

Information Management

Given the scope of the landmine problem, the wide spectrum of factors to take into consideration, and the number of actors involved, the development of an appropriate information management system is a priority for UNMAS. Such an information management system will greatly support proper monitoring, planning, and programme implementation. It will serve the needs not only of the United Nations but of other partners as well. An agreement has been concluded between UNMAS and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining to develop and maintain an **Information Management System for Mine Action**.

The first phase of the project, the development of a Field Module (FM), has just been completed. The FM has been designed for use within mine-affected countries, and incorporates a database and Geographic Information System (GIS) which provides an effective tool for information storage, collation and analysis. The FM has been developed based on the experiences of a number of existing Mine Action Programmes, and will process and display the full spectrum of information required to support mine action activities. This includes information gathered during the three levels of Survey, and incorporates in particular, the capability to process data on the impact of mine contamination, as well as mine awareness and victim assistance related data. Field modules will be made available upon request to existing or new programmes, along with training procedures for the use of the system.

The development of the Information Processing Module and the Information Dissemination Module to be used at UN Headquarters is the second stage of the project. Upon completion, a network would be established linking other UN and external databases to form a comprehensive information management system, upon which strategic planning and management of mine action can be based.

Casualty and Injury Description

Casualty No. Incident No.

Name: Relationship:

Given Name: Rank:

Sex: Age: Address:

Organization: Activity at Time of Incident:

Assignment:

Injuries (Other Information)

Loss of

- ☐ Eyes
- ☐ Fingers/Toes
- ☐ Hand/Finger
- ☐ Limb
- ☐ Foot/Toe
- ☐ Leg
- ☐ Arm
- ☐ Hand/Finger
- ☐ Limb
- ☐ Foot/Toe

Other Injuries

- ☐ Head/Neck
- ☐ Back
- ☐ Pelvis/Buttocks
- ☐ Chest
- ☐ Abdomen
- ☐ Open Lacer
- ☐ Lower Limbs

The United Nations and Civil Society: A Partnership for Mine Action

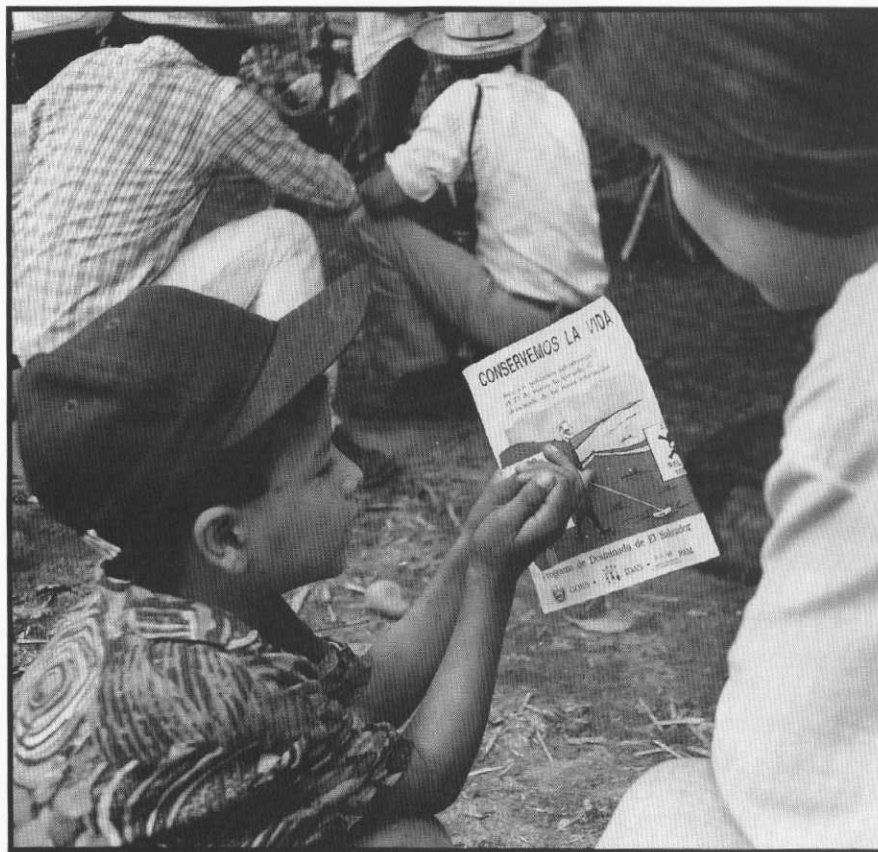
The role of civil society has been instrumental in raising public awareness of the global landmine crisis.

