GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER
2020 GLOBAL PROTECTION FORUM
EVENT REPORT

Consultation on Mine Action AoR Guidance Requirements
30 September 2020

1. Panel

Moderator:
- Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, UNMAS Geneva office & Global Coordinator, MA AoR

Speakers:
- Wolfgang Bindseil, Chair of the Mine Action Support Group and Head of Division for Humanitarian Assistance (Regional Policy and Operation), including Humanitarian Mine Action, at the German Federal Foreign Office
- Ms. Fadwa Benmbarek, UNMAS Democratic Republic of Congo Senior Programme Manager
- Ms. Pauline Boyer, Programme Officer, UNMAS Colombia
- Mr. William Chemaly, GPC Coordinator
- Francesca Chiaudani, Francesca Syria Mine Action Area of Responsibility Coordinator
- Ms. Catherine Guarín Franco, Project Director at Centro Integral de Rehabilitación Colombia (Fundación CIREC)
- Mr. Richard MacCormac, Head of the Danish Demining Group, Danish Refugee Council

2. Objective/overview of the session

Panelists and participants shared their perspectives on the value added of the MA AoR and on how to strengthen the strategic advice and coordination support it provides. Five key recommendations emerged: i) integrate mine action in all HRPs where there is contamination, ii) support the localization of mine action, iii) provide leadership in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus policy debate and operationalization; iv) develop a multi-year strategy for the MA AoR and build the capacity to implement it; and v) systematize the dialogue between donors and the MA AoR at the global and country level to address challenges jointly.

3. Summary of the discussion points

Strengths and Value Added of the MA AoR:

- In-Country coordination: MA AoR is a coordination platform which provides independent needs assessment, efficient distribution of resources and capacity
(geographic and thematic), strong working relation with protection coordinator, collaboration with other sectors, operations-focused hands-on experience from MA AoR members, exchanges of best practices among practitioners and pooling of coordination resources (information management, advocacy and reporting).

- **Joint advocacy**: concerted independent advocacy based on the needs of population at risk, national NGO representation, funding for the sector – National NGOs, legal advice (e.g. accreditation, visas, equipment).

- **Collaboration with child protection** is improving understanding of children at risk of explosive ordnance and expected to result in better coverage for prevention and response programming.

- **Community engagement**: is a golden currency in places where access is limited, where COVID-19 has spread, where stigmatization and other protection challenges are all over. Protection actors need to learn from mine action organizations how to build networks, maintain them and work with them.

- **Expertise in cross-sectoral programming**: mine action organizations know how to do integrated analysis and planning.

**Challenges and Areas to Strengthen:**

- **Critical funding gaps in mine action coordination in many countries and globally**: no MA AoR Coordinator position per se is funded. No MA coordinator specific profile, no team dedicated to coordination. The positions are fulfilled by staff who have other functions. It results in a reactive rather than proactive MA AoR at the country level (and generates frustration amongst MA operators). There is no surge capacity available.

- **Funding mechanisms are heavily bureaucratic** which makes access to funding difficult for National NGOs.

- **Reporting**: lack of cooperation from members in reporting mechanisms.

- **National authority** challenges the need for coordination by the humanitarian sector.

- **Risk to humanitarian principles**: stabilization actors involved in mine action and misunderstanding of humanitarian mine action as a stabilization/military activity vs. humanitarian response.
4. **Key recommendations / follow-up action**

1. **Coordination:**
   - At global level, facilitate the synchronization of strategies and indicate the direction of the most urgent needs, the trends in threats and technology. Establish a consolidated plan with the total need for mine action activities around the globe.
   - At the regional level, the AoR may contribute to the consistency or approaches in neighbouring contexts - for example, when there are minefields on both sides of a border.
   - At the local level, contextualize mine action, address issue of conflict sensitivity or identify nexus relationships such as additional contributions by mine action to development (i.e. enabling access to production means), or to protection of civilians living in conflict areas.
   - Explore options to include mine action in HRPs where it is not integrated (e.g. Ethiopia and Zimbabwe).

2. **Localization:** The MA AoR has knowledge and experience in working with local authorities and local organizations and must lead the localization agenda by:
   - Nationalizing Coordination positions as much as possible.
   - Supporting National NGOs to access funding and to become co-leads.
   - Leading inclusive processes that enable the participation of mine action authorities with the aim to handover the humanitarian mine action coordination.
   - Sharing its knowledge and networks with other protection actors.

3. **Mine Action is at the center of the nexus: it is 100% humanitarian, 100% development and 100% peace.** The MA AoR should add value to the nexus debate which may change the cluster system itself. Mine action should lead the way in integrating mine action in peace, disarmament and development planning and mobilize resources from various funding streams. Use the OECD recommendations on the nexus to accelerate mine action and demonstrate the impact on people’s lives (e.g. access to services).

4. **Strategic partnerships with other sectors:**
   - Mine action is as enabler of cross-cutting interventions across humanitarian response. It can use this asset to create “buy in” and synergies with other AoRs and sectors.
- Invest in greater collaboration with the HLP (Housing, Land and Property) AoR to plan large-scale return of IDPs and refugees and work with the livelihood actors (e.g food security).

5. Dialogue with donors at global level and at the country level.
   - At global level, include donors at the coordination table and involve stakeholders in resolving challenges faced and to conduct joint advocacy.
   - At the country level, partner with the country coalitions. MA AoR would provide the infrastructure on the technical level whereas the country coalition partners could concentrate on strategic issues. The AoR would bring together relevant UN agencies, authorities from affected countries, humanitarian partner organizations and donor embassies.

6. Member States participation: Protection is bigger than the protection cluster. Protection outcomes can only be achieved if it is central to all protection action and recognized as essential to development and peace. Positioning the MA AOR in the humanitarian protection cluster should be seen as launching pad rather than a limitation. Member states are an accountable important player to ensure this vision is implemented and should be on the table as accountable partners.

7. Learning, information management and capacity-building: Foster peer exchanges and share experiences from other MA AoRs. Develop global guidelines/SOP, Help Desk repository of documents and Surge capacity roster/support. Information on activities of MA AoR in Geneva is not reaching mine action NGO practitioners in the field.

8. Cash and Voucher Assistance in Humanitarian Mine Action: the GPC Task Team on Cash is conducting a research on how to use cash to improve protection outcomes.

MA AoR Team, UNMAS Geneva, 28 October 2020