



GOVERNMENT OF SRI LANKA

STRATEGY FOR MINE ACTION SRI LANKA

**Ministry of Nation Building and Development,
No. 177, Galle Road
Colombo 03
Sri Lanka**

4th April, 2006

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INTRODUCTION

Background

During the last two decades of Civil War between the Government and the LTTE landmines, both anti-personnel mines and to a lesser extent anti-vehicle mines have been deployed. The mines are designed to disable a person rather than kill. The Security Forces used Claymore mines, anti-vehicle mines and anti-personnel Mines generally (Chinese type 72, Italian VS50 and Pakistani PV4), while the LTTE used Claymore, anti-vehicle mines, and anti-personnel Jony mines and improvised explosive devices. These mines together with many UXO remaining in areas where high-intensity battles have taken place, have obstructed the resettlement and reconstruction process and made several acres of agricultural land uncultivable. In addition, infrastructure rehabilitation had been delayed until mine clearance.

The Government of Sri Lanka which used landmines purely as defensive weapons had marked and mapped the minefields. The Sri Lanka Army has handed over 3008 such maps to the UNDP Project and other Agencies in 2003.

Most of the victims of landmines are maimed and some killed. The disabled suffer long-term physical and psychological consequences. The most affected are children who constitute 30% of the casualties.

Though the scale of the problem is not yet well known, 730 villages have been identified as contaminated covering an area of 202 Sq.Km. The total number of landmines is estimated to be over One Million. Of the Eight Districts contaminated in the North and East, the Jaffna District has most of the landmines, approx. 50%. 228 Villages are contaminated in this District and the estimated landmines are about 500,000.

Mines Laid By The Security Forces

The Security Forces have not used mines as an offensive weapon, but purely as a defensive measure. According to the UN, the Sri Lankan Security Forces have laid protective minefields to prevent the LTTE from reoccupying defended areas. These minefields are laid in keeping with universally accepted standards of laying to a specific pattern following proper marking and recording procedures. The records amounting to 3,000 minefields, except those relevant to High Security Zones (HSZs), were released to other organizations involved in mine action and these records have helped easy and speedy recovery of mines. These minefields are seldom mixed but constitute large numbers of antipersonnel mines. Anti-tank mines have been used scarcely and separately only to cover prominent vehicle approaches.

Mines Laid By The LTTE

The UN also reports that the LTTE minefields have been laid with a rudimentary pattern without clear recording or marking. The LTTE have also laid nuisance minefields to prevent access to facilities such as wells, roads, footpaths, and food. These mines have been laid in

small numbers and not marked. All nuisance mines discovered have been laid by the LTTE and it is the use of this type of landmines that has created the greatest threat to resettled and returning displaced people. Mines have been laid in front of defensive positions, which have subsequently been hurriedly evacuated, and the mines forgotten about.

The Government of Sri Lanka disburses a considerable amount of funds to maintain a large number of Army personnel in humanitarian mine action to meet remuneration, food, clothing, accommodation, medical, transportation, welfare etc. which of course is a large amount for a developing country like Sri Lanka

The landmine problem in Sri Lanka could be contained.

The Impact of Landmines

The complexities introduced by landmines on the nation are:

Constraints/injuries imposed on manpower/persons

Delayed resettlement of displaced persons

Physical, psychological and economic consequences to inhabitants

Loss of agriculture land

Destruction and disruption to infrastructure caused in the areas of transportation, irrigation etc.

Exhaustion of medical and rehabilitation services

Destruction of the environment

Economic cost for humanitarian demining.

Clearing of landmines and Mine Risk Education programmes commenced in 1999 and 1997 respectively. The UNDP Mine Action Project established in July 1999 undertook some Mine Awareness activities and technical surveys. However, this project ended in April 2000, as the fighting was still ongoing. UNICEF assisted in the Mine Risk Education.

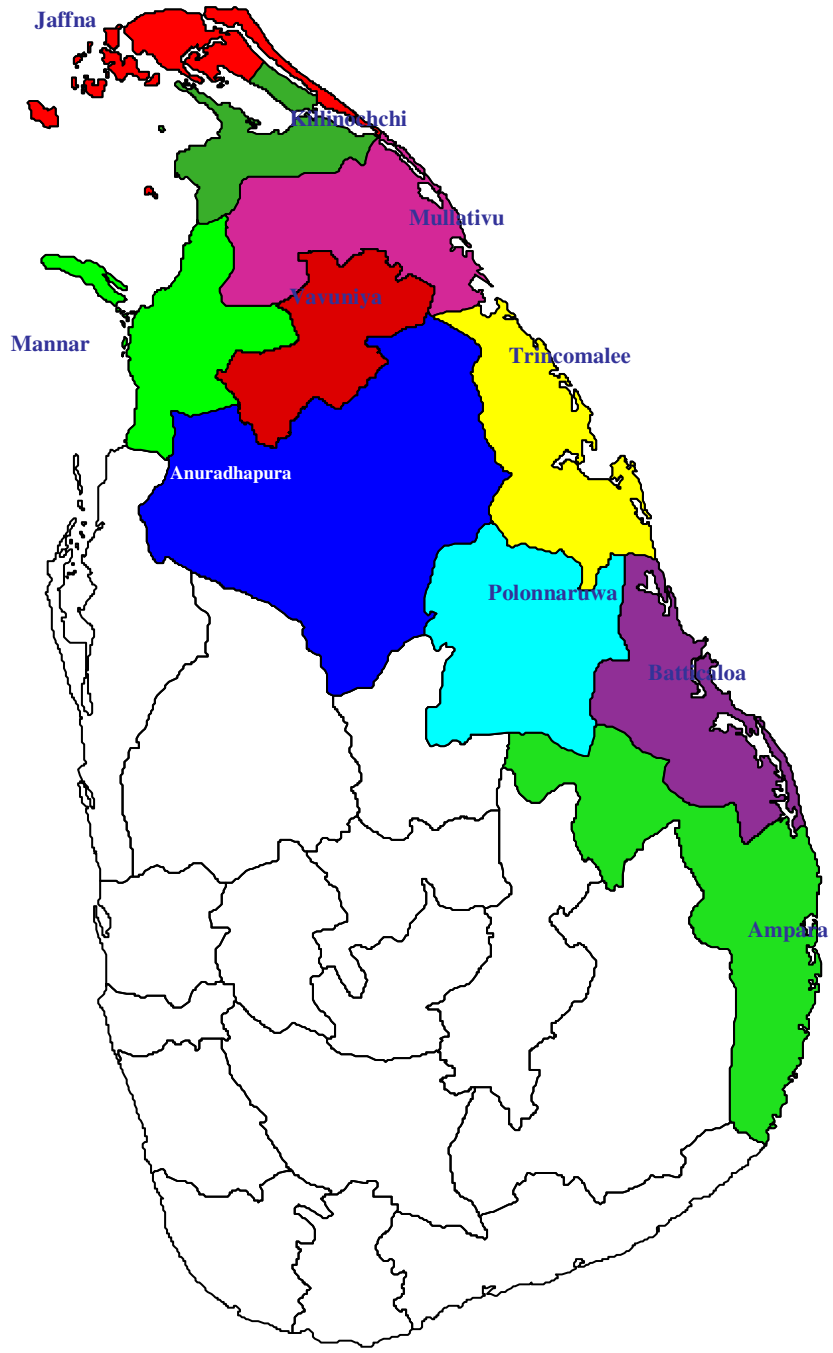
The Government has developed in 2003, a very effective and comprehensive humanitarian mine action programme in Sri Lanka which is development oriented, clearing for resettlement, agricultural lands, hospitals, schools, roads and other infrastructure (in that order). In a short period of time, about 3 years from its inception, the national programme has developed in leaps and bounds. We have already ratified our own mine action standards called SLNMAS (Sri Lanka National Mine Action Standards) and the accreditation procedure established. What Sri Lanka did is to commence clearance operations based on District priorities and did not wait for a National Plan. It also established a National Steering Committee on Mine Action (NSCMA) in August 2002 to own, coordinate and manage the programme.

CURRENT SITUATION – OVERVIEW

The primary responsibility for humanitarian mine action lies with the Government of Sri Lanka. The resettlement of the IDPs and rehabilitation work of the North-East falls under the purview of the Ministry of Nation Building and Development, a portfolio held by the President himself.

Though Sri Lanka is in a “No-War-No Peace” situation, the Government of Sri Lanka having realized that rapid clearance of contaminated areas should be undertaken well ahead of the

Mine Contaminated Districts



advent of Peace, formulated the comprehensive Mine Action Programme, which is being implemented from 2003 with the assistance of the UNDP, UNICEF and INGOs and local NGOs. Eight International NGOs, two local NGOs and the Sri Lanka Army are mainly involved in the clearance of mines. The local NGOs such as the Humanitarian Demining Unit are also working in partnership with some INGOs. The programme target for a mine free North & East area and border districts is by end of 2006, but this cannot be achieved in the main districts of Jaffna, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Further, the high security zones occupied by the Army are not included in the overall programme. The entire programme is just about three years old and has built local capacity with about 2500 Sri Lankan Deminers working in the field. These deminers have been trained by the Sri Lanka Army (400) and the INGOs (2100). Clearing operations actually commenced in 2003. However, as indicated earlier, the Sri Lanka Army and the HDU had commenced mine clearing activities on their own while the conflict was ongoing, 1997.

The focus of the Sri Lankan Mine Action Programme is to clear all the high and some of the medium priority areas by the end of 2006 to support the resettlement programme. Some of these internally displaced persons are languishing in Welfare Centres between 15-20 years. However, about 105,000 Internally Displaced Families have returned to their original home after the Ceasefire Agreement signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and LTTE in February 2002. 19,000 families are still in the Welfare Centres. The Mine Action Programme strategy also supports mine clearance in Agricultural and Market areas and reconstruction of Infrastructure such as damaged Hospitals, Schools, Drinking Water Supplies, Roads, Power Lines, Community areas, and so on.

The National Steering Committee on Mine Action established in August 2002, anticipates the clearance of all high and medium priority minefields by mid-2007 in most of the Districts except Jaffna and Trincomalee. These estimates do not include the High Security Zones occupied by the Security Forces which cannot be demined until the Sri Lanka Army and LTTE releases the area for occupation by the original Internally Displaced Persons. The High Security Zones are mainly concentrated in Jaffna, Mannar and Vavuniya Districts. LTTE also has high Security Zones in Mullaitivu District. Clearance operations in the Jaffna and Trincomalee Districts are expected to go on until 2008 with the INGOs, the Sri Lanka Army and local NGOs. Batticaloa District clearance will go until 2007. Also, the high security zones will be cleared only after the lands are released by the Army.

