

THE PRIMACY OF PROTECTION

MINE ACTION AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY STRATEGY 2022-2024

Protecting People from Explosive Hazards in Humanitarian
Emergencies: Promoting Inclusive, Local and Durable Solutions



A deminer in Afghanistan. Photo: Danish Refugee Council

Acknowledgements:

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The global MA AoR is also grateful to its several members, partners and in-country colleagues who have contributed to this strategy.



Bruno Donat, Global MA AoR Coordinator and Gaza MA AoR Coordinator, Ms. Hana Albaioumy of UNMAS attend a UNICEF child-friendly EORE session. October 2021. UN Photo/Shareef Sarhan

The views expressed in this strategy are those of the global Mine Action Area of Responsibility of the Global Protection Cluster and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations Secretariat, its Member States or those of the United Nations Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Foreword	4
2. Summary	8
3. Contextual background	9
3.1 Role of the Global Mine Action Area of Responsibility	10
4. Guiding Principles	11
4.1 Primacy of Protection	11
4.2 Strategic partnerships	11
4.3 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion	12
4.4 Local and National Actors at the Center of the Mine Action Response	12
4.5 Focus on People who are Most at Risk	12
5. Strategic goals	13
Goal 1: Offer reliable coordination for humanitarian mine action in emergencies to accelerate and deliver more impactful interventions	14
Goal 2: Build and strengthen strategic partnerships	15
Goal 3: Enhance and transfer capacity: strengthen the meaningful participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in humanitarian mine action coordination structures	16
Goal 4: Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in operations and workforce	17
Goal 5: Contribute to sustainable solutions in collaboration with peace and development actors	18
6. Enabling Factors	19
ANNEX 1: MA AoR Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	22
ANNEX 2: Mine Action Area of Responsibility in the Humanitarian Cluster System	32
ANNEX 3: Governance & Membership	33
ANNEX 4: MA AoR In-Country Presence (in 2021)	34

1. FOREWORD

We are living in unprecedented times. With over twenty conflicts currently taking place globally, several of which remain in a protracted nature, alongside the proliferation of Non-State Armed Groups using improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the changing technologies of IEDs and the wide spectrum and long-lasting harm caused by explosive weapons in populated areas; millions of people are facing the dangers posed by landmines, IEDs and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Their vulnerability has been compounded by the advent of the global COVID-19 pandemic. Responding to these dangers has never been more necessary yet they are increasingly challenging.

These weapons continue to kill, injure and traumatize communities – some 10,000 people on average every year are impacted, particularly amongst internally displaced people (IDPs), migrants, and refugees. Behind each victim is a traumatized community. Within this backdrop, colleagues from several in-country Mine Action Areas of Responsibility (MA AoR) continue to coordinate efforts to protect people from explosive hazards through awareness-raising, surveying and clearance activities. They are frontline heroes!

As per the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plans (HRPs), in the seventeen countries where the MA AoR is activated, some 41 million people are threatened by explosive ordnance contamination (EO) and are in need of Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA). Beyond these HRPs, it is estimated that a total of 60 million people are affected by contamination in the world, and it is as important to address the unmet needs of those injured by explosive ordnance: survivors and indirect victims. Hence, there is a clear need for sustainable multi-year flexible emergency funding to mitigate the risk posed by EO contamination.

The purpose of this strategy, a first of its kind, is to present a collective agenda that members of the global MA AoR have agreed on. It complements the technical Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the global MA AoR. This strategy builds on the vision of the UN Mine Action Strategy for 2019-2023 of a “world free from the threat of mines, explosive remnants of war, including cluster munitions, and improvised explosive devices where individuals and communities live in a safe environment conducive to sustainable peace and development” and on the vision of the Global Protection



A deminer in Ukraine. Photo: Danish Refugee Council.



Bruno Donat, Global MA AoR Coordinator attends a meeting of the Gaza MA AoR in the presence of Bridget Forster, UNMAS Chief of Mine Action Programme in Palestine, Hana Albaioumy, Gaza MA AoR Coordinator and representatives from HI, NPA, Save the Children, UNICEF and UNMAS. October 2021. UN Photo/Amani Abu Kallob.

Cluster Strategic Framework for 2020-2024 where “people are protected in humanitarian crises and their rights respected and solutions found in accordance with international law”.

In August 2021, the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated in his report (A/76/283) on Assistance in Mine Action, that: “Funding for protection responses must be scaled up, including through the Mine Action Area of Responsibility within the Global Protection Cluster”. In the spirit of this statement, this strategy further provides a framework to proactively engage partners, highlight our relevance to current challenges, reinforce advocacy and mobilize resources.

Going forward, we also call for an overhaul of the governance and membership of the global MA AoR, especially for more inclusion and diversity with the representation of relevant affected countries and territories, international and national NGOs, donors and United Nations entities of its Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes.

We trust that this strategy titled *The Primacy of Protection*, will guide and inspire us as we continue to improve on our capabilities and response, especially on the coordination of Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA).

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The 'Broken Chair', across from the United Nations Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. Photo: Humanity & Inclusion.

Funding for protection responses must be scaled up, including through the mine action area of responsibility within the Global Protection Cluster.

- António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations
(A/76/283), August 2021

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS



CP:	Child Protection
EDI:	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
ERW:	Explosive Remnants of War
EO:	Explosive Ordnance
EORE:	Explosive Ordnance Risk Education
GBV:	Gender-Based Violence
GPC:	Global Protection Cluster
HC:	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT:	Humanitarian Country Team
HLP:	Housing Land and Property
HMA:	Humanitarian Mine Action
HNO:	Humanitarian Needs Overview
HRP:	Humanitarian Response Plan
IACG-MA:	Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
IASC:	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDP:	Internally Displaced People
IED:	Improvised Explosive Device
IMAS:	International Mine Action Standards
MA:	Mine Action
MA AoR:	Mine Action Area of Responsibility
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD-DAC:	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee
OCHA:	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PoLR:	Provider of Last Resort
RE:	Risk Education
SOPs:	Standard Operating Procedures
UNHCR:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNMAS:	United Nations Mine Action Service
VA:	Victim Assistance
WAM:	Weapons and Ammunition Management

2. SUMMARY



UNMAS Acting Director, Ilene Cohn, visits UNMAS operations in Sudan. June 2021. UN Photo.

