needed for institutional development and support to the NMAA.

2.3. Updates from UNICEF

UNICEF CONTRIBUTION TO THE MASG NEWSLETTER APRIL 2005

Bosnia and Herzegovina

UNICEF Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continues to provide technical, financial and logistical support to the BiH Mine Action Centre (BHMAC) and to implementing agencies involved in MRE and Landmine Victim Assistance (LMVA).

In March 2005, BHMAC conveyed the MRE Implementation committee and the MRE Policy Board Meeting in Sarajevo. The meeting was held on 22-nd March, the BHMAC presented the MRE annual plan for 2005 and MRE organizations presented their plans for 2005 and reported about their activities in 2004. The BHMAC MRE department held technical meetings with MRE NGO sector concerning training of local community representatives, emergency marking and clarification of roles and responsibilities of local stakeholders at community and municipality levels. BHMAC also assisted a local NGO newly involved in MRE with analyzing, giving recommendations and technical opinions on their project. The BHMAC also conducted preparation for LMVA Implementation committee and Policy Board Meetings to be held in April in Sarajevo, updates the integrated MRE database, collecting reports and providing information required by implementing agencies.

During March 2005, the UNICEF supported local NGO Genesis Project conducted 152 peer education workshops in 20 primary schools located near suspected hazard areas. The 417 trained peer-educators acquired skills and knowledge and are now able to educate their peers about safer behaviors in regards to mine risk.

During March, the UNICEF supported local NGO AMI implemented the field test of the associated research project on the development of the system of planning for MRE at community level. Through training, workshops, collection and analysis of information, and liaison with Mine Action stakeholders and local authorities, the team tested the developed model and guidelines through the implementation of community risk assessment, vulnerability and capacity analysis and developed MRE plans for the communities of Grebnice, Brvnik, Domaljevac and Samac, in the Domaljevac-Samac municipality.

The UNICEF supported Italian NGO INTERSOS proceeded with the implementation of the project MRE and Community liaison activities in six municipalities of BiH. From half of January until half of March workshop activities were held in the targeted six municipalities. After presenting examples of integrated mine action plans at the workshops, participants (community leaders and working sector leaders) working in groups planed on their own territory an example of intervention that include all mine action components and indicate possible target groups. Selected community leaders and security managers of private and public companies will be trained as MRE community representatives.

During the second half of March a specific curricula for the MRE Community Representative course has been drafted by INTERSOS taking into consideration the recently issued Draft MRE strategy for BiH and the training needs of the selected community leaders. The course is meant for the development of basic capacities in planning and implementing simple informative campaigns and educational activities for endangered adult groups in rural areas. A tool kit for MRE Community Representative is being developed with participants as one of the activities of the training.

After the course INTERSOS tutors will assist community representatives in developing and implementing a plan of action in their territory (public information, urgent and permanent marking, advocacy etc.).

Cambodia

Mine/UXO Victim Information:

At the end of February 2005, 131 new casualties were reported by the Cambodia Mine/UXO Victim Information System. This showed an increase of 14% compared with 115 casualties reported in February 2004. Among the total of 131 casualties, 50% were men, 38% were children under 18 year and 12% were women. Sixty percent of the casualties were injured or killed by UXO and 40% by mines. Eighty-four percent of the total casualties received MRE and 16% did not. Among the 131 casualties injured or killed, 30% of them were caused by tampering with UXO.

Current Challenges

Mine Risk Education remains one of the vision statements in the National Mine Action Strategy 2005-2012. A Mine Action Coordination Committee Meeting was held in March 2005 at the Council of the Minister, and was chaired by H.E Sam Sotha, CMAA Secretary General, with the participation of the provincial governors/deputy governors from heavily contaminated provinces, national police, relevant ministries and NGO representatives to address the following issues:

- § High casualty rates caused by landmine and especially tampering with UXO;
- § Population growth and risky activities being undertaken by communities in the contaminated areas due to economical necessity;
- § Contaminated areas along the Thai and Cambodian border are not permitted to be cleared due to the fear of a Thai invasion.

It was recommended to increase MRE activities, the involvement of police and local authorities to warn and enforce the prohibition of active searches for UXO and specific awareness raising activities targeting the scrap metal collectors and dealers.

Russia – Northern Caucasus

General

UNICEF, in its role of the focal point for all mine action programme activities in the North Caucasus, has presented the problem of mines and UXO in the North Caucasus at the Humanitarian Forum held in Moscow on 18 March 2005.

On 10 March UNICEF chaired the interagency coordination meeting with all the MA actors working in the North Caucasus. UNICEF informed the meeting about the decision of the EMERCOM of Russia to start de-mining in Grozny in March 2005. The territory of the former chemical plant and mined fields in the outskirts of Grozny will be the first sites for initiation of the mine and UXO clearance. The information has been confirmed by Bilgis Baidarova, the Deputy Prime Minister of the Chechen Government and by the Emergency Committee of Chechnya.

