

GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER | STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2016-19

CONSULTATIONS WITH THE MINE ACTION AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY

GENEVA, 10 November 2015

1. The Senior Protection Coordinator undertook consultations with the Mine Action AOR as part of the development of the strategic framework. UNMAS is leading the Mine Action Area of Responsibility within the Global Protection Cluster.
2. In the field Mine Action sub-clusters are activated in 12 countries (from 28 active clusters and cluster-like mechanisms): Afghanistan, CAR, Colombia, DRC, Iraq, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, and Ukraine. UNMAS leads 10 of them; Iraq is led by Mine Action Group and Ukraine is co-led by UNDP and the Danish Demining Group.
3. There are strong interactions between Mine Action and other protection actors, both using similar participatory methods and working with local communities. From a protection perspective, it is therefore “imperative that mine action be fully integrated in the overall humanitarian response where landmines and explosive remnants of war are to be expected” (Handbook for the Protection of IDPs – March 2010).
4. An update to the last SG report, released on 3 August 2015, reveals that nearly eight million people live in or close to contaminated areas.
5. In its broad sense, Mine Clearance includes surveys, mapping and minefield marking, as well as the actual clearance of mines from the ground. This range of activities is also sometimes referred to as "demining". Mine clearance aims to clear land so that civilians can return to their homes and their everyday routines without the threat of landmines and unexploded remnants of war (ERW), which include unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance. The aim of humanitarian demining is to restore peace and security at the community level.
6. Mine and ERW risk education refers to activities aimed at reducing the risk of injury from mines and unexploded ordnance by raising awareness and promoting behavioral change through public-information campaigns, education and training, and liaison with communities. Risk education, along with demining, contributes to limiting the risk of physical injury from mines and unexploded ordnance that already contaminates the land.
7. Mine Victim Assistance is a core component of mine action and an obligation of States Parties under the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty. Article 6 of the Treaty states that "Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs." Victim assistance includes, but is not limited to, information management systems; emergency and continuing medical care; physical rehabilitation; psychosocial support and social inclusion; economic reintegration; and laws and public policies that promote effective treatment,

care and protection for all disabled citizens, including landmine victims, with a human rights perspective.

8. Stockpiled antipersonnel landmines far outnumber those actually laid in the ground. In accordance with Article 4 of the anti-personnel mine-ban treaty, State Parties must destroy their stockpiled mines within four years after their accession to the Convention.
9. Several international agreements, in particular the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Treaty, the Convention on Conventional Weapons, Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and international human rights instruments regulate or ban the use of landmines and explosive remnants of war. These instruments are a part of the body of international humanitarian law which seeks to limit the effects of armed conflict for humanitarian reasons. The corpus of international human rights law outlines the rights of persons affected by these weapons.
10. It was suggested that there is a lack of knowledge among protection cluster coordinators about what mine action is about. Mine action is quite isolated within the cluster and the broader humanitarian community and this means that some activities are not linked up properly with mine action. The relationship at the field level could sometimes be managed better because of this lack of understanding of mine action.
11. The Mine Action AOR wants mine action to be seen as the enabler for humanitarian action it is and this requires engagement with the wider community- the GPC can facilitate this engagement, especially with other clusters.
12. The Mine Action AOR would like to see more efficient information management, including in the process of developing the HNO. There needs to be a more integrated approach to planning, one that includes mine action. IMSMA is being used in all operations but the AOR would like to see how common information management could be developed. Indicators for progress on mine action are often simplistic and lack utility.
13. The division of humanitarian mine action and peacekeeping can be tricky, see Somalia. However, the military clearance of mines also has positive humanitarian impact. The clusters at field and global level can act as a bridge between the humanitarian and peacekeeping.
14. IEDs: resolution moved by Afghanistan in the First Committee on mine action, including the scourge of IEDs was passed last Friday. Debate in the Fourth Committee on IEDs led to a resolution, sponsored by Poland and supported by many countries, without contention and the atmosphere in the Fourth Committee was very positive.
15. There are some concerns about the perception of the neutrality and impartiality of agencies clearing IEDs because of their use in asymmetrical conflicts against national armies in a conflict.
16. Looking at further ratifications of the Convention on Cluster Munitions: there is a strong correlation between UN presence in a country and ratification of a treaty.