VISION

A world in which boys, girls, men and women living in humanitarian emergencies are protected from explosive hazards and where the rights of victims are recognized and respected.

MISSION

The Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) of the Global Protection Cluster is a coordination platform that supports relevant global, regional and local actors and advocates for mine action in humanitarian settings to be timely, coordinated effectively and held accountable.

GOALS

1. Offer reliable coordination for humanitarian mine action in emergencies to accelerate and deliver more impactful interventions.
2. Build and strengthen strategic partnerships.
3. Enhance and transfer capacity: strengthen the meaningful participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in humanitarian coordination structures.
4. Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in operations and workforce.
5. Contribute to sustainable solutions in collaboration with peace and development actors.

3. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND



Risk Education session in Candelillas, Colombia along Luz Dary Landazury, a prominent advocate for EO survivors, Pablo Parra, UNMAS Acting Chief of Mine Action Programme in Colombia, Christelle Loupforest, Deputy Global MA AoR Coordinator, colleagues from CIREC and community members. October 2021. UN Photo.

The current humanitarian situation is challenging and requires stronger cooperation among its key stakeholders. The global MA AoR focusses mainly on countries in humanitarian emergencies or emerging from conflict, however mine action (MA) is also often required for years beyond the signature of peace agreements. The needs of victims will continue years after the last EO has been removed. The challenges identified by the Landmine Free 2025 campaign in *Mine Action's Fair Share: An Agenda for Change* are observed in both conflict and post-conflict situations: insufficient international funding, standards and good operational practice not being applied, barriers to access due to ongoing conflict or contested jurisdiction, and level of contamination. The mine action sector needs to work together to address these issues and the global MA AoR can contribute based on its comparative advantages.

3.1 Role of the Global Mine Action Area of Responsibility



Meeting chaired by General Youssoufa Mamadou Maiga, President of the Commission Nationale de Collecte et de Contrôle des Armes Illicites (CNCCAI) of Niger, with representatives of the Cluster Protection, Comité International pour l'Aide d'Urgence et le Développement (CIAUD), Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), Génie Militaire des Forces Armées Nigériennes, Humanité & Inclusion, Paix et Sécurité pour un Développement Durable (PSDD), OCHA, UNHCR, and UNMAS. Bruno Donat, Global MA AoR Coordinator, and Mr. Phillippe Renard, UNMAS Chief of Mine Action Programme Burkina Faso/Niger were in attendance. October 2021. UN Photo.

The global MA AoR provides a forum to strengthen coordination across the five MA pillars: advocacy, clearance, risk education, stockpile destruction and victim assistance with a view to increasing their coherence, reach and effectiveness. Supporting the in-country MA AoR, it focuses, *inter alia*, on technical support, advocacy, policy, and as needed, leads on finding common ground to discuss and settle any contentious issue unresolved at the country level. It also takes measures to scale up mine action responses in existing emergencies when needed and to take part in the GPC Rapid Response Team where relevant. For more information and details about its roles and responsibilities, please see the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the MA AoR.

Did you know?

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) created the cluster approach and designated UNHCR as the Global Lead Agency for the Protection Cluster. The MA AoR is a specialized area of responsibility of protection. The 2016 IASC Policy on Protection named UNMAS as the lead of the MA AoR at the global level.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Mine Risk Education in Basra, Iraq. Photo: Danish Refugee Council.

The following principles guide the MA AoR and the implementation of the strategy:

4.1 Primacy of Protection

The GPC, led by UNHCR, provides a coordination platform for partners with expertise, resources and capacity relevant to protection. Given the broad definition of protection, AoRs have been established within the GPC: Child Protection, Gender-Based Violence (GBV), MA, and Housing, Land and Property (HLP). These AoRs provide technical advice and support in their specialized areas. As stated in the IASC Policy on Protection, the objective of MA is to identify and reduce the impact and risk of explosive hazards to a level where people can live safely.

The global MA AoR adheres to and promotes humanitarian principles and relevant normative frameworks. This is particularly relevant for guiding staff and programmes in complex emergencies where it is necessary to work with parties to the conflict to deliver protection services. Together with the GPC, the global MA AoR advocates for protection to be central to humanitarian action by supporting the inclusion of clear mine action protection outcomes, in the humanitarian programme cycle and providing the analysis and planning required for their realization.

4.2 Strategic Partnerships

The MA AoR, at all levels, is as strong as its participating organizations and the level of collaboration between them. It can only be strengthened by mutual trust among the organizations and mutual accountability, to achieve the goals of the MA AoR. Partnerships are central to the MA AoR at both the local and global level. To achieve its goals, the MA AoR brings together the UN Secretariat, funds, programmes, international and national NGOs and academic institutions at the global level as well as within a humanitarian crisis setting. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) is the lead entity¹¹ of the global MA AoR which is co-coordinated by an NGO (currently the Danish Refugee Council). The MA AoR sets up new partnerships to accelerate MA and deliver more impactful interventions.

¹¹ UNMAS is designated as the Lead Agency for the global MA AoR in the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016). For the purpose of this MA AoR Strategy, “lead entity” will be used as the Mine Action Service is part of the Secretariat, in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions within the Department of Peace Operations of the United Nations.