The Ministry of Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconciliation now termed the Ministry of Nation Building & Development is establishing a Demining Unit (Operator) making use of the US trained army personnel on Humanitarian Demining. This Unit which will consist of at least 300 - 400 Deminers and will be expanded further will undertake all the residual work after 2008. It will also continue to do the clearance work which the Army personnel have undertaken already and will be given, in addition, new tasks from 2006 onwards. These persons will be seconded to the Ministry of Nation Building & Development as civilians for mine clearance work. The Japanese Government has supported the establishment of this Unit.

Unlike in other countries, in Sri Lanka mine clearance started with the initiation of the Mine Action Programme. It did not wait for the preparation of a Strategy or National Plan for Mine Action. Instead, due to the urgency to release lands needed for resettlement, the Government of Sri Lanka went in directly for mine clearance utilizing the operators, well-known International NGO such as Halo Trust, Mines Advisory Group and Danish Demining Group, Norwegian People's Aid and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action. These INGOs have

experience in many other countries. Only a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Government of Sri Lanka and the concerned INGO or LINGO.

Priorities in the field for mine clearance were well known to the communities, the District Government Agents (GA) and other Senior officials of the Government in the respective areas. Based on these priorities, the Government started mine clearance work in 2003. The first National Steering Committee Meeting was held on 29th August 2002. In 2003 most of the work was on preparation for mine clearance, although clearance was initiated. The take-off stage was only in 2004.

At the time of Ceasefire in 2002, the number of mine casualties were between 15-20 per month. This has now been reduced to 2.5 per month. The number of accidents are now less than 2 per month.

VISION

The vision is to have a mine threat free Sri Lanka by the end of 2008, except for the High Security Zones, and to have most of the High Priority areas and some Medium Priority areas cleared by 2006.

SCOPE OF THE PROGRAMME

The strategy of the Government of Sri Lanka is to address the mines problem in the Districts of Jaffna, Mannar, Vavuniya, Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee and Batticaloa and the Northern Border of Ampara District with a view to survey and clear all the mines in the High Priority areas and a major portion of the Medium Priority areas by mid-2007, except in the Jaffna and Trincomalee Districts. This strategy does not include any of the High Security Zones in the Jaffna, Vavuniya, Mannar and Trincomalee Districts. These areas are under the jurisdiction of the Sri Lanka Army, which is in occupation of these lands, a major portion of which belong to the people of the respective areas, which are both residential and agricultural lands. These areas will be released only if the Peace Process takes a definite shape and some basic decisions are made in the direction of an established Peace. As is well known, Sri Lanka is now in a No Conflict situation since the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement in February 2002. However, at present escalation of sporadic violence and violations of the Ceasefire are being noticed in some Districts, particularly, the Jaffna District and the Eastern Districts.

OBJECTIVES

The principal objectives of the comprehensive Mine Action Programme now being implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka are:

- a] With the assistance of the International NGOs and the Sri Lanka Army (who are actively clearing the mines) the Government of Sri Lanka will be surveying and clearing all the High Priority areas and some of the Medium Priority areas immediately required for resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons and for the recovery of agricultural lands which are not being cultivated now as they are mined. Most of these areas except in the Jaffna District will be cleared according to the target, 2006. Clearance will continue until 2008 when the balance mined areas will have been cleared.

- b] To impart Mine Risk Education services among the various communities, both not affected and affected by the mines. The Mines Risk Teams will undertake various activities including providing wide publicity on Mine Risk by way of Dramas, Meetings, Workshops, Handbills and in various other forms of publicity. The Mine Risk Education Programme has also been included as part of the School Curriculum.
- c] The Government of Sri Lanka is concerned about the Survivors Assistance, even though a programme exists, supported by the UNICEF, it needs expansion and further support. At present most of the work is on prosthesis, with about four Agencies in various Districts manufacturing Artificial Limbs. Even though some action has been taken to vocationally train persons disabled by mine accidents, so that they can sustain livelihood, this activity has to be widely extended and expanded.
- d] The Government of Sri Lanka has seriously taken positive steps in respect to Accession to the Ottawa Landmine Ban Treaty. It is waiting to have discussions with the LTTE so that both parties will mutually agree to sign the necessary documents.

COMPONENTS OF THE MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

The most important of the five pillars on Mine Action are being implemented by the Government of Sri Lanka with less or no attention on stockpile destruction. They are:

- a] **Survey and mine clearance** which was initiated in 1999 with UNDP support, but was suspended in about 8 months due to the escalation of the conflict. After the signing of the Ceasefire Agreement in February 2002, the Government is fully committed to surveying and clearance of all the mines, both Anti-personnel and UXO and other devices. It is now implementing a comprehensive programme, which is now three years old and hopes to have most of the landmines cleared before the end of 2008, except in the High Security Zones which are now not available for clearance.

Clearance Methodology

Manual Clearance

Initially a heavy rake is used to soften and prod the ground. This rake is pulled horizontal through the possible mine infested soil, loosing up the soil and possible hitting/locating the mines on the side. As the mines are designed to activate only if hit on the top, this action will not set on the mine, and we have only had one incident where a mine went off while excavating with the heavy rake. Investigations afterwards showed that the mine had been tilted by the growth of the roots of a small tree, thereby “standing” on the side, so when the heavy rake hit the mine, it was activated but fortunately the PPE and the long handle of the rake ensured that no harm came to the deminer.

After the soil is loosened up, the deminer will use the light garden rake to remove the soil. This rake is originally designed for removing grass cuttings from the lawn without damaging the lawn. Each of the fingers (in total 22) bend back if any serious pressure is made onto it, far less than the pressure that is needed to set off the type of AP mines we are recovering. It can therefore be used safely to remove the soft soil, sweeping it away from the top. Instead of the rake method, some operators use metal detectors later, for clearance: some use both the rakes and metal detectors together.

Mechanical Clearance

Landmines and other explosive devices are cleared in Sri Lanka mainly by the manual rake method. The Flail Machines are used for verification of areas cleared by the rake method, and also for area reduction and vegetation clearance. They are also used for clearance after which verification is done either manually or with MDD.

HALO Trust also does mine clearance mechanically by fully excavating and transporting the soil for the removal and crushing of the mines. The soil is subsequently brought back and put in place. Nevertheless, it is said that this methodology is detrimental to agriculture, which disturbs the top soil. Therefore, such mechanical clearance cannot be done on agricultural lands.

The use of mine detection dogs is not encouraged by the National Steering Committee as it is very difficult to train and maintain them. They are also costly and some of the dogs are not acclimatized to the tropical conditions in Sri Lanka. On an experimental basis the Sri Lanka Army started using mine detection dogs which American donors gave them. At present it has 12 MDDs, which are being used in Jaffna for mine detection. The Sri Lanka Army is quite satisfied with the performance of these dogs. Incidentally, MDDs do not remove mines, they only detect after which the mines have to be removed manually.

There are six Flail Mine Clearance Machines in Sri Lanka used by the Sri Lanka Army, Norwegian People's Aid, Mines Advisory Group and Swiss Foundation for Mine Action. Japan Center for Conflict Prevention is also using a Japanese made machine on an experimental basis. This machine not only excavates the soil, but also crushes the landmine and the soil is put back in the same place. Sarvartha has developed an Excavator called "Arjun" for mine clearance.

There was also a proposal for mine detection/clearance through plants which the Government of Sri Lanka did not encourage.

Prioritisation of Clearance Tasks

The Sri Lankan Government agrees with the modern concept that it is not the number of mines or the size of mine field that determines how important it is to be cleared, rather than it is the impact it has on the community. Therefore, the methodology for prioritization of clearance should be community based and decided by the community beneficiaries and not by external experts.

Due to the considerable number of minefields identified in Sri Lanka, and given the limited resources available, it is not possible to clear all minefields simultaneously. Therefore, to make best use of the available demining capacity and ensure that the highest priority areas are cleared first it is essential to prioritise the order in which locations are tasked.

Low:

Minefield is away from the populated area. No infrastructure or agriculture land is blocked. Local population knows the area is mined and can avoid its use.

Medium:

Minefield is close to populated area. Blocks access to other infrastructure or agricultural land. Local population knows the area is mined and can avoid its use.

High:

Minefield is in a populated area or area soon to be resettled. It blocks access to essential infrastructure/water and/or food. The local population is forced to use the area even though it's mined.

However, these three categories alone are not enough to compile a running order of clearance tasks. Ownership and involvement of all stakeholders, in the order and the way minefields are selected for clearance, is vitally important. This is essential from the beneficiaries/end-users of the land right through local communities and municipal institutions to the organizations that undertake the clearance.

The prioritization system in Sri Lanka is designed to accomplish this effectively. The Government Agent (GA) is responsible for all departments and projects in his district and it is logical that the strategy for the order in which mine clearance tasks are addressed, and all other elements of mine action, is carried out through his office, which is being done.

Each District in Sri Lanka is made up of a number of Divisions. Each Division has a Divisional Secretary (DS) who reports to the GA and each DS has the best local knowledge of the demographics, projects, problems and constraints in the Division. With this knowledge each DS forwards the task locations of what they consider to be the highest priority for Mine Action in their area based on the number of beneficiaries, infrastructure and services blocked by the presence of landmines.

The DS priorities are consolidated into a single District-wide list and compared to the surveys carried out by Mine Action agencies and are entered into the national IMSMA database and maps. From this consolidated list the GA readjusts with District oversight to finalise a District work-plan.

It is important to stress that the priority list needs to be reviewed by the District Steering Committee for Mine Action (DSCMA) on a regular basis as priorities change with events such as IDP returns, development projects, terrain released from the High Security Zones and other new information gained through survey and assessments.

Quality Management

Consistent Standards

To establish a consistent level of high quality humanitarian mine clearance across all of Sri Lanka, the Government published Sri Lankan National Mine Action Standards (SLNMAS) in March 2004. The UNDP assisted in its preparation.

Accreditation

All agencies operational in the field of mine action have since undergone a rigorous accreditation process in line with the national standards. The accreditation board examined each agency's Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to ensure they met national standards and then carried out in depth field assessments to confirm work practices on the ground followed what had been documented in the agency.

In accordance with SLNMAS and to minimize mistakes in mapping the work done, all demining is checked and verified by a Quality Assurance (QA) team based in the District MAO working for the GA. These teams have been trained by the UNDP.

Maintenance of Standards

The demining site is monitored approximately every month until it is completed and then a final Quality Control is done (QC). This QC verified the finished product and confirms that the map and completion report is correct enabling a handover ceremony to be arranged. The

handover procedure gathers community members at the site with representatives from the clearance agency and someone from the QA team who verified the task. Together they walk the site explaining and discussing what had been done, which raises confidence in the community that the mines and the hazard have been totally removed.

