

MINE ACTION PROGRAMME OF AFGHANISTAN NEWSLETTER: DECEMBER 2009



MACCA SUPPORTS THE CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

The government of Afghanistan celebrated International Day of Persons with Disabilities on 9th December 2009 with the financial support of MACCA. The event was held in Kabul with the participation of government high-ranking officials, disability NGOs and persons with disabilities.

The celebration began with the recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the National Anthem, performed by Family Welfare Foundation students singing the Anthem in Afghan Sign Language.

Mrs. Amina Afzali, Advisor to the Presidential Office read the President's message saying: "Celebration of International Day of Persons with Disability really honors all persons with disabilities in our beloved country. Many disabilities are the result of three decades of war and now we put all our efforts to prevent further disabilities in the country. I request all concerned organizations to cooperate with and support all disability efforts in Afghanistan and work determinedly to provide valuable services to them."



Family Welfare Foundation (FWF) Students
Performing National Anthem



Dr. Mohammad Haider Reza, giving speech on
International day of person with disabilities

Dr. Mohammad Haider Reza, programme director of the MACCA resenting the United Nations and MAPA said, "I accept that problems exist and I do feel the pain of the persons with disabilities. We must work hard to achieve our goal of providing services to all persons with disabilities."

H.E Miss Suraya Paikan, Deputy Minister of Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) gave her speech pointing to the theme of the year "Making the Millennium Development Goals Inclusive! Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities & their Communities Around the World." She expressed the commitment of the ministry to ensuring rights and privileges to all persons with disabilities.

A number of other officials from government, Upper House of the parliament and NGOs also gave speeches. Some issues highlighted were that 196,000 children with disabilities in Afghanistan have no access to education is the joint responsibility of NGOs and the government of Afghanistan.

RECENT TALIBAN STRONGHOLD WILL SOON BE CLEARED OF LANDMINES AND OTHER ERW

In the last week of December MACCA Landmine Impact Assessment Teams (LIAT) were deployed to Nowzad district in Helmand province to assess the reports of contamination there. Nowzad was a stronghold of the insurgency until recently and was inaccessible for mine action survey teams.

The LIAT teams along with senior representatives from MCPA, DAFA and MDC are conducting a polygon survey to find out scope of contamination problem in the district.

According to the Nowzad district head, about seven people have been killed due to mine explosions recently in Nowzad district of whom three were children. One EOD team of DAFA operating in Lashkargah will be deployed for an emergency response to the district. The team will be cautious of how to deal with the new types of IEDs and carry on ERW clean up and if needed clear small and high priority minefields.



The MACCA Chief of Operations visited Helmand province in December where he attended a gathering which was organized for demining Nowzad district.

Authorities from the government, international forces, mine action staff and representative from Nowzad district participated the gathering and requested community based demining approach for the district.

The road leading to Nowzad district is not secure yet, but security in the centre of Nowzad is viewed as sufficient for the demining to start. Upon the completion of the polygon survey, demining operation will soon start in the high priority areas.

MINE AND ERW INCIDENTS JANUARY– DECEMBER 2009

Month	18 Years and Younger		Over 18 Years		Unknown Age/Gender	Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Jan	16	0	14	0		30
Feb	30	5	17	1		53
March	37	0	14	0		51
April	22	5	15	1		43
May	33	9	24	8		74
June	10	5	17	0		32
July	23	6	20	6	1	56
August	12	2	9	1		24
September	14	2	11	5		32
October	15	2	10	0		27
November	4	1	12	4		21
December	19	1	7	1		28
Grand Total	235	38	170	27	1	471

MINE ACTION BENCHMARKS IN AFGHANISTAN

Ottawa Treaty:

Clear all emplaced anti-personnel mines by 2013;

Destroy all known anti-personnel mine stockpiles by 2007; and

Provide mine risk education to Afghans and assist mine survivors.

Afghanistan Compact:

Land area contaminated by mines and ERW will be reduced by 70% by March 2011;

All stockpiled anti-personnel mines will be located and destroyed by March 2007.

DESTRUCTION OF ALL KNOWN STOCKPILES OF ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES

The Government of Afghanistan successfully fulfilled its Article 4 of Ottawa Treaty and Afghanistan Compact benchmark to destroy all known stockpiled anti-personnel landmines in its territory in October 2007.

KEYS TO MEETING THE BENCHMARKS FOR MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

- * Sustaining existing capacities
- * Expansion of Community - Based Demining
- * Programming through focused projects
- * Introduction of competitive tendering
- * Enhanced fundraising to ensure resources to meet benchmarks

CHALLENGES TOWARDS BENCHMARKS

The Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan must increase multilateral and bilateral funding to mine action to achieve the targets set by the Ottawa Treaty and the Afghanistan Compact. Essentially, funding needs to be coherent to enable effective delivery; this means funds must be received before the beginning of the year . If the funds are provided, the MAPA has the technical capability to achieve the targets.

MINE ACTION ACHIEVEMENTS SUMMARY JANUARY– DECEMBER 2009

- * 51,743 AP mines, 746 AT mines, and 1,152,738 ERW destroyed.
- * 280 communities declared impact free.
- * 430,989 women and girls and 655,018 men and boys received MRE throughout the country.

THE MINE ACTION STRATEGY IN AFGHANISTAN

The strategy for mine action is based on the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's vision of a country free from landmines and ERW, where people and communities live in a safe environment conducive to national development, and where landmine and ERW survivors are fully integrated in the society and thus have their rights and needs recognized and fulfilled. To turn this vision into reality, the government has established benchmark obligations within its national development strategy, the Afghanistan Compact, which are in accordance with its obligations under the Ottawa Convention.

SUPPORT TO MINE ACTION NATIONAL CAPACITY

The Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA) supported by the United Nations and the Government of Afghanistan through its Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA)/Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) have formed a partnership within the MACCA offices to plan, coordinate and ensure the quality of all mine action activities in Afghanistan. The most recent Inter-ministerial board meeting was held in March, key topics discussed included information exchange between ministries of Aynac copper mine.



MDD teams returning from demining operation in Charasyab district / June 2009

MAPA AND MACCA SUMMARY

The concept of humanitarian mine action was developed in Afghanistan in 1988/9. Mine action encompasses all pillars of mine action: advocacy, demining (survey, marking and clearance), stockpile destruction, mine risk education (MRE), and victim assistance (VA). The programme is funded both bilaterally and through the UN Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF)^[1].

Collectively known as the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA), mine action implementers in Afghanistan form one of the largest mine action programmes in the world. Together, these agencies have a twenty year history of successfully delivering mine action in Afghanistan and have cleared over 12,000 hazard areas throughout the country. The MAPA is coordinated by the Mine Action Coordination Centre of Afghanistan (MACCA), which is funded through a UN modality. The MACCA has sub-offices, known as Area Mine Action Centres (AMACs) in Herat, Jalalabad, Mazar, Kunduz, Gardez, and Kandahar.



Demining Operation in Samangan province Photo by : Jacob Simkin, April

MAPA is supported by :