4.3 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The MA AoR is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), advocating - among other issues - for gender, race and disability inclusion across its workforce and in the different operations. The global MA AoR is committed to benefit people most at risk without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political orientation, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Recognizing that the causes of vulnerability and exclusion are highly complex, multiple, overlapping, compounding and dynamic, the global MA AoR will adopt an intersectional lens.

Recognizing the importance of a diverse and inclusive workplace – which improves the quality of work by offering a larger range of skills and knowledge – the MA AoR extends its efforts to fight against any form of discrimination and to promote a fair and equitable work environment. In that regard, an overhaul of the governance and membership of the MA AoR, especially for more inclusion and diversity, should be implemented.

In line with the *United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* and with the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination*, the MA AoR also adopts a perspective, sensitive and responsive to diversity, to promote inclusive and effective mine action programmes.

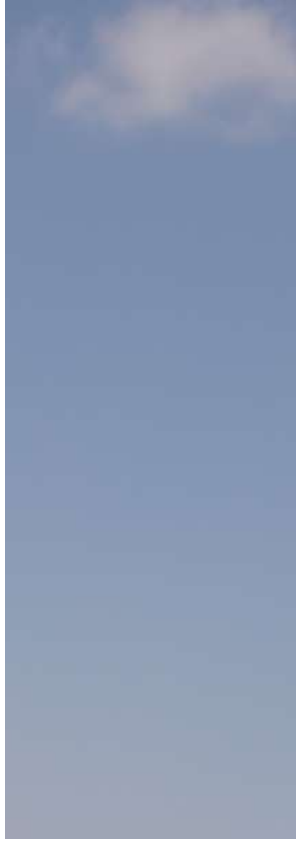
4.4 Local and National Actors at the Center of the Mine Action Response

The global MA AoR is dedicated to supporting commitments to improve the participation and representation of local and national actors throughout its work streams.

This includes increasing national authorities and civil society leadership and capacity in mine action coordination mechanisms, improving coordination and information management processes as well as facilitating access to direct and multi-year funding for local partners at national and sub-national levels. The global MA AoR seeks to include national actors as full and equal partners and to accelerate the process of appointing national coordinators or co-coordinators to capitalize on their comparative advantages. Developing local capacity for coordination and programme management through a two-way capacity transfer mechanism will support prevention strategies, improve the quality, rapidity and scale of the response, reinforce the resilience of national systems, promote durable solutions and strengthen the means to realize accountability to affected people.

4.5 Focus on People who are Most at Risk

The global MA AoR will work in close collaboration with other clusters or sectoral groups to identify the most vulnerable population, participating in the joint intersectoral analysis framework and contributing mine action analysis to inform programme planning and implementation. In addition, it will advocate across the mine action sector to focus resources and programming on protecting people from EO and assisting victims.



5. STRATEGIC GOALS



Clearance in Somalia. UN Photo.



Goal 1: Offer reliable coordination for humanitarian mine action in emergencies to accelerate and deliver more impactful interventions



Clearance in Afghanistan. UN Photo.

The global MA AoR aims to strengthen an effective coordination platform for collaboration in in-country MA AoR operations to further enhance mine action coordination in humanitarian contexts, meet cluster responsibilities and contribute to prompt and informed decisions by Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs). MA AoR members are recommended to agree on priorities and to develop tools, guidance and advisory groups to support greater alignment and more systematic ways to deploy capacity, prioritize interventions, and coordinate resources and resource mobilization.

Key objectives:

- Provide leadership and guidance to in-country coordination teams and partners on global developments, new initiatives and commitments.
- Support integration of Mine Action in Humanitarian Needs Overviews and Response Plans.
- Promote a common definition of people in need (PiN) of mine action, people targeted (prioritization process) and ways to measure impact on beneficiaries.
- Promote coordination between the GPC AoRs to strengthen information sharing and capacity transfer at the country, regional and global level.

Synergetic cooperation

- **With the Global Protection Cluster:** mainstreaming mine action in protection.
- **With the Child Protection AoR:** collaborating to mitigate the impact of explosive ordnance on children, especially on risk education and victim assistance to children.
- **With the Housing, Land and Property AoR and Shelter Cluster:** promoting due diligence in land clearance and exploring the benefits of the “settlement approach” or “area-based approach” for mine action.
- **With the Gender-Based Violence AoR:** advocating for MA to be integrated, as necessary for survivors in relevant gender-based violence responses.
- **With the Education Cluster:** supporting access to safe schools and education for children with disabilities and joining forces on risk education.
- **With the Food Security and Logistics Clusters:** collaborating for safer access to food, livelihood and markets.
- **With the Health Cluster:** mainstreaming victim assistance initiatives as per IMAS 13.10 and clarifying the links between MA and the humanitarian health infrastructure that responds to injuries caused by explosive ordnance.



Goal 2: Build and strengthen strategic partnerships



Association AMMIE conducts Risk Education session with a local community in Korsimoro, Burkina Faso. October 2021. UN Photo.

Strategic partnerships are key to promoting innovation and attracting new technical and financial resources for mine action. Fostering new and existing partnerships more proactively would support the MA AoR in responding to the rising mine action needs with adequate resources. The global MA AoR will strengthen its partnership strategy with Member States and donors, regional organizations, civil society, private sector and academia that can contribute to knowledge-sharing, learning, funding and innovation within the sector.

Key objectives:

- Identify emerging sources of funding and assess their current usage and potential for the future, including advocating for the HNOs and HRPs to mobilize support from donors and partnering institutions.
- Strengthen partnerships with the MA community as well as external stakeholders including academic institutions, civil society, NGOs, regional organizations, UN entities and the private sector.
- Support outreach efforts of the Explosive Ordnance Risk Education Advisory Group.