The external monitoring complements the demining organization's own internal quality management system. It verifies that the demining organization's quality assurance procedures and internal quality control inspections are appropriate and are being applied – but it does not replace the demining organization's responsibility for ensuring the application of safe, effective and efficient operational procedures.

The monitoring through QA is random, non-intrusive and does not interfere with the conduct of planned demining activities. It does not slow the clearance process down. The frequency of monitoring should be approximately monthly but is in reality dependent on the task and the previous performance of the demining organization.

QA Capacity

There is a team of 8 QA inspectors based in the GA's Secretariat in Jaffna covering Jaffna District. There is another of the same size in GA's Secretariat in Vavuniya covering Mannar, Vavuniya, Anuradhapura, Trincomalee, Polonnaruwa, Batticaloa and Ampara. There is also a similar team based in Kilinochchi working through the Tamils Relief Organisation (TRO) covering the Vanni. All three teams work to the same work practices and standards using the same survey check lists and methodology developed by UNDP Technical Advisors based on IMAS standards.

Each team of 8 is sub-divided into smaller teams of 2 inspectors to enable them to meet the workload of carrying out QA on up to 2,000 deminers working at the end of 2005. The balance of QA monitors to deminers have been purposely kept very small to concentrate funding to clearance and not on heavy monitoring.

The QA inspectors monitor each demining site in exactly the same way regardless of whether it is a military site in Government controlled terrain, an international NGO or a national agency in LTTE controlled land. A completely level playing field has been established regarding humanitarian mine clearance standards across a very disparate group of demining organizations.

b] Mine Risk Education

Mine Risk Education has received high priority in the Mine Action Programme. With the assistance of UNICEF, this programme has been fully established and is well underway and has been very successful during the last two years. The number of accidents which were 13 – 15 per month in 2002 has come down to 2 per month by the end of 2005. This confirms the success of the Mine Risk Education Programme even though clearance of mines has also contributed to this reduction.

Sri Lanka Mine Awareness Programme is to support and inform the public of the threat and risk from mines that will enable the reduction in Landmine and UXO casualties. The specific purpose of the programme is to provide affected communities in landmine and UXO risk area with appropriate knowledge and skills to protect themselves from the dangers of landmines and UXO.

UNICEF is assisting this programme in the conflict affected areas, which hopes to finally reach the entire risk group in the North-East Region in 2006.

Mine Risk Education is being done through Awareness Programmes conducted to persons returning to the mined areas and included Drama, Posters and Handbooks, Radio Broadcasts, Billboards, spreading MRE messages in Children's Clubs and through School Books, Placement of Warning Signs and marking certain mined areas.

Several programmes on Mine Risk Education are implemented. They are:

- a) MRE through a community based programme. In 2004, 295,000 people were provided Mine Risk Education Services through house to house visits, presentations, drama, community mapping, songs and Children's Club. Activities focused on how to develop safe behaviour and to act as liaison persons between communities and demining teams during and after clearance operations.
- b) MRE through mass media campaign. MRE posters were developed and disseminated to supplement MRE activities through Schools and Community Centers. Also Radio spots were broadcast through Radio Channels.
- c) MRE School-based Programme – These programmes were started in 2004. MRE has become a part of the school curriculum.

Training programmes for Teachers in Primary and Secondary schools have been undertaken. By end of 2004 –

- (i) 45,085 Teachers were given Handbooks and Student Activity Books and 197,583 Students were given Laminated Activity Sheets.
- (ii) 50 Street Drama Video Tapes were prepared and given to each Education Zone Director.

Capacity Building and Training in Mine Risk Education

Several training sessions have been organized during the last three years to train Mine Risk Education Project Managers and Field Officers of all partner organizations. They were trained mainly in:

- 1] Management and financial reporting;
- 2] Participatory approaches, communicating techniques, behavioural change, learning and teaching;
- 3] Monitoring and evaluation;
- 4] Safety training;
- 5] Mine Risk Education assessment and impact tool using the knowledge, attitude, practice (KAP) form.

At the request of the National Steering Committee on Mine Action, UNICEF with the assistance of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining developed a set of national Mine Risk Education standards. These standards have been included in the overall Mine Action Standards for Sri Lanka.

c] **Survivor Assistance**

Survivor Assistance Programme is not extensive like the Mine Risk Education, and needs further expansion and development at present. The services provided to the victims of landmines include both physical rehabilitation through psychotherapy, the fitting of prosthesis and provision of mobility services and psycho-social rehabilitation of the survivors and their families.

Vocational training and income generating programmes to assist these victims or families of victims is not well developed and the Government has requested UNICEF and UNDP to assist in formulating large programmes for vocational training for victims or members of their families to enable them to sustain a reasonable livelihood. UNICEF is undertaking this expanded programmes in 2006.

UNICEF is providing support to physical rehabilitation services with local NGOs as partners in the Jaffna, Mannar and Batticaloa Districts. In the Batticaloa District it is working together with Handicap International. There are several Rehabilitation Centres (4) established in the North & East dealing with prosthesis and other similar activities. UNICEF provided equipment and training to some of the staff in these Rehabilitation Centres.

Psycho-Social Counselling and Referral System to Existing Families

Psycho-social rehabilitation of survivors and families are being conducted in most of the affected districts, particularly, in Kilinochchi and Jaffna. To encourage families of child victims to send the child back to school as soon as possible after an incident, a system of Education Grant has been set by an NGO called White Pigeon in Kilinochchi through MRE Field Officers. The aim of the Grant was to support poor families with school supplies and uniforms. Similarly, other NGOs have developed income generating projects for landmine survivors.

d] **Advocacy**

International and local Agencies have promoted advocacy and pressurized the Government of Sri Lanka to sign the Landmine Ban Treaty. Advocacy work has been undertaken by various local NGOs, UNDP and UNICEF and some International NGOs. The Government of Sri Lanka has reacted positively to the signing of the Treaty. However, it wants to discuss with LTTE at the next round of talks (now suspended) to ascertain their position. LTTE too had discussed with Geneva Call on a number of occasions. They too have indicated to discuss with the Government of Sri Lanka and come to a mutual understanding on the issue. However, it is safe to believe that landmines have not been newly laid since February 2002.

Land Ban Advocacy Forum (LBAF) consisting of representatives of the UN Agency, local and International NGOs and the donor community and other similar organizations have appealed to the Government to accede to the Mine Ban Treaty and the LTTE to sign the Geneva Call Deed of Commitment. The LBAF provides an opportunity for individual or organizations interested in advocating a total ban on the use of anti-personnel land mines, share information, brief each other on their individual advocacy initiatives, undertake joint activities and ensure that a cohesive and emphatic attempt could be made to guarantee that anti-personnel landmines are never used within Sri Lanka

The LBAF works through Media Conferences, Posters and Stickers with Slogans, Ban Landmines, Act now a Sri Lanka free of landmines printed in all three languages, Press Statements, Art Exhibitions for children and other similar processes.

The Government of Sri Lanka has already acceded to the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons including its Amended Protocol II.

Sri Lanka has also submitted its report consistent with the UNGA Resolution 58/53, which requests the States that have not ratified or acceded to the Ottawa Convention to provide on a voluntary basis, information to make global mine action efforts more effective, under Article 7 of the Ottawa Convention. The Government of Sri Lanka has taken very positive steps towards accession to the Ottawa Convention and will definitely do so no sooner it is feasible. It is not a matter of 'IF' but 'WHEN'.

PROGRAM COORDINATION – A comprehensive Mine Action Programme to free Sri Lanka from the threat of landmines has been undertaken since 2003, with the assistance of the UNDP, UNICEF and NGOs, most of which are International NGOs. The programme targets a mine threat free Districts of Vavuniya, Mannar and Batticaloa by mid-2007. The other Districts will include Jaffna and Trincomalee where mine clearance has to go on until end of 2008. More than 60% of the mines are in the Jaffna and Trincomalee Districts. These estimates do not include the High Security Zones occupied by the Armed Forces.

The Mine Action Programme is directly under the President of Sri Lanka and is located in the Ministry of Nation Building & Development, (formerly Ministry of Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconciliation) The organizational structure below indicates the flow of functions. The Ministry of Nation Building & Development has a Unit for Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconciliation (Triple R Unit), under which it has established a National Steering Committee on Mine Action to manage, coordinate and develop policies on the Mine Action Programme which is fully owned by the Government.

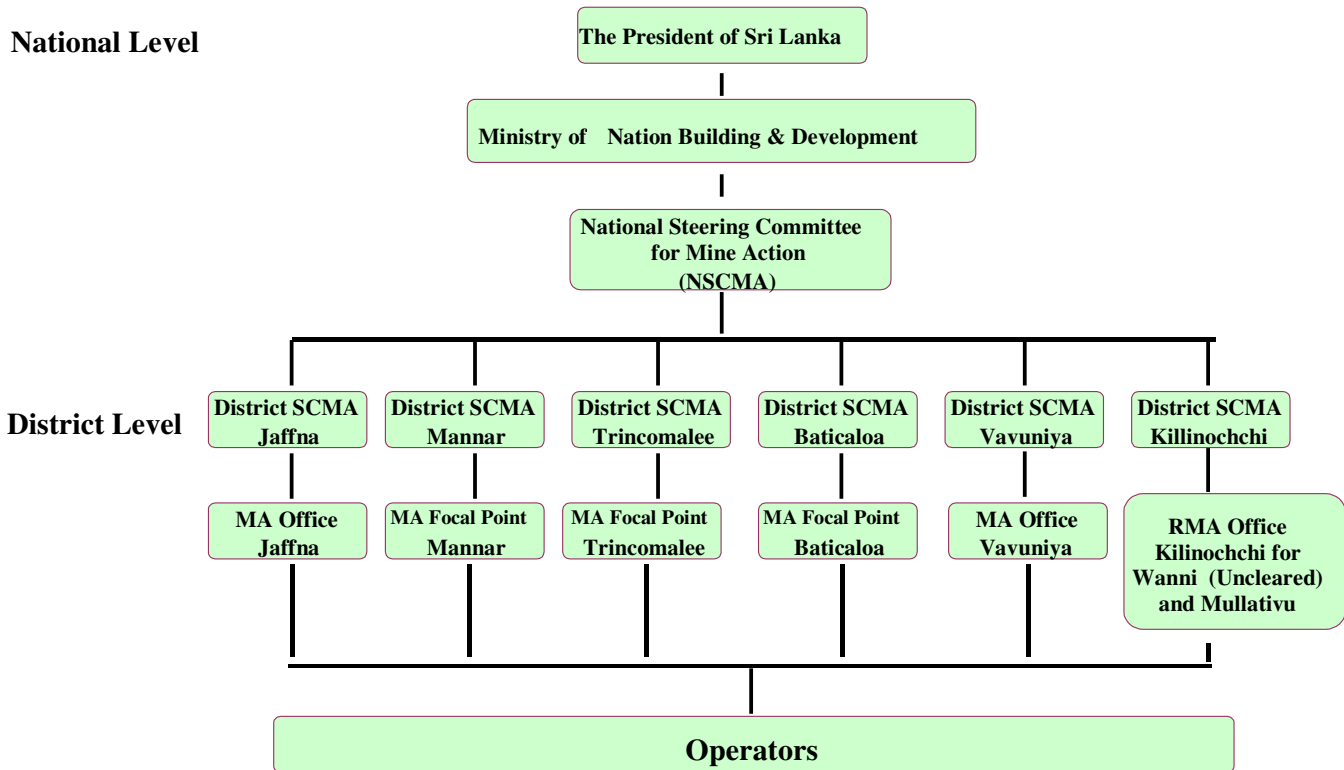
The functions of this National Steering Committee are:

