



Improving mine action information and coordination

Acquiring more and better information about the global landmine problem is essential to understanding its magnitude and developing coherent priorities for deploying resources. Until recently, the landmine problem was defined according to a rough estimate of the number of mines in the ground around the world. We know now that such a measure is relatively meaningless as it tells us little about the social and economic impact of the threat of mines. Vast approximations of the number of landmine victims worldwide provide little guidance on where the areas of greatest need may be, the nature of particular needs of landmine victims and the level of services available to meet their needs.

The year 2000 was a landmark in acquiring more and better information on the global landmine problem.

In August 2000, the results of the first completed and certified Level One Socio-Economic Impact Survey were delivered to the Government of Yemen. This survey identified and mapped all suspected mined areas in the country. Socio-economic, victim and behavioural data associated with these suspected areas were collected and the information is being used to determine the relative socio-economic importance of mined areas. Canada was the primary donor to the survey effort in Yemen and has continued to provide leadership in this area.

Almost one-quarter of the funding for the global survey effort has come from Canada. In follow-up to the survey in Yemen, similar projects have now been completed in Mozambique, Chad and Thailand and work is proceeding in Cambodia. In addition, Level One Survey work is being done, or is being considered for, Afghanistan, Angola,

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ethiopia and Eritrea, Kosovo, Lebanon, north-west Somalia, Western Sahara, and Vietnam.

In addition to Level One Socio-Economic Impact Surveys, United Nations inter-agency assessment missions and technical missions are important tools for acquiring more and better information on the global landmine problem. In 2000, the UN Mine Action Service coordinated assessment missions in Belarus, Egypt, Eritrea and Ethiopia, Georgia, Lebanon, Mozambique, Namibia, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Since 1998, 21 assessment missions have been completed.

Effective coordination mechanisms are essential to translating more and better landmine information into a coherent set of priorities for mine action. In recent years, major advances have been made in establishing mine action centres or other coordination bodies. Today, bodies responsible for the coordination and implementation of mine action exist in 35 countries or regions.