Goal 3: Enhance and transfer capacity: strengthen the meaningful participation, representation and leadership of local and national actors in humanitarian mine action coordination structures



In accordance with the IASC Guidance, the GPC and its four AoRs are seeking to promote strategies and coordination mechanisms that are: “as local as possible, as international as necessary.” The global MA AoR promotes local ownership and transfer of capacities in mine action processes and empowers affected people by enhancing equitable and long-term partnerships with humanitarian mine action NGOs (both national and international) and national authorities with a clear focus on building in-country capacity. The MA AoR works with local and national actors, in particular women-led and youth-led organizations as well as persons with disabilities, aiming to facilitate their participation and representation in coordination structures for the overall benefit of affected people.

Key Objectives:

- Identify barriers to and enablers of the participation and representation of local and national actors in humanitarian mine action.
- Promote local leadership, participation and innovation in mine action coordination groups and advocate for local organizations to participate in decision-making and prioritization processes.
- Strengthen technical and institutional capacities of local mine action organizations in coordination with other Areas of Responsibility and clusters.
- Increase joint advocacy with national NGO representation to secure access to contaminated areas, identify key issues faced by affected people and mobilize resources to address them.
- Promote the transfer of protection activities to local communities, organizations, and civil society and make the global MA AoR membership accessible to national and local actors.

Risk Education in Laos. Photo: Humanity & Inclusion

Goal 4: Promote equality, diversity and inclusion in operations and workforce



IHSCO conducts Risk Education in Iraq. UN Photo.

The MA AoR aims to promote Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) across its workforce and in relevant MA operations, with a particular focus on disability inclusion, gender and racial equity through an intersectional approach. This includes diversity-responsive and conflict-sensitive programming, so that the work delivered benefits the entire community and that it does not impact local power dynamics unknowingly or negatively. It also includes a diverse and inclusive workplace, promoting a work environment free from discrimination and improving the quality of work by offering a larger range of skills and perspectives. Additionally, at the global level, an overhaul of the governance and membership of the MA AoR especially for greater inclusion and diversity should be implemented. This work will be conducted in line with the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and other relevant guidelines.

Key objectives

- Raise awareness and advocate for increased equality, diversity and inclusion across the mine action community, including in the governance and membership of the MA AoR.
- Promote collection of qualitative and quantitative data on disability inclusion, gender and racial equity in the MA AoR workplace and operations.
- Strengthen partnership and collaboration across the mine action community on equality, diversity and inclusion, through sharing of best practices and enabling dialogues with key stakeholders.
- Foster inclusive and diverse programming guided by accountability to affected populations.

The Secretary-General welcomes progress made by the mine action community to deepen discussions in this area, including through a dedicated plenary discussion on racial equity in the mine action sector during the International Meeting of National Mine Action Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers in May 2021. The Secretary-General is confident that next steps will complement the initiatives of the Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations, which he launched in 2020.

- (A/76/283), August 2021



Goal 5: Contribute to sustainable solutions in collaboration with peace and development actors



From humanitarian emergencies all the way to post-conflict peacebuilding, humanitarian mine action, operationalized in a conflict-sensitive manner, is critical to peace and sustainable solutions. The global MA AoR champions durable solutions that meet protection standards through the nexus of humanitarian, peace and development action. Furthermore, the planet is faced with an unprecedented environmental emergency and the mine action sector has identified the need to develop stronger environmental practices.

Key Objectives:

- Advance mine action into development, environmental and peacebuilding strategies to achieve sustainable solutions to strengthen the peace-humanitarian-development nexus.
- Share practices of local solutions where alternative livelihoods have protected people and reduced the risk of explosive ordnance accidents.
- Enhance monitoring mechanisms in place to assess the suitability of existing coordination systems for achieving collective outcomes that foster durable solutions.

Climate Change: flooding. Photo: UNHCR/C. Tjjerina.



6. ENABLING FACTORS

Mine Risk Education in Myanmar. Photo: Danish Refugee Council.

The global MA AoR is composed of organizations, which come together to deliver mine action in emergencies as effectively as possible.

Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning

The global MA AoR commits to creating and aligning measurable activities in line with the strategy. These activities will form the basis of a workplan, that will be developed collectively and will be accompanied by indicators, timeframes and assigned responsibility. On an annual basis, the MA AoR will compile a status report, showing progress against actions.

Adequate and Flexible Resources

To achieve the goals of this strategic plan, the MA AoR must have adequate and flexible resources. Ensuring the sustained funding of key human resources and expanding the funding base for activities are essential to the full implementation of this strategic plan. The global MA AoR will look to keep the current positions within the coordination team and expand in key areas of priorities as outlined in this strategy including partnership; capacity enhancement; equality, diversity and inclusion; information management and communications.



Explosive Ordnance awareness session with humanitarian colleagues in Damascus, Syria. November 2021. UN Photo/Francesca Chiaudani.

Governance

Responsive and representative decision-making is crucial to the timelines of action and ensuring the MA AoR works in a streamlined and flexible manner. Effective decision-making will allow the MA AoR to respond to crises and emerging priorities. The global MA AoR will conduct a review of membership, governance structures and decision-making procedures at the outset of this strategy to ensure they are diverse and inclusive, and fit for purpose.

Effective communication

The global MA AoR recognizes the importance of strong, clear and consistent internal and external communications. Effective communication to and from members, donors, humanitarian partners, in-country level coordination mechanisms and other relevant actors is crucial to achieving the core goals of this strategic plan. The global MA AoR will develop a communications plan based on thorough stakeholder analysis to ensure predictability and accessibility of its communications for all stakeholders and a varied group of audiences.

Strategy Development Process

This first-ever strategy was developed by the global MA AoR in consultation with key stakeholders including its members and in-country MA AoR coordinators.