- a] Coordination and Management of all Mine Action Activities in the Country;
- b] Establish policy guidelines on all aspects of Mine Action;
- c] Monitor activities of physical removal of landmines and UXOs;
- d] Review and approve:
 - i. National Mine Action Plan;
 - ii. National priorities for Mine Action Activities;
 - iii. National Mine Action Policies and Standards;
 - iv. The National policy on Victims Assistance and Mine Risk Education.
- e] Creating Public awareness on the risk that mines pose to civilians;
- f] Care and treatment of mine victims and vocationally training them for sustenance;
- g] Assist in resource mobilization for Mine Action initiatives;
- h] Establish Information Management System for Mine Action;
- i] All other matters connected to Mine Action.

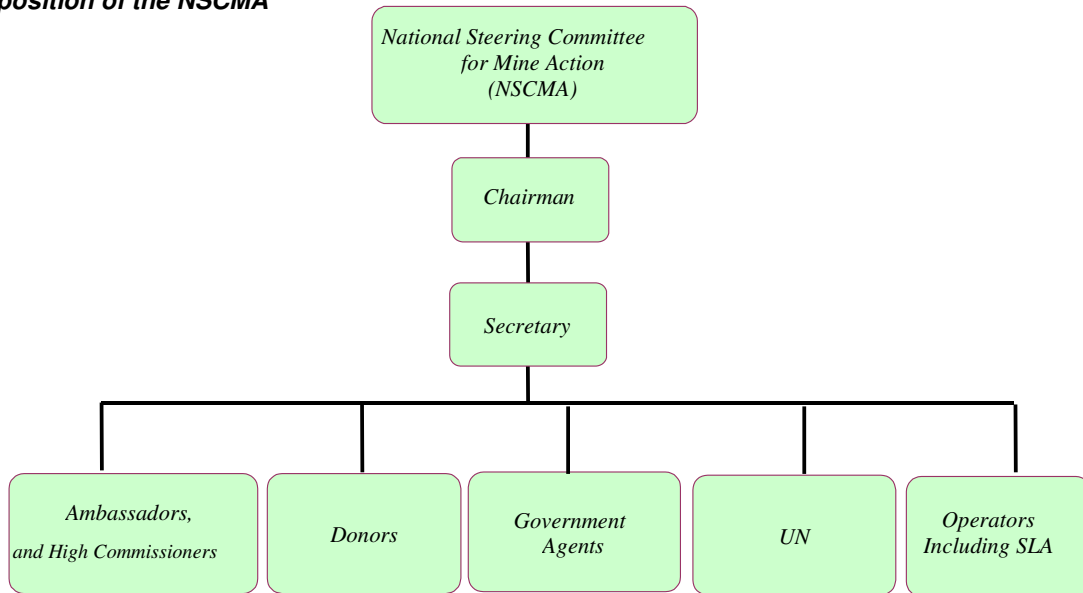
The National Steering Committee comprises the Secretary, Ministry of Nation Building & Development (Chairman), the Ambassadors and High Commissioners of concerned Embassies, bilateral agencies, relevant Ministries, UNDP, UNICEF and implementing NGO, some of which have observer status only.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

Overall Programme Coordination



Composition of the NSCMA

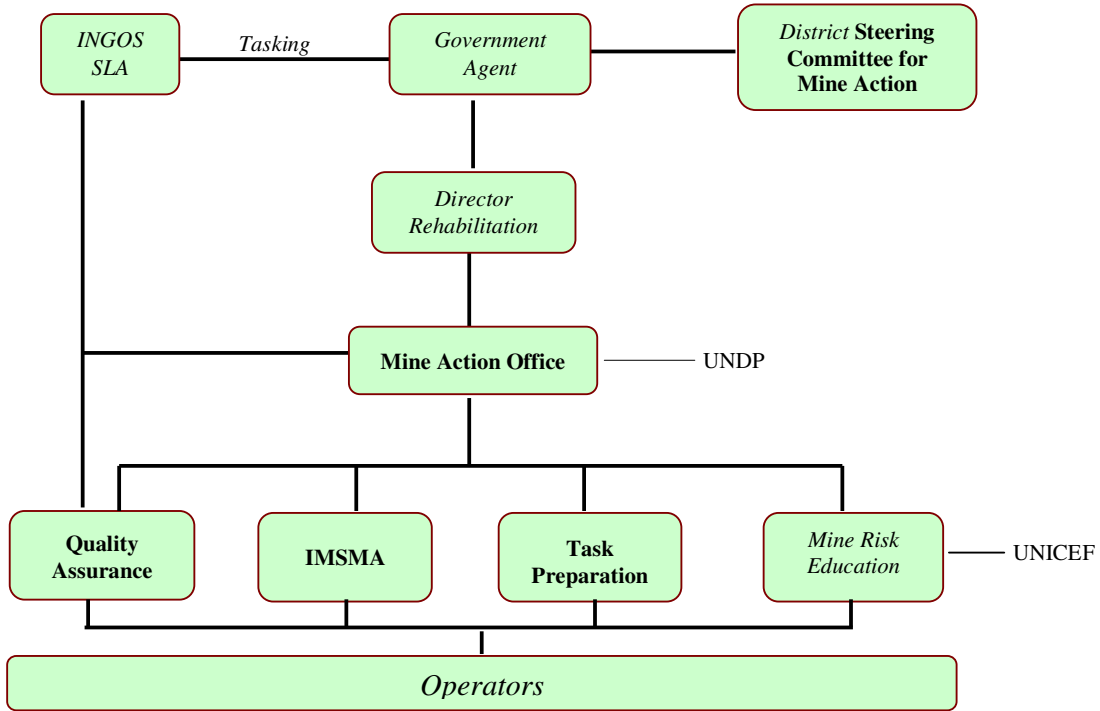


SLA unit is being transferred/ seconded to the Ministry of Nation Building and Development as a Civilian De-Mining Unit (Operator)

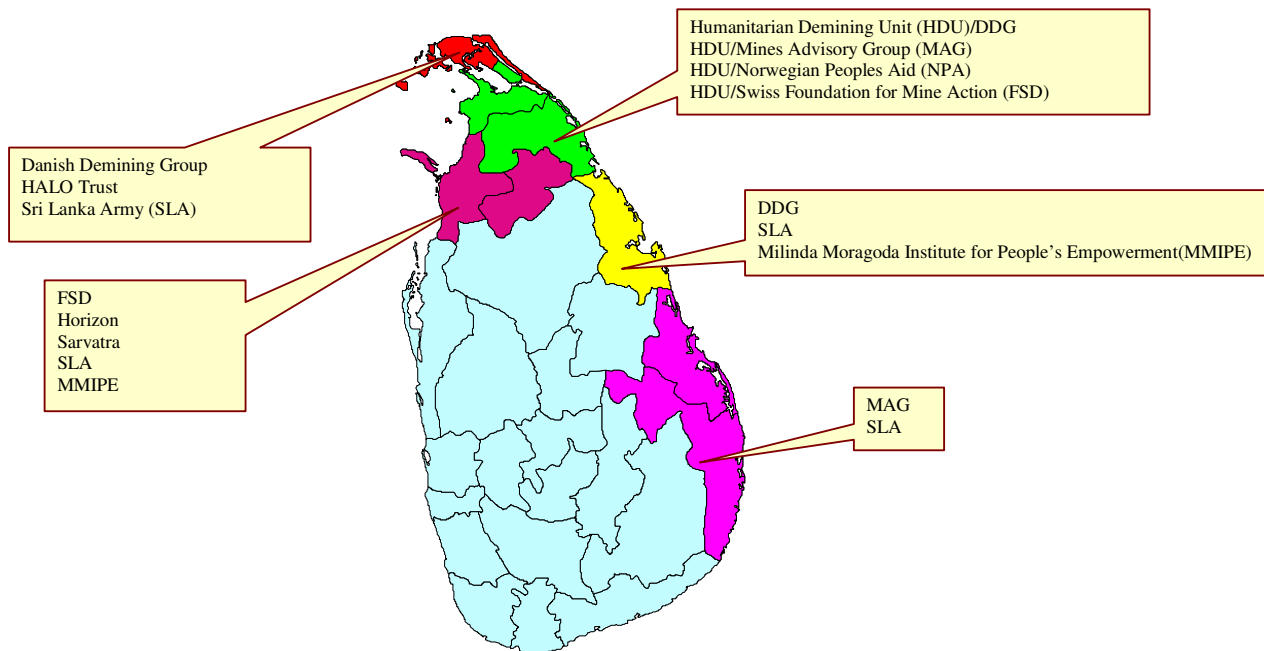
District Level Coordination

The District Steering Committee for Mine Action (DSCMA) is the apex body for Mine Action coordination in each mine affected District. The DSCMA meets on a regular basis

District Level Coordination



Operators Classified Geographically



chaired by the GA and attended by the relevant district administrative staff including the Divisional Secretaries from each mine affected DS Division.

The DSCMA reports through each GA to the National Steering Committee for Mine Action in Colombo. The DSCMA is open to all stakeholders and is intended to bring together Mine Action operators and non-Mine Action operators to ensure that activities are taking place where they are most relevant to beneficiaries.

