

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction



MINE CLEARANCE

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ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

ISSUES

1. Article 5 of the Convention requires States Parties to develop mine clearance programmes "... to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under (their) jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than ten years after the entry into force of (the) Convention." However the Convention does not define 'clearance'.
2. In order to be fully effective, mine clearance programmes require a conducive environment in which to operate. What are the optimal conditions and how can they be created or encouraged?

OBJECTIVES

3. The first objective is to define an appropriate and achievable clearance standard which satisfies the requirements of the Convention to provide guidance to the mine clearance community. Such guidance will ensure that (finite and limited) resources are applied effectively and appropriately.
4. The second objective is to identify the main conditions for effective clearance and to identify how these can be improved.

BACKGROUND

5. The UN's *International Standards for Mine Clearance Operations* (paras. 5.9 - 5.10) defines an area as being cleared when "... all mines and munitions have been removed and/or destroyed. ... The area should be cleared of mines and UXOs to a standard and depth which is agreed to be appropriate to the residual/planned use of the land, and which is achievable in terms of the resources and time available. The contractor must achieve at least 99.6% of the agreed standard of clearance. The target for all UN-sponsored clearance programmes is the removal of all mines and UXO to a depth of 200mm." Mines/UXO below this depth are therefore not necessarily cleared. How can compliance with the Convention be achieved? What about Quality Assurance? What is the role of other forms of mine action (e.g. marking, awareness education) in relation to clearance and compliance with the Convention?
6. To operate effectively, mine clearance organisations need stable working conditions, support from the national authorities, and suitable procedures for employing staff, importing equipment, etc.

TOPIC 2: MEASURES OF IMPACT AND BENEFIT

ISSUE

1. In Article 6 para. 7a of the Convention, States Parties requesting assistance from other States Parties on the elaboration of "...the extent and scope of the anti-personnel mine problem.." will need to identify the scope of the humanitarian, social, economic and environmental implications of that problem, when making their requests. The Convention does not give guidance on how the socio-economic impact of anti-personnel mines can be assessed or measured.
2. The benefits to be expected from mine clearance include reduction of deaths and injuries, freeing of assets (such as land) and improved access and movement. Better understanding and measures of the benefits of mine clearance will improve effectiveness and help secure resources to undertake clearance.

OBJECTIVE

3. The objective is to promote the search for a valid and agreed set of indicators which can measure the impact of landmines on communities in socio-economic or developmental terms, and the benefits of clearance; and to encourage the application of these indicators in both appraisal and evaluation of mine clearance projects, and the establishment of priorities.

BACKGROUND

4. Simple issues of effectiveness of clearance - such as numbers of mines removed or destroyed, or area of land cleared - do not provide adequate measures of benefit to the communities affected. For example, what would the cleared land be used for? Who would gain from its use? And what are the particular benefits of clearance in the context of peace building and conflict reduction?
5. Some work has been undertaken or is planned. What progress has been made? How useful is it? Are the criteria appropriate and sufficiently comprehensive? Are they sufficiently well known, understood, and put into practice by stakeholders in the mine clearance community? Who should set and monitor the criteria in specific situations?
6. What further work in this area is needed? How can the development of this work and its application be extended and promoted?

TOPIC 3: PLANNING AND PRIORITISATION

ISSUE

1. States Parties requesting assistance from the UN or other States Parties under Article 6 para. 7 of the Convention, "in the elaboration of a national demining programme" will need to address the requirements for planning and prioritisation if such requests are to compete successfully for limited resources and lead to effective mine clearance programmes. The goal of removing all APLs is certainly not inconsistent with efforts to tackle the most urgent mine problems earliest.

OBJECTIVE

2. The objective is to promote better understanding of the information requirements for planning and the prioritisation of tasks of different stakeholders, and to determine whether (and how) existing institutional mechanisms and support tools need strengthening. This should lead to better national planning, and better prioritisation of international resources against the needs of States Parties requesting assistance.

BACKGROUND

3. Making best use of limited resources is essential. Detailed and accurate information needs to be gathered, appraised and applied to the process of planning and prioritisation. Mine clearance may be in competition for resources with other national priorities. Mine clearance may also be an essential component of wider national developmental priorities, e.g. rural development.

4. The circumstances of each country will be different, but at the national level what information is required and how can it be gathered? How effective and comprehensive are existing methods, guidelines and techniques? How can they be improved? How can national planning and the setting of priorities be improved? How can we learn from past experience? What are the similarities and differences between an "emergency" and a "development" approach to mine clearance? Within the context of overall national planning, how can we improve the linkages between mine clearance strategies and programmes and those of other development sectors?

5. At the regional or global level, what factors influence donors in deciding which programmes in which countries to support? Can donors plan better?

TOPIC 4: COORDINATION

ISSUE

1. Mine clearance usually involves a large number of stakeholders: including affected countries, donor countries providing assistance under Article 6 of the Convention, the UN and other international bodies, mine clearance organisations and the affected communities. Article 7 (Transparency Measures) requires States Parties to report on implementation and that the reports be shared. Without sharing of information and coordination of action, the mine action community cannot make the best use of existing resources

OBJECTIVE

2. The objective is to identify how well existing methods of co-ordination, including information acquisition and flows, succeed, where they may need to be strengthened and in what ways. Best practice can be encouraged and disseminated.

BACKGROUND

3. Fulfilling the obligations under the Convention of mine-affected countries to clear, and of donor countries to assist, depends on shared understanding of the mine problem in each country and of how to tackle it. Better co-ordination among different stakeholders,

better sharing of information, and a better understanding of past successes and failures (evaluation) should lead to more effective programmes in the future.

4. Who needs what information? Is necessary information currently readily available to those who need it? How can we improve the range and accessibility of information?

5. The roles of different stakeholders may need to be clarified. Coordination depends not only on willingness to work together, but on effective means of working together, and agreement on who does what best. How can we improve coordination at the global, national and local levels?

6. Groups of stakeholders - e.g. mine clearance organisations and donors - may be able to develop common systems and approaches so as to reduce duplication of effort.

TOPIC 5: BUILDING NATIONAL CAPACITY

ISSUE

1. Although it is not a requirement of the Convention, developing effective national capacity in mine-affected countries to clear mines is an integral aim of almost all major and long-term mine clearance programmes. In practice, this aim may take time and effort to achieve.

OBJECTIVE

2. The objective is to promote better understanding within the Committee on the requirements for identifying best practice and common constraints in order to encourage improved national capacity building.

BACKGROUND

3. What is "national (sometimes called "indigenous") capacity"? Why is it usually developed? Are there circumstances where it is not needed, or not worth developing? What conditions are essential for the successful development of a national capacity? What are the different components of a national capacity? (or on what different levels must it operate?)

4. How effective are current models for the development of national capacity? Can existing resources (e.g. the military) be used? What resources are needed to set up and develop national capacity, and to make it sustainable? What are the constraints?

5. What is the link between national mine clearance capacity and national capacities in other sectors of the economy?

6. Can regional or global capacity help or supplement national capacity in mine clearance?