UNMAS EORE session in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Warrap, South Sudan, November 2021. UN Photo.



Victim Assistance in Afghanistan. Photo: Humanity & Inclusion.

ANNEX 1: MA AoR STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)



Bruno Donat, Global MA AoR Coordinator and Philippe Renard, UNMAS Chief of Mine Action Programme in Burkina Faso coordinate with colleagues in a meeting chaired by Alimata Ouattara, Protection Cluster Coordinator, Centre Nord Region, Burkina Faso. October 2021. UN Photo.



Standard Operating Procedures

9 August 2021

Global Protection Cluster Mine Action Area of Responsibility

Approved by: Global Coordinator of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, Global Protection Cluster

Approval date: [03/ 08/ 2021]

Contact: unmasgeneva@un.org

Review date: [03/ 08 / 2023]

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE MINE ACTION AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER

Contents:

- A. Purpose
 - B. Rationale
 - C. Scope
 - D. Roles and Responsibilities
 - E. Accountability
 - F. References
 - G. Review
 - H. Contact
-
-

A. PURPOSE

1. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) outline the responsibilities of the Global Protection Cluster (GPC) Mine Action Area of Responsibility (MA AoR) hereafter referred to as the global MA AoR^[1] They provide guidance on how to deliver timely support to in-country MA AoR^[2]

2. The SOPs are informed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee^[3](IASC) Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response and build on previous related guidelines, in particular the Terms of Reference for the global MA AoR of January 2018, which they supersede.

^[1]Global MA AoR here refers to the lead entity of the group, in this case UNMAS, and participating organizations. Even though the IASC Policy “Protection in Humanitarian Action 2016” refers to “lead agency”, for the purpose of these SOPs, the term “lead entity” is used as the Mine Action Service is part of the Secretariat, in the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions within the Department of Peace Operations of the United Nations.

^[2]For the purpose of these SOPs, “in-country MA AoR” is employed in place of the different terms which are used to denote the existing various in-country coordination mechanisms for mine action, e.g. sub-cluster and working group.

^[3]The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the main forum for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It brings together a broad range of United Nations and non-United Nations humanitarian, human rights and development actors. It is chaired by the Emergency Relief Coordinator.

3. The SOPs outline a comprehensive approach to reinforce the integration of mine action into humanitarian response, by coherently and efficiently streamlining its protection work. Hence, it contributes to the enhancement of its operational effectiveness and, ultimately reducing the humanitarian impact of explosive hazards.

4. The vision of the MA AoR is a world in which boys, girls, men and women living in humanitarian emergencies are protected from explosive hazards and where the rights of victims are recognized and respected. “The objective of mine action is to identify and reduce the impact and risk of landmines and explosive hazards to a level where people can live safely.”^[4]

B. RATIONALE

5. The cluster approach was established by the IASC in 2005 within the framework of the Humanitarian Reform Agenda following a decision to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response and prevent gaps.

6. At the country level, the cluster approach serves to strengthen humanitarian response by enhancing predictability and accountability, clarifying the division of labor, roles and responsibilities of humanitarian organizations, and by providing the Humanitarian Coordinator with a first point of call in all key sectors. At the global level, the aim is to strengthen system-wide preparedness by ensuring that there is predictable leadership and adequate partnerships in place with other humanitarian actors.

7. The GPC was established to improve protection in humanitarian response with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as its Global Lead Agency. To address the broad range of protection concerns, specialized components – “areas of responsibility” – were tasked with ensuring an effective response within their specific protection sectors in collaboration with other participating agencies.

8. The global MA AoR therefore takes part alongside the GPC in inter-cluster processes and is also responsible for mainstreaming issues pertaining to its area of activity into the Humanitarian Programme Cycle. Within the GPC, the UNMAS Geneva office is the focal point for the global MA AoR. Since April 2018, the Global MA AoR has been co-led by an INGO on a two-year term rotation basis.

9. The other global Areas of Responsibility are: Child Protection led by UNICEF, Gender- Based Violence led by UNFPA, and Housing, Land, and Property led by the Norwegian Refugee Council.

^[4]IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016).

C. SCOPE

10. These SOPs are intended for the global MA AoR. The in-country MA AoR should be familiar with the SOPs. In addition, the global MA AoR should inform partners of these SOPs.

11. The words 'shall', 'should' and 'may' are herein used to indicate the intended degree of compliance. This use is consistent with the language used in the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards and guidelines:

(a) 'shall' is used to indicate requirements, methods or specifications that are to be applied in order to conform to the standard.

(b) 'should' is used to indicate the preferred requirements, methods or specifications.

(c) 'may' is used to indicate a possible method or course of action.

D. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GLOBAL MA AoR

12. The global MA AoR is an in-country oriented coordination mechanism that aims to support a predictable, accountable and effective mine action response in humanitarian and conflict-related emergencies and natural disasters.

Membership

13. The global MA AoR shall bring together United Nations entities, national and international organizations, NGOs, donors, academic institutions, and other relevant mine action actors in line with the Principles of Partnership endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform.

14. Participation in the global MA AoR shall be guided by the following principles:

14.1. The lead entity shall represent its members fairly and provide continuous feedback on the activities of the global MA AoR, shall consult its members on the guidance and direction of the AoR work, and shall strive for consensus;

14.2. Membership shall be on a voluntary basis;

14.3. Membership and participation may take different forms, from close coordination and joint programming to looser associations based on the need to avoid duplication and enhance complementarity;

14.4. The work of the global MA AoR shall be informed by the GPC Strategic Framework (2020 – 2025) and the GPC MA AoR Strategy (2022 – 2024).

14.5. The global MA AoR shall function with due respect to the different roles, responsibilities and mandates of its participating organizations, and in line with humanitarian principles;

14.6. The global MA AoR meets with key stakeholders on a continuous basis including with donors twice a year, with its partners every other month and with the MA AoR in-country coordinators (currently, 17) every other month.