The coordination system established for clearance and MRE is straightforward and streamlined. The system is under the leadership of the GA and calls for consistency with all agencies. It can be summed up in five points:

1. **Task Allocation:** Clearance tasks are allocated by the GA and authorized by his signature on a national database numbered tasking dossier compiled by his Mine Action Office. Each task is reviewed and signed by the Security Forces General Staff. This task dossier and signed authorization is the official pre-requisite for opening a task and no new sites should be opened without these signatures.
2. **Task Continuity:** Worked on task sites should be completed before new ones are opened. Exceptions for flooding or technical reasons require clearance suspension reports submitting to the GA.
3. **Task Quality:** All demining and MRE activities are monitored and verified by the GA's Quality Assurance team. The QA team reports results and recommendations to the GA in line with the National Mine Action Standards.
4. **Task Finalisation:** Task sites are not closed before a completion form has been accepted, verified and signed. The completion certificate is the legal document that finalises humanitarian mine clearance, it must be signed by:
 - a. The head of the clearance agency stating work has been done in accordance with National Standards.
 - b. The head of the verifying agency stating the work has been checked and is up to standard (usually the Mine Action Office on behalf of the GA).
 - c. A representative of the beneficiary community stating that they have been shown around the task site, the clearance has been explained to them and that they have confidence in the process agreeing that the ground is safe.
5. **Task Reporting:** Work locations, progress, staff details, explosive usage and other relevant details are reported to the GA and the SF HQ via the weekly or bi-weekly coordination meetings on the progress report format in use since 2002.

The District Mine Action Steering Committees (DMASCs) are the regional organizations responsible for mine action. DMASCs are established in the districts of Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Vavuniya, Mannar, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. The District Secretary of the respective district chairs DMASC. DMASC's membership is comprised of all stakeholders at the district level. This committee does the coordination and control of mine action within the district that includes allocation of priority tasks and assigning of these tasks among mine action operators. The NSCMA coordinates and supervises all such activities from the National Level.

UNDP – UNDP support to mine action in Sri Lanka focuses on three broad areas, i.e. Assistance to Field Coordination and Capacity Development, Support to Field Operations and Assistance to Resource Mobilization (marginal).

UNICEF – MRE in Sri Lanka is supported by UNICEF and conducted in conjunction with the Department of Education and several local and international organizations, namely, Sarvodaya, Save the Children Fund (SCF) – UK, Tamil Refugee Resettlement Organization (TRRO), White Pigeon, Mine Advisory Group (MAG) and Community Trust Fund (CTF).

Implementing Agencies

At present the following International NGO (INGOO) and Local NGO are involved in mine action:

- 1] Danish Demining Group (DDG)
- 2] Swiss Federation for Mine Action (FSD)
- 3] The Halo Trust
- 4] Mine Action Group (MAG) and HDU
- 5] Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and HDU
- 6] RONCO – USA (clearing assignment completed end July, 2003, and now undertaken a Training Programme with the Sri Lanka Army)
- 7] Japan Centre for Conflict Prevention (JCCP)
- 8] Sarvatra Technical Institute
- 9] Horizon De-mining Team
- 10] Milinda Moragoda Institute for People's Empowerment (MMIPE)

The Sri Lanka Army and Humanitarian De-Mining Unit (HDU-TRO) are the pioneers in mine clearance since 1997. The areas covered by each Operator is shown in the Map. (Page 14).

The Sri Lanka Army de-mining Unit, particularly the RONCO trained de-miners will be transferred and seconded to the new De-mining Unit to be established in the Ministry of Nation Building and Development early in 2006. This training by RONCO has been made possible by the US State Department. They will work on mine clearance as a Civilian Unit in the Government controlled mined areas with a small Management Unit in the Ministry. It will be an operator removing mines in the contaminated areas as done now but under a civilian administration. This Unit will work under the management and supervision of the National Steering Committee on Mine Action as in the case of the other operators. The Japanese Government has assisted this Unit to purchase three Flail Machines and other necessary equipment. The de-miners also will be wearing a special civilian uniform. It is envisaged that additional de-miners from among the public and retired Army personnel will be recruited to increase the de-miners from 350 to 600 in the near future.

The Unit will continue to undertake all the residual clearance of landmines and UXO after 2008. It will be recalled that about local 2500 de-miners have already been trained and involved in mine action work. This includes de-miners, section leaders, etc. and have been trained by the Sri Lanka Army (600) and INGOO. Over 2000 de-miners are working with the INGOs. The Tamils Rehabilitation Organization has contributed 900 de-miners who are working with the NPA and MAG in the (LTTE controlled) uncleared areas. The Sri Lanka Army de-miners are confined to the Government controlled areas. It is noteworthy to mention that the LTTE/TRO is working in close cooperation with the Government administration in

the uncleared areas. The TRO is a member of the National Steering Committee on Mine Action and had attended all the meetings.

The Sri Lanka Army is the only Government and indigenous self-reliant organization involved in humanitarian demining activities in Sri Lanka. It was the first to engage in these activities in the country commencing their humanitarian demining operations in 1996 to meet various requests made by the civilian authorities and residents in the mine-affected areas. The Army commenced its formal demining operations in February 2002 in support of the Government's programme for resettlement and rehabilitation in the North and East.

The Field Engineers or the Sappers of the Army have had invaluable experience in conventional mine warfare in actual battle conditions and are quite competent in the field of mine clearance for military purposes. But they lacked the advance technical know-how and modern equipment that are available to the INGOs and essentially required for humanitarian demining. While the INGOs in mine action enjoyed immense financial support from the donor countries, the Army had to rely on the military equipment that were available but not suitable at all, for humanitarian demining.

Nevertheless, amidst all the difficulties the Army continued with the endeavour in assisting the Government's Programme for Resettlement and Rehabilitation. It would be pertinent to mention that 46 Army deminers suffered injuries in the process of humanitarian demining activities. Such a high rate of casualty could have been avoided if equal opportunities were available to them.

Engineer Brigade is the focal point for humanitarian mine action conducted by the Army. It is assisted by three regional Mine Action Offices (MAOs) established respectively in Palaly, Vavuniya and Minneriya. The MAOs are responsible for coordination and control of all demining activities conducted by the Army, coordination with other stakeholders i.e. DMASCs, District Mine Action Offices (DMAOs), UNDP etc. The Army participates in all National and District Coordinating Committee Meetings.

In addition to the INGOO, the following local NGOO are clearing mines:

- i] Milinda Moragoda Institute for People's Empowerment
- ii] Humanitarian De-mining Unit (HDU)

Milinda Moragoda Institute for People's Empowerment has undertaken on their own mine action activities in the Vavuniya and Trincomalee districts since October 2005 even though it cleared mines through two Indian NGOs namely, Horizon – Post Conflict Involvement Management and Sarvatra Technical Consultants. This Institute also attends the National Steering Committee.

The National Steering Committee has planned mine action programmes that would make the entire North East Region safe of mines in three years to five years.. The Action Plans of some of the INGOO have already been presented at the National Steering Committee which reviews progress of all mine clearing and operations every six weeks. It has met 24 (twenty-four) times commencing from 2002.

A 'One Stop Shop' has been established in the Triple 'R' Unit since 2003 to assist these NGOO in all administrative matters including signing of Memorandum of Understanding, Registration as a NGOO and assisting in clearance of machinery duty free and without other taxes.

ACHIEVEMENTS

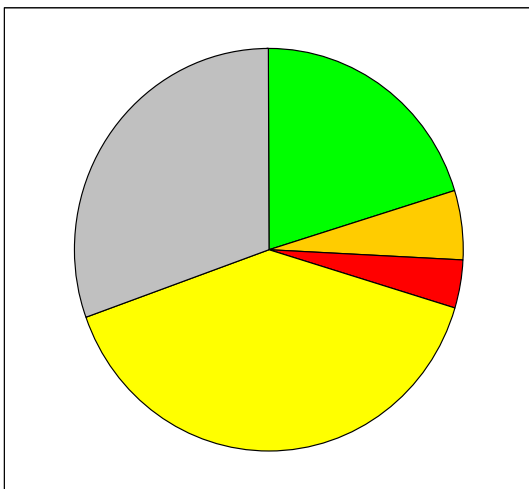
730 villages are said to be contaminated with landmines and UXO, of which 173 had been relieved (24%) of mines, 250 (34%) are being demined and the balance of 307 (42%) will be tasked after technical surveys. In terms of area, of the 202 SqKms contaminated, 11 SqKms have been tasked for mine clearance and 8 SqKms have to be yet tasked for demining. The area cancelled after clearance and technical surveys is 103 SqKms, and the balance 80 SqKms are awaiting technical surveys for identification of minefields and cancellation of dangerous areas (Diagrams below).. From past experience it would be seen that not more than 5 – 10 SqKms could be considered contaminated out of this area yet to be technically surveyed. These technical surveys will be undertaken in 2006 with EEC support of Euros One Million and more than 90% will be cancelled thereafter.

Of the estimated 1 – 1-1/2 Million landmines and UXO laid by the warring parties during the last two decades, about 150,000 have been removed by the Humanitarian Demining Unit prior to 2002, and another equal number by the Sri Lanka Army from 1997–2001, before the implementation of the Government’s comprehensive Mine Action Programme. During the last three years another 150,000 landmines and other devices have been recovered by the International NGOs, Humanitarian De-Mining Unit. On the basis of an estimate of 1 Million, about 40-50% of the mines laid have already been cleared.

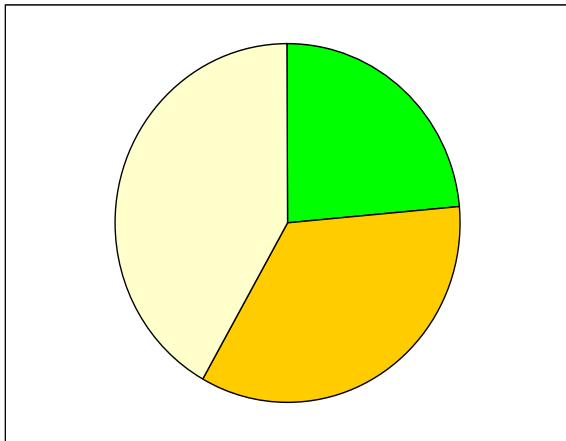
About 50% of laid mines are in the Jaffna District, covering 228 villages with about 500,000 mines. It is anticipated that a major portion of the High Priority Areas and Medium Priority Areas will be cleared during 2006 and clearance will continue during the years 2007 and 2008 in the Jaffna District. Clearance of mines in the Trincomalee District will go beyond 2006. In the Vavuniya and Mannar Districts, it is anticipated that High and Medium Priority areas will be cleared of landmines and UXO by end of 2006. In the Batticaloa District also, all High and Medium Priority areas will be cleared of mines by mid-2007. In the Kilinochchi and Mullaitivu Districts and the uncleared parts of Vavuniya and Mannar Districts, mine clearance is going according to schedule and again the High and Medium Priority areas will be cleared of mines by mid-2007.

All the aforesaid estimates and performances exclude the High Security Zone occupied by the Sri Lanka Army and are excluded from this programme, as these areas can be demined only when the Army release the lands to the original owners, which constitute both residential and agricultural lands of the people of the respective areas.

