

Kathleen Cravero's Presentation at the IPA Conference – 24 Feb 2006, NY

Security problems such as presence of landmines has a direct impact on development of affected communities.

- For affected states, without successful mine action, broader progress towards achievement of the Millennium Development Goals will be difficult, if not impossible.
- Mine Action is not a stand alone issue and the detrimental effect of landmines on a country's development is all too clear: Mines render agricultural land unusable, contribute to food shortages and the nutrition deficit; they restrict access to potable water, and contribute to disease; they prevent schools from being built, or students and teachers from attending classes; they limit educational and training opportunities, and hinder the construction and maintenance of roads and other infrastructure; they prevent the safe return of refugees and internally displaced persons, and impose significant and unnecessary costs on health care systems already stretched to or beyond capacity; and last, but by no means least, they help breed instability and insecurity, tear the social fabric of already fragile states, and terrorize entire populations.
- While many countries have made a lot of progress in establishing dedicated mine action programmes and some donors have set up excellent, dedicated mine action units, for the most part mine action is not “mainstreamed” into national *development* plans of mine affected states. And it is, for the most part, not yet integrated into the normal operations of development agencies throughout the world. This needs to change.
- To demonstrate exactly how this can be tackled, UNDP has launched a set of “mainstreaming” policy recommendations. The most important of these is the need for countries where the degree of mine contamination is severe to establish

mine action as a national development priority, to include it in national development plans and relevant sector plans, and to make substantive domestic investments in mine action. And when domestic resources are not sufficient to deal with the problem, the international donor community needs to provide additional support on the most concessional terms possible to country-led strategies. Because this really is a matter of life and death.

- At the same time, there are also a number of ways in which the international community can strengthen efforts to support more successful national strategies for mine action by continuing to increase our knowledge and expertise, assisting mine affected states more systematically to assess the impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war in post-conflict environments, supporting efforts to integrate mine action into national and sector plans, strategies and budgets, and ensuring that mine action is an integral part of our own assistance programmes and frameworks.
- Last but not least, it also is important to recognize that while the vast scale of the problem in some states means that mine action is necessarily a long-term activity, it is not often recognized that in others complete clearance of mines in a relatively short time period – not more than three to four years, is possible.
- **To that end, UNDP has now launched a “completion initiative” to encourage sustained additional domestic and international effort to finish the job in countries where that is feasible. Not only will this be of great value in itself, but it will free up scarce global resources and expertise to focus more clearly and effectively on worst-affected areas.**