14.7. The global MA AoR takes measures to scale up mine action responses in existing humanitarian emergencies when needed and to take part in the GPC Rapid Response Team where relevant

14.8. The global MA AoR engages actively with the Global Protection Cluster including with its Strategic Advisory Group, Task Teams and Operations Cell. It promotes the sharing of data on mine action with GPC partners to improve analysis and protection strategies. It provides advice on relevant resources and develops methodologies to identify people in need based on severity ranking.

Functions

15. The global MA AoR shall have three main functions: a) coordination; b) support to in- country MA AoR; and c) advocacy.

16. The lead entity of the global MA AoR shall convene an annual retreat of the participating organizations to discuss and agree on the priorities of the global MA AoR. A workplan with a clear division of labor shall be developed based on the resources that participating organizations can make available.

17. The workplan as well as other documents of relevance to the MA AoR shall be made available on the GPC website under the theme of mine action.

(a) Coordination

18. The global MA AoR shall act as a first point of call for the GPC and relevant subsidiary bodies of the IASC on mine action-related issues.

19. The global MA AoR shall manage the coordination of its Area of Responsibility and shall create and update on a regular basis a relevant strategy, SOPs and workplans. It should participate in outreach to Member States and donors to secure support for the MA AoR.

20. The MA AoR should contribute to the development of joined-up strategies and a workplan by the GPC, and participate in the outreach to Member States and donors to secure support for a coordinated protection approach.

21. The Protection Cluster coordinator should be fully enabled to represent all protection issues, therefore the MA AoR should support the protection cluster coordinator as necessary.

22. The global MA AoR should participate in the work of other clusters and inter-cluster coordination mechanisms as relevant. These may comprise without being limited to the Emergency Directors Group, the Global Cluster Coordinators Group, and the relevant IASC thematic bodies.

23. The global MA AoR should organize joint meetings or workshops, as necessary, with other relevant clusters and GPC AoRs on themes of common interest.

24. The global MA AoR should support and strengthen thematic mine action working groups such as the Risk Education Advisory Group, and more.

(b) Support for In-Country MA AoR Activities

(i) Coordination capacity of in-country MA AoRs

25. Support to in-country MA AoRs should include without being limited to:

25.1. Providing or supporting relevant training and other capacity- building, enhancement and transfer efforts related to humanitarian mine action coordination within the cluster approach;

25.2 Conducting context-specific support missions to assist in strengthening in-country MA AoR and coordination mechanisms;

25.3. Providing guidance on the cluster activation and deactivation processes^[5];

25.4. Supporting the development of guiding tools and ToRs for in-country MA AoRs;

25.5. Coordinating the response to GPC requests for technical and policy advice on mine action issues;

25.6. Promoting the integration of cross-cutting issues (e.g. age, gender, human rights, and the environment) in initiatives of in-country MA AoR;

25.7. Informing in-country MA AoR coordinators of developments in mine action and wider humanitarian discussions.

^[5]The decision to activate an MA AoR is based on a request by the Resident Coordinator / Humanitarian Coordinator, in consultation with the Humanitarian Country Team.

26. The modalities for inter-cluster coordination should be flexible. In the case of the protection cluster, the AoRs may need to liaise directly with other clusters and to engage directly in inter-cluster coordination alongside the protection cluster, and arrangements for doing so should be agreed at country level in consultation with the protection cluster lead agency^[6]

27. Activation of the protection cluster means activation of all aspects of protection, and this may or may not require the activation of the area of responsibility. The activation of the protection cluster cannot be a partial activation, i.e., when the protection cluster is activated, no single protection issue can be excluded.

28. The Global MA AoR shall encourage the national protection cluster lead agency (and co-lead agency if there is one) to seek the endorsement of the Humanitarian Coordinator^[7] to activate an in-country MA AoR, as necessary, and propose an entity to lead it.

29. The Global MA AoR should coordinate its positions and representation in the GCCG and other IASC fora with the GPC and other AoRs.

30. The different protection efforts should be framed on an overarching protection analysis, thereby sharing expertise, achieving efficiencies, dividing labor or getting a more complete protection response.

(ii) Policy Guidance

31. The global MA AoR should provide guidance to in-country MA AoR coordinators on:

31.1. The roles and responsibilities of the 'Provider of Last Resort'^[8] (particularly during a Level 3 crisis);^[9]

31.2. New thematic areas of work outside current humanitarian mine action activities and their impact on protection and how to integrate them in overall humanitarian response;

^[6]IASC Guidance Cluster Coordination at Country Level July 2015.

^[7]The HC may also highlight the need to activate the MA AoR in the letter to the Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) on cluster activation.

^[8]In addition to supporting the six core functions of the cluster/AoR, the designated lead entity (UNMAS, of the UN Secretariat, in the case of mine action) is the Provider of Last Resort (PoLR). This means that, where necessary, and depending on access, security and availability of funding, it should be ready to provide necessary services required to fulfil critical gaps identified by the cluster/AoR and reflected in the HC-led Humanitarian Response Plans.

^[9]The IASC classification for the most severe, large-scale humanitarian crisis.

31.3. Translating protection objectives into mine action initiatives using relevant guidance documents, such as the IASC Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action (2016), the IASC Centrality of Protection statement (2013), and the United Nations Secretary-General Human Rights up Front (2012) which have significantly contributed to promoting protection;

31.4. Cooperation with national authorities and local actors including NGOs within the cluster approach;

31.5. Working within integrated Missions and balancing, at times, conflicting priorities (e.g. humanitarian, stabilization and peace operations objectives).