Area Classified According to Performance



	Km ²
Completed/Cleared	41
TS Tasked	11
TS not tasked	8
Suspected	80
Cancelled for other reason or inside HSZ	62



	Villages
Freed	173
Clearance tasked	250
Affected	307

Operational Issues

The pace of demining in Sri Lanka may be slow due to difficulties, which are encountered in manual demining operations. These complications also pose an imminent danger in the life of manual deminers. However, de-miner accidents have been extremely low.

Terrain/Vegetation – Minefields of the Army and LTTE have been laid prior to 1995, the bulk of it in the era from 1995 – 97. They are covered with thick vegetation. The damage caused to the buildings has been immense. Damaged buildings along with their rubble are found in plenty. Some areas are covered with man made defence-lines with trenches and obstacle belts made of ditches, bunds, wire and other types of fences.

Climate – The climate in the North and East is generally dry, humid with an outside temperature of 31 to 38 degrees Celsius throughout the year. The deminers engaged in demining operations have to wear heavy PPE, which is very cumbersome and exhausting. The tedious operations require a high degree of mental concentration and therefore, the deminers commence their work very early in the day and finish operations around noon, and hence, a full day's work is not possible. Various INGO have formulated flexible timetables for de-mining. Furthermore, during the rainy season from October to February, the soil becomes very sticky and slippery. During heavy rains which cause minor floods, mines are displaced to different locations and get embedded at greater depths. Mapping and marking does not help much in such situations.

Lack of Records – The Army has the records of most of their minefields but some are not available due to numerous reasons. However, there are no records of the LTTE minefields available, though the suspected mined areas are known to us, through mine accidents, incidents and surveys.

UXO/IEDs – In and around the recorded and suspected minefields, there are many UXO and IEDs found, particularly in the areas where intense fighting has taken place. Most of the minefields found are further contaminated with UXO and IEDs. Some of the UXO found are buried in greater depths beyond detection by a standard metal detector.

Difficulty in Detection of AP Mines – All anti personnel mines other than the LTTE Jonny Mine have a low content of metal, which is less than 8 grams, and therefore, detection with standard metal detector is extremely difficult. Intense battle was fought with the use of

numerous types of weapons has resulted in almost all mine and UXO affected areas being contaminated with metal fragments as well. Some areas contain laterite soil and it raises alarm of the metal detector. This situation has resulted in manual operations conducted with metal detectors further complicated and slow.

Delay in Processing Documents

There are delays in the grant of import permits, duty and tax waivers and permission to transport equipment etc., to the uncleared areas. These delays have caused obstruction to the progress in mine clearance. Yet, Sri Lanka has done well in mine clearance as it has its own manual clearing rake method and within three years had cleared 40-50 per cent of the contaminated area and reduced casualties from 15-20 to 2.5 per month.. This includes the start-up period.

Instability

Instability in the North-East region due to the No War No Peace situation with periodic disturbances has delayed de-mining work. Movement of radio equipment, some vehicles, explosives, de-mining equipment needed special permission from the Ministry of Defence/Sri Lanka Army to be taken past the Sri Lanka Army/LTTE checkpoints to reach Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu and Jaffna Districts.

Funds

Even though donor funding has been flowing into the programme reasonably well, insufficient funds needed to expand de-mining units in the Jaffna District allowed for the slip in the target for this district. HALO Trust which promised to have all the High Priority and Medium Priority areas cleared indicated that it could not expand for want of funds to double the capacity to maintain 2006 target. Completion of Jaffna District clearance except for the High Security Zones has now been targeted for 2008.

MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES

Donor support for mine clearance have been readily forthcoming from 2002, from various countries such as Japan, USA, EEC, Australia, UK, Canada, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, New Zealand, Sweden, World Bank, UNDP and UNICEF.

Uptodate, the Donor contributions have exceeded US\$ 32 Million with more Aid forthcoming from Japan, USA, EEC, Australia, Norway and Switzerland. The Donors are quite convinced of the commitment of the Sri Lanka Government which is the lead Agency for the comprehensive programme. The Government controls, manages and coordinates the Mine Action Programme. Some of the Donors are also encouraging the establishment of the Operational/Demining Unit of the Ministry of Nation Building & Development. The Japanese Government has already donated about US\$ 2 Million for this purpose and is expected to continue assistance to this Unit in 2006.

FUTURE STRATEGY AND ACTION

We have already seen that about 40-50% of the 202 SqKms of contaminated areas have been either cleared of landmines or being tasked for clearance or clearance is taking place at present. This includes 103 SqKms of cancelled and cleared areas and cancellation of

dangerous areas after technical surveys. In terms of the number of villages, the picture is that 173 villages have been freed of landmines and another 250 actively tasked of the total of 730 villages. A balance of 307 contaminated villages have to be technically surveyed (48%). This will be done in 2006 with EEC Funds.

It should be noted that Sri Lanka has undertaken mine clearance well ahead of the advent of lasting peace. At present, there is only a No-Conflict No Peace situation and a Ceasefire effective from February 2002. During this period the Sri Lankan Mine Action Programme has achieved about 50% clearance through de-mining and technical surveys. The Programme is internationally and locally considered very successful.

The future strategy will continue to be development oriented and activities such as resettlement, agricultural cultivation, rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, and roads will continue to determine priorities.

- 1] The mines in the Jaffna and Trincomalee Districts will be cleared effectively with additional capacity installed in Jaffna District. Funds are required for this purpose.
- 2] Clearance of other areas, particularly, the low risk areas which may from time to time become high or medium risk areas.
- 3] Clearance of the High Security Zones (HSZ) as and when the lands are released by the Sri Lanka Army. The extent of contaminated areas in the HSZ are unknown to the National Steering Committee on Mine Action, but known to the Sri Lanka Army.
- 4] The establishment (transfer) of the trained Army personnel as civilians to the operational Demining Unit of the Ministry of Nation Building & Development for continuation of the clearance programme. This Unit will continue to do mine clearance and survey as done now by the Sri Lanka Army. It will be expanded from about 350 deminers to 600 deminers during the course of year 2006, and is expected to also continue all the residual clearance work after 2008, in addition to maintaining the continuity in the clearance work.
- 5] In 2006, UNICEF will continue to implement its three-fold MRE Strategy through Community Based Projects implemented by the NGOs, School Based Programmes implemented by the Provincial Education Directors and Mass Media Campaign in the North & East. In the Anuradhapura and Puttalam Districts, UNICEF in 2006 will maintain only a Resource Information Centre and a small team will remain in these Districts.

The IDPs from Puttalam returning to their place of origin will be reached directly in the area of return. UNICEF will continue to work closely with the UNDP in the areas of QA and IMSMA.

- 6] The Survivor Assistance Strategy will continue with UNICEF supporting 4 Rehabilitation Centres operating in the North-East. Regular Coordination Meetings have been organized between these Centres to avoid duplication of efforts and improve quality of services. Training in motivation in wheel chair prescriptions will be given to 2 of these organizations.

Livelihood assistance in the form of training and micro-finance will be enhanced. This programme is now small. Many of the victims have to be trained vocationally to enable them to sustain a living. The Government of Sri Lanka through the National Steering Committee after discussion have requested UNICEF and UNDP to expand their programmes in Survivor Assistance for the sustenance of victims.

7] The Government of Sri Lanka will accede to the landmine ban treaty as soon as possible.

Conclusion

Concluding the Strategy for Mine Action in Sri Lanka is to have a mine threat free Sri Lanka by 2008. In the process it is expected that most of the High Priority and Medium Priority areas will be cleared of mines by 2006 – mid-2007, except in the Jaffna and Trincomalee Districts. The High Security Zones could be de-mined only when the lands are released to the owners.

Annex 1

FUNCTIONS OF THE TRIPLE-R UNIT

1. All aspects of Resettlement and Relocation of Displaced Persons including Policy matters and Refugees.
2. **MANAGEMENT, COORDINATION AND CONTROL OF THE MINE ACTION PROGRAMME.**
3. Coordination and monitoring of:
 - NECORD
 - NECORD Extension
 - NECORD II
 - Tsunami affected area Rehabilitation Project under NECORD.
 - North-East Road Rehabilitation Project.
 - UNDP Mine Action Project
 - UNDP Creating Peace Dividends
 - International Centre for Migration Policy (ICMPD)
 - UNHCR Durable Solutions to IDPs
 - UNDP Transition Project
 - UNHCR Thewanpidy Water Supply Project.
4. Coordination of Volunteers (UN), Australian Youth Ambassadors and similar Youth Programmes.
5. Management of De-mining Unit, M/RRR including two Japanese Funded Projects.
6. Focal point for UNHCR, UNDP and ICMPD.

Annexe 2

US ASSISTANCE AND RONCO TRAINING

In spite of the reluctance on the part of the donor community to support militaries direct for humanitarian mine action, the bold step taken by the US Government to assist the Sri Lanka Army in its humanitarian demining operations, has made a significant effect on our performances. US humanitarian demining assistance to Sri Lanka is a direct result of an agreement signed between the governments of the US and Sri Lanka, to support the Sri Lanka Army in the field of humanitarian demining at a cost of nearly US\$ 7 million thus far. It is believed that the DoS program will continue until end of the Year 2006.

Large scale US training began at the Sri Lanka School of Military Engineering in the second half of the Year 2003. RONCO Consulting Corporation was assigned by the USG to train, equip and advise our troops. The training team comprised of professionals displayed a very high level of dedication.

Manual Component

The US assistance has helped the Army to meet the International Mine Action Standards in all aspects of humanitarian demining that include Mine Action Management Basic and Advance Trauma Life Support, manual demining and MDD operations. Up to now 52 Officers and 451 men have followed the Manual Deminers' Course. These 71 Officers have followed the Management Course. 1 Officer and 35 men have followed the Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS) Course and of them the Officer and 17 men subsequently qualified in the Advance Trauma Life Support (ATLS) Course. They have been provided with the best of equipment and accessories; all what is needed for manual demining, from wooden stakes used for marking to vehicles and ambulances. By now, under this programme, the Army has emerged the best in-country trained and best-equipped manual demining force.

MDD Component

Army's Mine Detection Dog (MDD) component is comprised of 12 excellent dogs provided by the US Marshall Legacy Institute. Now, the Army is in possession of the best in-country trained Mine Detection Dog (MDD) teams.

Mechanical Component

The first vegetation removal system (bush cutter) that was also provided by the USG is now deployed in Vavuniya. It is a PROMAC Model 36 C Light Brush Cutter fitted on a JCB 3CX Backhoe loader.

