

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

[HOME](#) > [Intersessional Work Programme](#) > [March & May 2000](#) > [Technologies](#) >

### SUMMARY REPORT

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#### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY REPORT :

In accordance with the relevant decisions of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, the Standing Committee of Experts on Technologies for Mine Action (SCETMA) held its second inter-sessional meeting on May 24-25, 2000 at the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in Geneva. More than 80 experts, including representatives of States Parties and non-States Parties, international organizations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and other non-governmental organizations, national mine action centers or programs, universities, research centers and industries took part in open and in-depth discussions on all the issues relevant to the SCETMA.

In conformity with the mandate and guidelines agreed during the Maputo Conference, and following a first intersessional meeting dedicated to the analysis of the needs expressed by the end-users, the constraints as they are perceived by both the deminers and the researchers, and the identification of practical conclusions in term of priorities. the SCETMA focussed for its second meeting on the information of deminers and deciders on technologies presently or soon available, on the new standards to be implemented, and on the axes of research which to day appear to be most promising in the medium term.

All participants insisted that there was no silver bullet and that neither manual demining, nor dogs or mechanical equipment taken separately was the solution to the landmine problem. Rather, all these technologies had to be considered as complementary elements of a tool box, to be mobilized in accordance with the particular conditions and environment of every minefield/mine action program and after a dedicated evaluation process has been conducted.

#### 1. Technologies indispensable to deminers

##### 1.1. Personal protection equipment (PPE)

The several improvements brought to PPE since the early 90s (better coverage of the throat, arms, legs, feet and vital arteries, increased resistance to blasts and fragmentation) were presented, and the need for the review of standards actually undertaken by UNMAS was underlined. The need to better integrate the appropriate use of PPE in training was also stressed.

##### 1.2. Mine detecting dogs (MDD)

Though MDD are widely used in various minefields and environments and are considered an efficient tool by many users, there is still a lack of data on many aspects of the use of MDD. Though it was not possible to draw conclusions at this stage, several efforts aiming at improving knowledge about MDD's performance and appropriate use, and at setting new standards for testing and accreditation were presented.

##### 1.3. Information technologies

Delegations expressed wide support to the recent development and expansion of the IMSMA interactive database, providing both deminers in the field and headquarters with comprehensive and evolutive information. Participants also expressed their views about the need to keep a balance between the comprehensive and multiple purpose character of IMSMA and its necessary end-user friendly environment. All speakers stressed the importance of feeding current databases with more high-resolution maps in order to further increase their utility.

##### 1.4. Mechanical equipment

The SCETMA made a review of mechanical equipments already available or in development for mine action (flails, bush-cutters, excavators...). The respective merits of light and heavy equipment were

discussed, and all participants insisted on the need first to focus on the adequacy between the equipment selected, the task that is assigned to it and the environment in which it is supposed to operate. End-users stressed the need for multi-purpose, versatile equipment, as a single piece of equipment will often have to operate successively in different minefields.

## 2. Norms and standards

Wide support was expressed to the review undertaken by UNMAS with the assistance of GICHD and the expertise of end-users, with the aim to create in a near future a complete framework of renewed standards to be made accessible to all operators of humanitarian demining. Several participants expressed their wish for an ongoing review of these standards and of their implementation in the field. In order to do so, it will be necessary to agree on common acceptable procedures for evaluating the outcome of demining activities.

## 3. Promising technologies

Several organisations, including the IAEA, presented some of the most promising technologies in the medium term, particularly for mine detection. The need to reduce the gap between researchers and deminers on the one hand, and to avoid, through training and cooperative efforts, that another gap emerge between end-users and new technologies on the other hand, was underlined. The interest of cooperative networks, such as ITEP, aimed at avoiding duplications in R&D programs and at strengthening the relationship between the R&D establishment and the end-users, was also recognized.

At the conclusion of its deliberations, the SCETMA confirmed that a more comprehensive report, including operative conclusions, will be made available at a later stage. A final report, summing up the proceedings and conclusions of the two meetings of the SCETMA will be submitted to the second Meeting of States Parties to be held in Geneva on September 11-15, 2000./.

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