(iii) Integration in Humanitarian Programme Cycles

32. Throughout Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) processes, the global MA AoR should represent the positions of in-country MA AoRs.

33. The global MA AoR shall advise in-country MA AoRs on access to funding mechanisms and opportunities, especially the humanitarian pooled funds managed by the United Nations and in particular OCHA and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). To that end, the global MA AoR may:

33.1. Develop guidance on humanitarian financing;

33.2. Support the integration of mine action into global humanitarian planning tools such as the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), as well as the annual and mid-term Global Humanitarian Overview (GHO);

33.3. Explore mechanisms of strategic interest, as well as available databases and platforms such as the Grants Management System and the Financial Tracking Service (FTS), which may be used in advocacy efforts as a tool to not only monitor the funding status of an emergency, but also to understand the funding trends of donors to better target fundraising efforts;

33.4. Explore new partnerships and map emerging and innovative funds as a way to increase and diversify sources of funding.

(c) Advocacy

34. The global MA AoR shall undertake efforts to mainstream mine action across relevant humanitarian action and response. Such efforts should include:

34.1. Undertaking advocacy in various fora to raise awareness of mine action as an indispensable component of a humanitarian response, and as a lifesaving intervention in crisis situations, countries and territories where mines and/or explosive remnants of war contamination are suspected or confirmed;

34.2. Advocating for the inclusion of mine action in pertinent planning and advocacy documents, and taking part in relevant studies commissioned, inter alia, by the GPC or the IASC;

34.3. Advocating to donors for funding of humanitarian mine action;

34.4. Including adequate humanitarian mine action information in GPC learning, development and capacity-building modules;

34.5. Highlighting mine action as an important cross-cutting protection issue.

35. Further to the World Humanitarian Summit and subsequent initiatives related to financing and pooled funding across humanitarian and development operations, as well as other efforts to develop tools and knowledge products to strengthen humanitarian effectiveness, the global MA AoR should monitor relevant developments in order to assess the best ways to engage with them. Such an approach should be centered on the humanitarian sector but be cognizant of possible linkages to peace and development actors

E. ACCOUNTABILITY

36. These SOPs are issued by the global MA AoR.

F. REFERENCES

1. *Mine Action Area of Responsibility Strategy 2022-2024: The Primacy of Protection*, 2021.
 2. *Inter-Agency Standing Committee Policy on Protection in Humanitarian Action*, 2016.
 3. *IASC Introduction to Humanitarian Action: a Brief Guide for Resident Coordinators*, 2015.
 4. *IASC Reference Module for Cluster Coordination at Country Level 2015*.
 5. *Generic Terms of Reference for Sector/Cluster at the Country Level*, 2013.
 6. *The Centrality of Protection in Humanitarian Action, Statement by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals*, 2013.
 7. *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Operational Guidance on the Concept of 'Provider of Last Resort'*, 2008.
 8. *Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidance Note on Using the Cluster Approach to Strengthen Humanitarian Response*, 2006.
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G. REVIEW

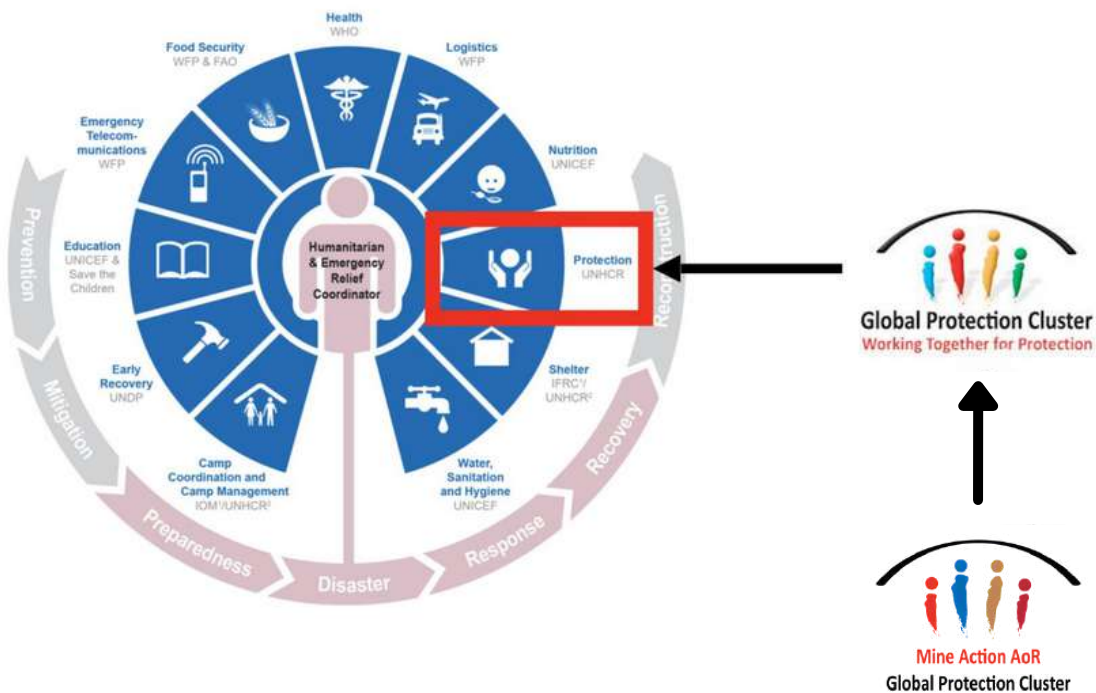
These SOPs shall be kept up-to-date and reviewed biennially to take into account the results of future “lessons learnt” exercises and evaluations.