The second mechanical equipment that joined the Army was a MV4 Mini Flail that was donated by the Norwegian Government. It is deployed in Vavuniya and its performance has enhanced our output remarkably.

The latest addition to our mechanical equipment fleet is the MAXX+ Vegetation Reduction System that arrived in Sri Lanka in June 2005. It was provided by the US Department of Defense under their R&D Programme.

In addition to the RONCO-trained troops, we also have a large number of troops who resort to Military Rake Excavation Method employed on humanitarian demining operations. Their numbers vary from day to day for being employed on other Field Engineer tasks as well.

It would be pertinent to mention that it is the Sri Lanka Army that invented the Rake Excavation Method of mine clearance, which was introduced to its troops in the late 1980s and effectively used in the military operations. This system was adopted by the troops subsequently for humanitarian demining task as well. We are happy to observe that this method has been further developed by some INGOs. Army also invented its mine boots that was successfully used in military demining operations and later in humanitarian demining operations.

The Army demining toolbox has become fully versatile and very efficient being all the components of demining i.e. manual, MDD and mechanical elements, available.

The Sri Lanka Army has by now the following numbers of Officers and men trained by the US RONCO Consulting Corporation, under the US Government-Assisted Programme, to meet the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) in different disciplines of humanitarian mine action.

Manual Deminer Instructors' Course	- 08 Officers 10 Other Ranks
Management Course	- 71 Officers
Deminers' Course	- 52 Officers 451 Other Ranks
Advance Trauma Life Support (ATLS) Course	- 01 Officer 13 Other Ranks
Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS) Course	- 01 Officer 35 Other Ranks
Mine Detection Dog (MDD) Handlers' Course	- 02 Officers 23 Other Ranks
Mech Veg Removal (PROMAC Brush Cutter) Course	- 04 Other Ranks
Machl Mine Clearance (MV4 Mini Flail) Course	- 02 Officers 14 Other Ranks
Mech Veg Removal (MAXX +) Course	- 04 Officers 10 Other Ranks
IMSMA Field Module & GIS Course	- 04 Officers 05 Other Ranks
Advance Trauma Life Support (Reassessment) Course	- 01 Officer 17 Other Ranks

Note:

- (1) A certain number of the above Officers and Other Ranks have been trained in more than one of the above courses.
- (2) The above-mentioned Mech Mine Clearance Training on MV4 Mini Flail (donated by the Norwegian Government to the Sri Lanka Army) was facilitated by the Norwegian People Aid (NPA).

Annexe 3

Extracts from Inter Press Service (Johannesburg), 26th July 2004

SRI LANKA: ETHIOPIANS FIND FAMILIARITY IN MINEFIELDS

“We are learning a lot from the Sri Lanka programme, particularly the mine risk education and awareness aspects,” Teklowold Mengesha, director of the Ethiopian Mine Action Office, told IPS in a phone interview from the northern city of Jaffna.

“One of the positive elements in Sri Lanka is that international standards and procedures are being following in the de-mining exercise here,” said Mengesha who’s the leader of the three-member Ethiopian team.

About 2,000 locally recruited de-miners work for specialist mine clearance non-governmental organizations or NGOs in Sri Lanka, and the government army employs a further 300 soldiers in full-time mine clearance.

The Tamil Tigers have also provided 600 de-miners to clear land for civilian resettlement in the swathe of territory they control across the north and pockets in the east.

Derhane Achame, head of the mine risk education section in the Ethiopian Mine Action Office, said his group was also impressed by the Sri Lankan awareness programmes handled by the NGOs.

“This is well coordinated, using different techniques like home-to-home education and street dramas among other methods,” Achame told IPS.

“Another success is the cooperation between military and civilian de-miners,” he pointed out.

NSCMA’s Kunasingham said one of the reasons why the Sri Lanka programme stands out from de-mining work in other countries is because it is controlled and owned by the state and is also cost-effective.

“The mine action programme is coordinated by the NSCMA with all its members being voluntary while a one-stop shop helps clear bureaucratic hurdles in bringing in equipment, expatriate staff and other material,” added Kunasingham.

But although both sides are clearing mines, neither government forces nor the Tamil Tiger armed movement is prepared to promise not to lay any more.

And donors caution that Sri Lanka’s target of removing all landmines by 2006 is ambitious due to the shaky peace process and shrinking donor funds.

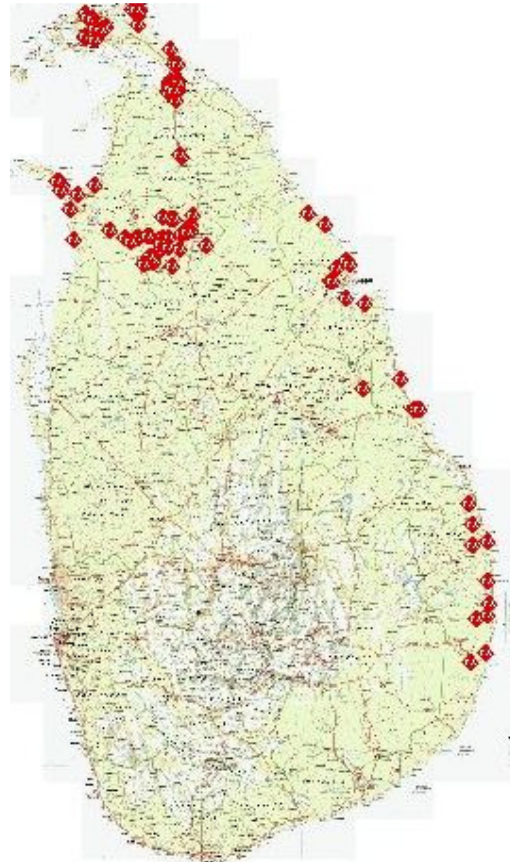
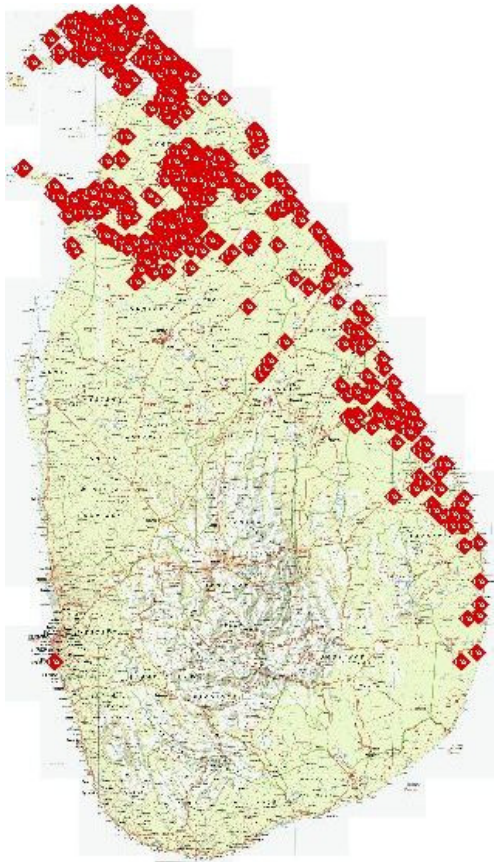
Last week, the Landmine Ban Advocacy Forum – a group comprising humanitarian organizations including the United Nations Development Program and the United Nations Children’s Fund or UNICEF – called on the Sri Lankan government and the Tamil Tigers to sign treaties banning landmines.

Map 1

Suspected Hazardous Areas

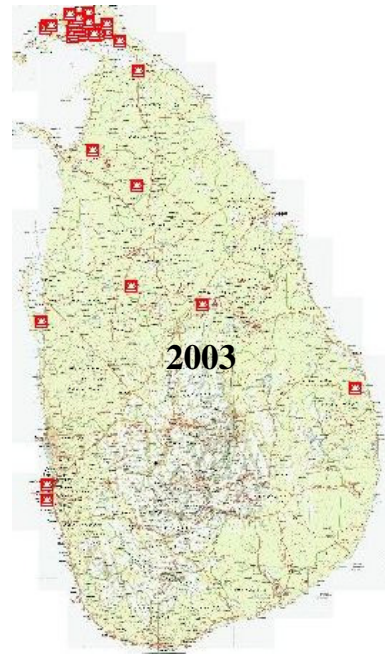
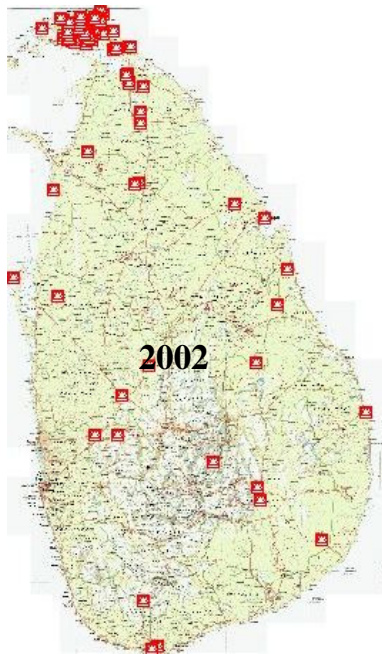
Past

Present

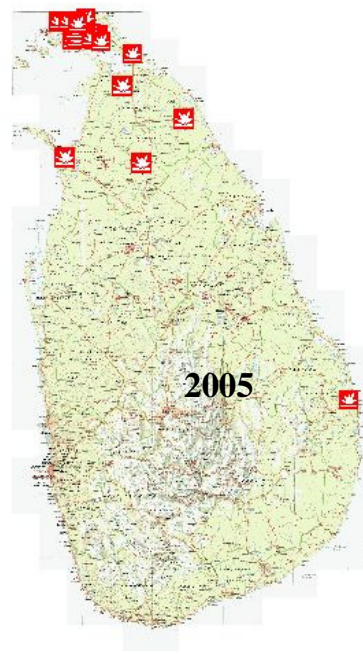
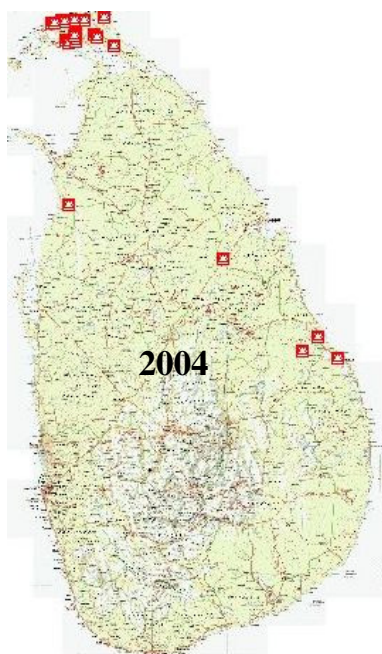
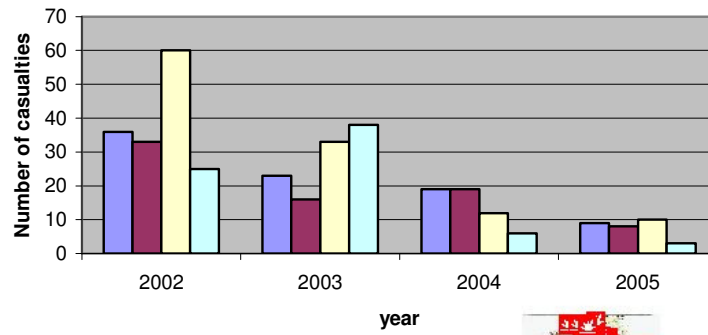