Two meetings aimed at discussing the survivor assistance (SA) activities and enhancing coordination in this sector have been held with the ICRC Head of Orthopedic Project and Handicap International Rehabilitation Specialist. Possible hand over of the coordination of SA activities from UNICEF to HI has been discussed. A follow-up meeting will be shortly held with HI. The current technical capacity of the Grozny Prosthetic Workshop and planned activities of the ICRC, HI and UNICEF for strengthening its capacity in the year of 2005 were also on the agenda of the meeting.

Mine Risk Education

UNICEF continued its mine risk education campaign in Chechnya through its local implementing partners Voice of the Mountains (VoM), Let's Save the Generation and the Chechen State Drama Theatre. Different approaches have been used to achieve the best results in contributing to the change of wrong behavior into the on mine and UXO affected territory. With the aim to raise the awareness of civilians about the existing min/UXO problem, 120 posters, 40 pens, 20 t-shirts, 300 fairy tales and 800 stories about survivors have been distributed by VoM during the reporting period. The above mentioned activities have been supported by the ECHO funds.

VoM reported on creation of mine risk education (MRE) community-based focus groups in four districts of Grozny. The groups are reported to comprise of people working for district administrations, hospitals, religious institutions and youth institutions. The groups will be used to ensure smooth flow of MRE related information from UNICEF and its partner to the communities of Chechnya.

In accordance with the information already received from the focus groups, 3 mine/UXO incidents involving four civilians (one killed, three injured), have been reported by VoM. One incident took place in Achkhoy-Martan, two others happened in Grozny when people were trying to dismantle their destroyed houses.

Survivor assistance

A new lot of assistive devices (wheelchairs, crutches, multifunctional beds, walking sticks) has been procured by UNICEF with the financial support of the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the German Government.

In the framework of its physical rehabilitation programme for disabled children and women, UNICEF supported production of 11 prosthetic devices through the Grozny Prosthetic Workshop.

Responsibility for preparing stumps for prosthetic devices and for follow-up treatment of disabled children has been taken over by the Republican Clinical Hospital in Grozny since 2003 in the framework of the cooperation agreement with UNICEF. Based on the Republican Clinical Hospital in Grozny, some 14 children with disabilities completed in-patient treatment in the hospital, 17 benefited from physiotherapeutic procedures offered by the hospital using UNICEF-procured equipment.

Vocational training on tailoring for disabled girls has been supported by UNICEF through the Chechen branch of All-Russian Society for Disabled. 20 students who are currently attending the course have significantly improved their skills in sewing bed linen and basic overcoat.

A more comprehensive psychosocial rehabilitation has been offered by UNICEF to disabled children in the Psychosocial Rehabilitation Center run by Let's Save the Generation (LSG) in Grozny. Some 35 children have been involved in the programme in March 2005.

Sri Lanka

School based MRE programme

In March, 3 Provincial College of Education (NCoE) organised three specific trainings in MRE for the teacher trainees (both Sinhala and Tamil medium). Resource persons for these trainings were the President and/or Vice President of the NCoE and UNICEF Mine action project assistants from Colombo and the district level. Students were organised into several groups and during the 3 trainings of 2 days, a total of 625 students (225 in Adalaichenai, 240 in Vavuniya and 160 in Jaffna) received the MRE course.

In February, the UNICEF project assistant in charge of integrating MRE into the formal school system, went in Puttalam district to discuss with the zonal education director and subject directors. During this mission, eight schools were monitored.

In March, the director of social studies and two in-service advisers from the North Central provincial education department, assisted by the UNICEF project assistant, met to develop an MRE monitoring guideline. This tool will be used in the future by the in-service advisers to better monitor the integration of MRE in the schools by the teachers. The tool will also be used to collect information on the level of MRE knowledge gained by the students.

This new tool will be discussed by other provincial directors of education and by the UNICEF Mine action project assistants before its implementation in the field.

Landmine Ban Advocacy

Part of the CHA (Consortium of Humanitarian Agencies), the LBAF (Landmine Ban Advocacy Forum) continues to meet every month with representatives of embassies, UN agencies and NGOs to discuss further steps for advocacy activities related to the signature of the Ottawa Treaty and the Deed of Commitment.

A proposition made during recent meetings suggested supporting the development of district level fora in the most mines/uxo affected areas. UNICEF, UNDP and the CHA have shown interest in supporting these activities.

Survivor assistance

UNICEF has been supporting several initiatives and projects in survivor assistance since 2003. The main aim is to ensure access to rehabilitation services for landmine survivors and other people with disabilities. To be more consistent with the UNICEF mandate in mine action and to follow the principles defined in the Global UNICEF Strategy for Mine Action 2002-2005, UNICEF Sri Lanka is now working on a draft survivor assistance framework. This paper will soon be circulated for discussion.

Also, the annual report 2004 for the UNICEF Sri Lanka mine action program is now available and can be provided to interested individuals.