H. CONTACT

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DATE: 9 August 2021

ANNEX 2: MINE ACTION AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY IN THE HUMANITARIAN CLUSTER SYSTEM



ANNEX 3: GOVERNANCE & MEMBERSHIP



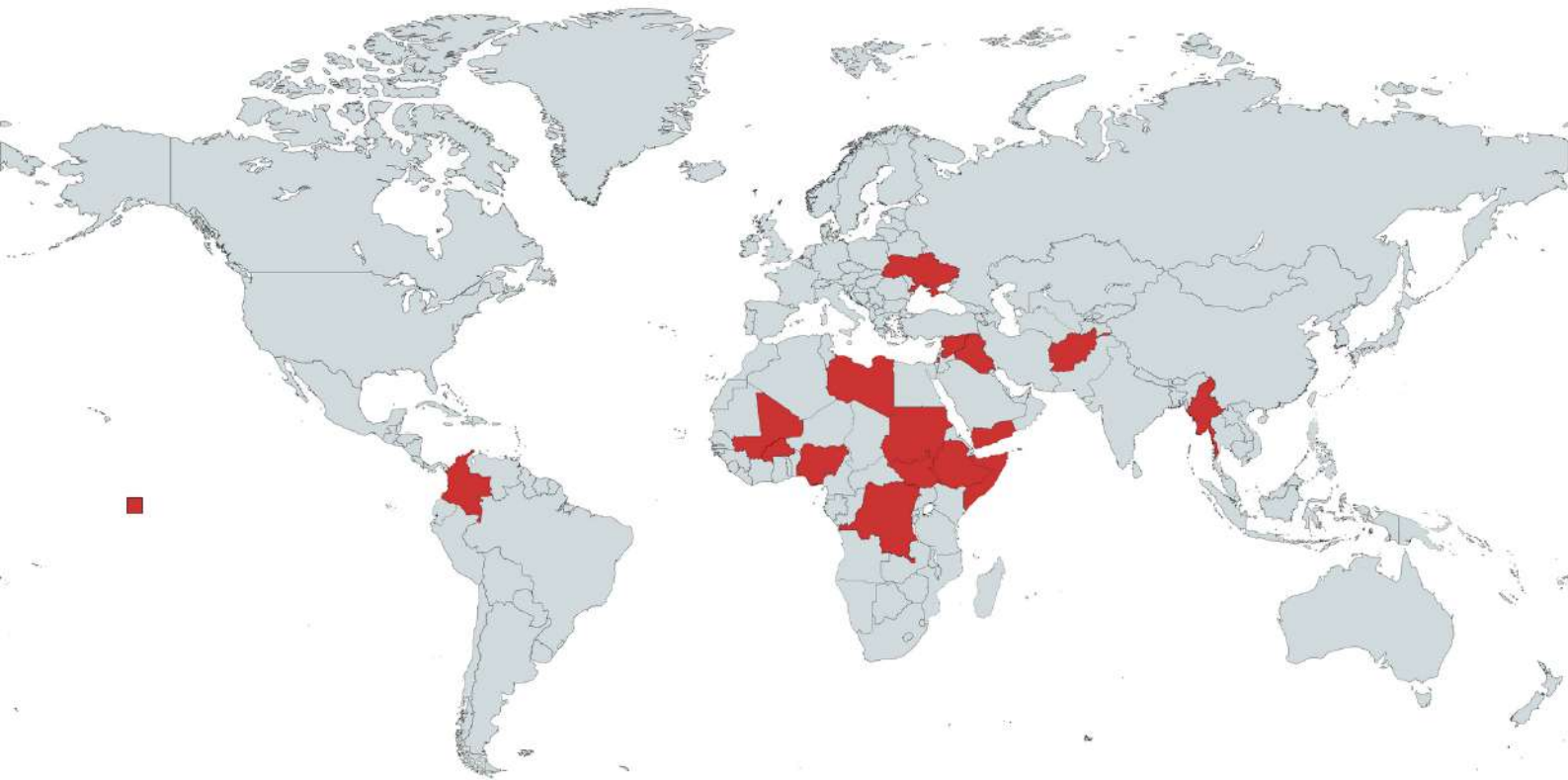
While this MA AoR Strategy (2022-2024) calls for an overhaul of the governance and membership of the MA AoR especially for more inclusion and diversity with the representation of relevant affected countries and territories, international and national NGOs, donors and United Nations entities of its Secretariat, Agencies, Funds and Programmes, the list below reflects the global MA AoR members in 2021:

- **Coordinator:** United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), Geneva office.
- **Co-Coordinator:** Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding (HDP), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Geneva office.
- **Members:** Action on Armed Violence, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit, Cluster Munition Convention Implementation Support Unit, Dan Church Aid, Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding (HDP) / Danish Refugee Council, Fondation Suisse de Déminage, Free Fields Foundation, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), HALO Trust, Hand in Hand for Aid and Development, , Humanity & Inclusion, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), iMMAP, International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Mines Advisory Group, The Marshall legacy Institute, Norwegian People's Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), OXFAM, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), University of Queensland Australia, University of Washington, World Food Programme (WFP).

Did you know?

UNMAS as Provider of Last Resort: In addition to supporting the six core functions of the cluster/AoR, the designated Lead Entity (UNMAS, of the UN Secretariat, in the case of mine action) is the Provider of Last Resort (PoLR). This means that, where necessary, and depending on access, security and availability of funding, the cluster lead, as PoLR, must be ready to ensure the provision of services required to fulfil crucial gaps identified by the cluster/AoR and reflected in the HC-led Humanitarian Response Plans.

ANNEX 4: MA AoR IN-COUNTRY PRESENCE (IN 2021)



Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Colombia
DR Congo

Ethiopia
Iraq
Libya
Mali

Myanmar
Nigeria
Palestine
Somalia

South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Ukraine
Yemen



Ms. Hana Albaioumy, of UNMAS Palestine and Gaza MA AoR Coordinator conducts EORE with children. UN Photo.