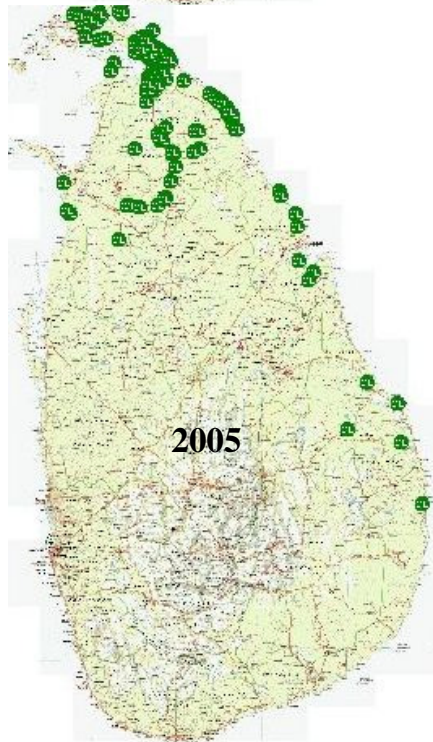
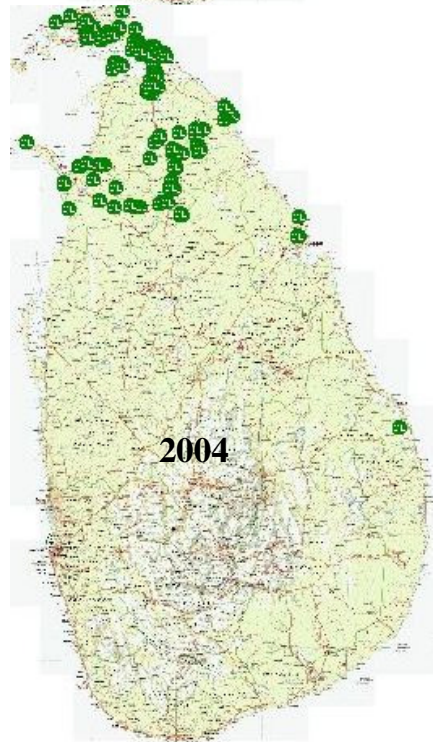
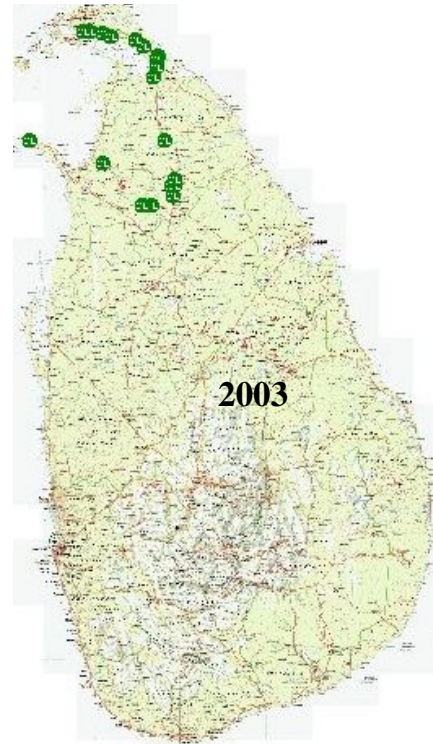
Map 2

Mine Accidents



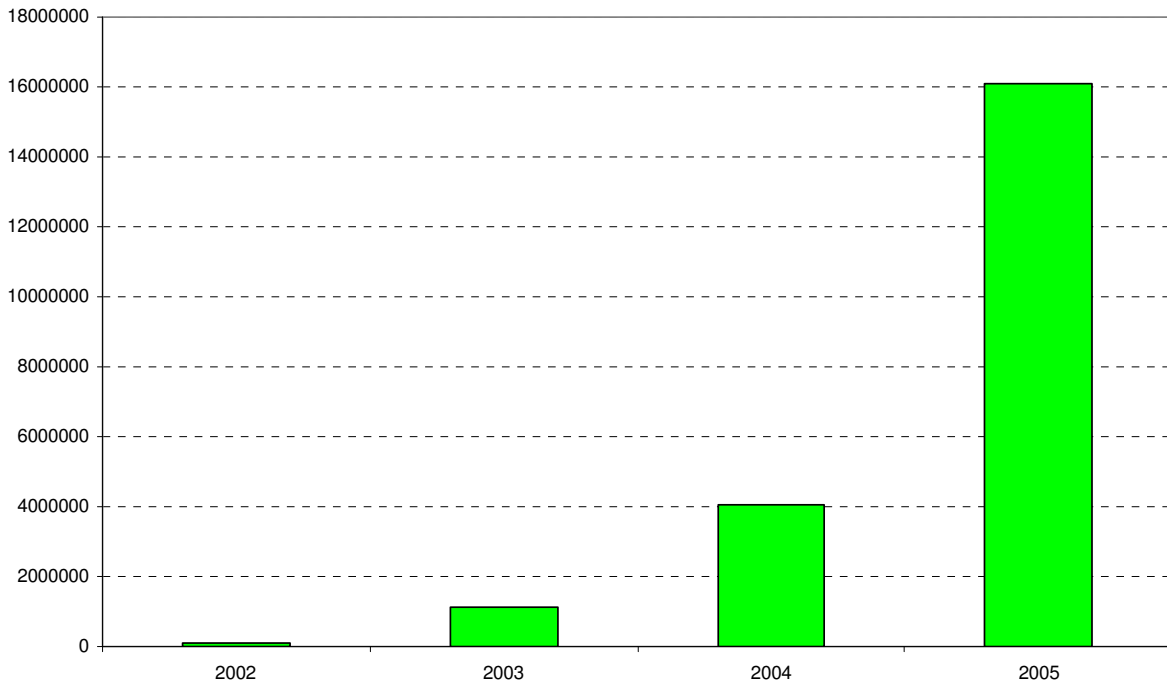
Casualties per quarter/per year





Bar Chart 1

Clearance activities



**MINE ACTION TECHNICAL SURVEY - ALL SUSPECTED
HAZARDOUS AREAS**

Concept

The Government of Sri Lanka is implementing a comprehensive Mine Action Programme as described in the “Strategy for Mine Action Sri Lanka”. Under the heading of Achievements on page 18 it states that 103 square kilometres of mine or unexploded ordnance (UXO) contaminated land has been declared safe either by clearance or survey since the programme commenced.¹ In addition to this there is a further 80 square kilometres of land still suspected of containing explosive remnants of war (ERW).

All suspected hazardous areas (SHA) were identified by specialist mine action organisations and entered into the national database during the last 6 years. However experience has proved that the number and size of SHA’s can be significantly reduced through “Technical Survey” methods. The Strategy for Mine Action anticipates up to 90% reduction can be made through Technical Survey.

A Technical Survey, as described in International and National Mine Action Standards, generally confirms a smaller area as a minefield or removes the suspected hazard completely giving local communities the confidence to use the land in a productive manner. To establish unequivocally the scope and extent of the mine/UXO contamination in Sri Lanka, the government has planned a Mine Action Technical Survey Project.

Aim

To remove or replace all SHA by identifying, confirming and quantifying all minefields in Sri Lanka excluding high security zones.

Input

Technical personnel will visit all SHA’s that have ever been reported by any agency². The size, composition and cost of the Technical Survey capacity will be developed appropriately to fit district requirements.

Outputs

1. If no mine/UXO hazard is found, SUSPECTED areas will be CANCELED using IMSMA Completion Reports

Or

2. If a mine/UXO threat is found, IMSMA Mine Field Survey Reports will be completed and entered into the national IMSMA database.³

¹ 62 of the 103 square kilometres has been cancelled from the national database as it is inside military High Security Zones or is in the immediate vicinity of a military installation and therefore cannot be tasked to a demining agency for clearance.

² SHA are entered into the database as Dangerous Area or Mined Area Reports

³ The subsequent maps will contain perimeters of mine fields after technical area reduction has been carried out ensuring that the smallest area possible is quantified and marked (it is to be decided how it should be marked)

Outcomes

1. No suspected dangerous areas or mined areas will remain outside the HSZ
2. Area reduction will have been carried out on each confirmed mine field
3. All mine fields will be quantified in square meters.
4. Mine fields will be prioritised using a consistent country-wide methodology enabling analysis of IMSMA to show how many high, medium and low priority minefields remain to be cleared.

Areas Of Responsibility

After careful deliberation the Government has decided that the mine affected districts will be sub-divided into 5 Areas Of Responsibility (AOR) for efficiency and cost effectiveness. Each AOR will be allocated to one specialist **Mine Action Organisation** identified by the NSCMA based on the following criteria:

- A. Has experience in the AOR so that institutional knowledge of past operations can be utilised.⁴
- B. Based in the AOR so that no set-up costs are incurred.⁵
- C. Has previous experience in Technical Survey.⁶
- D. Has the ability to carry out clearance in the AOR after the surveys are completed.⁷

The Lead Agency and AOR will be as follows:

1. Jaffna district. Danish Demining Group (DDG).
2. Vanni.⁸ Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA).
3. Mannar / Vavuniya. Swiss Federation for Demining (FSD).
4. Trincomalee. Danish Demining Group (DDG).
5. Batticaloa / Ampara / Polonoaruwa. Mines Advisory Group (MAG)

⁴ Some agencies have worked for several years in locations where they have the deepest and most up to date information on the mine and UXO contamination. It would be counterproductive to use a separate agency.

⁵ Demining and survey project costs are often "front end loaded" where the start-up costs are disproportionately high as offices and compounds need to be found and equipped.

⁶ Technical Survey is explained in IMAS and Sri Lankan National Mine Action Standards. However it is complex the results benefit from national and international experience gained in other countries. The Government wants the results of this Technical Survey project quickly and does not want it used as a training exercise.

⁷ While not imperative it is generally agreed that if the agency that carries out the survey carries on to demine the surveyed land there is better continuity.

⁸ covering all of the LTTE controlled area between Jaffna and Vavuniya.