Acknowledging this contribution, the United Nations strives to further develop partnerships with NGOs, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and concerned individuals, with a view not only to advocating in support of a ban, but also to implementing effective and flexible mine-action projects in the field.

At headquarters level, both the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and the ICRC have joined UN departments and agencies in a Steering Committee on Mine Action chaired by the UN Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations. This Committee promotes better coordination and integration of all mine-related activities.

At country level, NGOs such as Handicap International, Mine Advisory Group, Norwegian People's Aid and The Halo Trust, often work with affected communities prior to UN involvement in a mine-contaminated country. They remain, subsequently, important partners in integrated UN programmes as they are developed. The whole Afghanistan Programme, for example, is based on a central coordination mechanism led by the UN, and on a variety of local and international NGOs responsible for the execution of survey, clearance, awareness and advocacy activities.

The Global Landmine Survey Initiative provides the latest illustration of how far the United Nations and NGOs have moved towards working closely together in a spirit of trust and mutual respect. In a unique cooperative effort, NGOs, UNMAS and key donors have established an institutional mechanism specifically designed to



facilitate the coordination of resources and expertise required to implement Level One Surveys worldwide. This initiative has received the financial support of the United Nations Foundation for International Partnership, funded from Ted Turner's donation to the UN.

It has required, and it will continue to require, both will and frankness to bring together the vastly different cultures that nourish the UN family and the NGO community. However, the efforts put into this undertaking proved not only worthwhile but also indis-

pensable to ensure that the resources available for mine action are put to their best use, and to minimize the risk of overlap and duplication. The United Nations will take every opportunity to promote even further cooperation with civil society in the common fight against landmines.

The Road Ahead

With the ratification and entry into force on 1 March 1999 of the Ottawa Treaty banning anti-personnel mines, the international community has formally recognized that the landmine problem is a serious humanitarian emergency.

Yet, the suffering in mine affected countries continues. The frequency and intensity of internal conflicts continues to exacerbate the problem of landmine use. A number of military experts believe landmines are no longer a viable weapon. Antipersonnel mines are easily procured and indiscriminately deployed. Their significance as a psychological deterrent seems to outweigh their tactical value.

The role the UN system plays is impartial and comprehensive. UN mine action policy embodies the Secretary-General's reform programme while strengthening the system's overall capacity to effectively respond to humanitarian emergencies.

Through the core principles of mine action — mine awareness and risk reduction; minefield surveying, mapping, and clearance; victim assistance and rehabilitation, and advocacy, the responsibilities of UNMAS and the UN partners is clearly defined. However, the need remains for continued long-term support for existing programmes.

The fact that the international response to the problem has been consistently growing warrants recognition. Much has been accomplished in the area of mine action with the generous contributions of the donors. But resources are limited and the competition for assistance is keen. Increased cooperation will be sought with non-traditional partners including the NGO community and the private sector. UNMAS is well positioned to coordinate with the UN system resource mobilization strategies and programmes.

The implementation of a holistic and integrated mine action policy has already provided a number of vital lessons. For example, through focused

mine awareness programmes, affected communities can learn to sufficiently adapt and function despite the presence of landmines.

Perhaps the most compelling lesson is that with a coordinated approach and adequate resources the landmine problem can be addressed and brought under control over a finite period of time.

Though the primary responsibility for taking action against the presence of landmines lies with the concerned state, the coordinated policy facilitates UN assistance in the creation of sustainable national capacities and in the implementation of overall programmes. The role and resources of national and local governments are a critical dimension of mine action that cannot be underestimated, as is the collective role of the international community and supportive role of concerned individuals.

Mine action is indeed about people. It is about giving them the opportunity to live in an environment free from the physical, socio-economic and psychological entrapments caused by these callous and indiscriminate killers. Through its activities, the United Nations Mine Action Service is committed to ensuring that those now living with the threat of landmines will have the chance to enjoy a peaceful and productive existence.



What you can do as an individual

Become *informed* about the issue

Share this information with your friends, and families

Contact your government or elected officials

Contact the International Campaign to Ban Landmines

Search the United Nations Website:
www.un.org/Depts/Landmines

