

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

# LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: MINE ACTION AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Preliminary findings

# PURPOSE OF THE STUDY BRIEF

This brief provides the early results and preliminary recommendations of a joint GICHD-UNDP study exploring the links between mine action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The full study, which will be published in June 2017, seeks to reflect the current understanding of the contribution and impact that mine action could have on the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in countries affected by landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (i.e. mine-affected). The study will provide an initial reflection aimed to help orientate mine action policy and decision makers on how to:

- increase awareness and understanding of the 2030 Agenda amongst the mine action community and its core partners;
- identify the catalytic potential of mine action for progress across relevant SDGs;
- promote clear mainstreaming of mine action into broader sustainable development through integrated prioritisation, planning, financing, implementation, monitoring, and reporting;
- establish SDG-compatible outcomes and indicators for monitoring and reporting on project achievements.

The findings of the study are informed by the growing wealth of policy literature on SDG implementation and guidance from UN agencies, development organisations, civil society, academia and practitioners. Importantly, the study draws on qualitative feedback from more than 30 mine action, and other human security, stakeholders on a tailored questionnaire sent in September 2016.

# BACKGROUND

Since January 2016, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs and 169 targets have shaped global development efforts. The Agenda is based on the premise that sustainable development be participatory, inclusive and non-discriminatory, so that no one is left behind, particularly the most vulnerable and marginalised. One of the biggest challenges in achieving this bold vision will be found in places and societies that have been torn apart by conflict.



Figure 1. Global SDGs (source: United Nations)

In conflict, recovery and stabilisation phases, mine action often rightly pursues immediate humanitarian objectives instead of medium- and long-term development-oriented goals. However, mine action needs to be viewed as a transformational activity that not only reduces violence and fear, but also enables and accelerates broader sustainable development. Although mine action has in some instances played a part in reducing the humanitarian action-development divide, more could be done in this regard.

The 2030 Agenda recognises the indivisibility and need to balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: economic development, social equity and environmental protection. This approach captures well the spirit of interconnectedness of the challenges and responses needed to ensure the most vulnerable in society are not left behind in a rapidly and unpredictably changing world.

The 2030 Agenda calls for a new approach to planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting for development. In this regard, mine action stakeholders can build on decades of hard-won experience and achievements from around the world, experience that includes:

- an overall understanding of how mine action contributes to improved lives and livelihoods as part of peacebuilding, early recovery and long-term development;
- a growing use of data for evidence-based planning and reporting;
- the establishment of information management systems;
- activities to be targeted at the most marginalised groups in society;
- supporting national ownership and capacity development;
- the ability to work in a range of operational settings, from humanitarian to long-term development.

These are strengths that are crucial when working towards achieving the SDGs and would also help demonstrate how mine action can lead the way for other development actors in addressing data collection and analysis, results monitoring and priority-setting challenges that come with implementing the aims of the 2030 Agenda.

At the same time, the 2030 Agenda helps rethink and address some of the persisting challenges in mine action experienced during the Millennium Development Goal era, such as how better to:

- align mine action with broader development priorities at planning and implementation levels;
- define and monitor outcomes in terms of equity, livelihoods and development investments;
- collect and analyse disaggregated data for planning and reporting of results;
- cooperate and coordinate across humanitarian-development sectors and stakeholders.

# PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

Below are presented some of the early key findings and recommendations from the study that will be expanded upon in the final report:

## A. Ensuring No One is Left Behind

- At the core of the 2030 Agenda is the goal to “leave no one behind” and ensure inclusiveness. Given the social and spatial blockages that are posed by the presence of landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war, mine action often finds itself at the forefront of efforts to rebuild lives and communities that have become marginalised by conflict. But experience suggests that mine action dividends do not always benefit all members of society equally.
- Respondents to the study noted strategic planning processes, the definition of indicators, sustainable development orientated priority-setting, monitoring, and data collection and analysis as some of the areas where mine action could play a greater role in overcoming this challenge.

## B. Mapping mine action contributions to the SDGs

- The 2030 Agenda provides a robust structure for mine action to demonstrate its catalytic and accelerating role in achievement of SDG targets in mine-affected countries. Mapping mine action’s current and potential links to the SDGs is critical to raising its visibility and relevance beyond the sector. The study is a first attempt in this regard.
- While mine action’s contribution to “promoting peaceful, just, and inclusive societies” (SDG 16), and in particular its target to reduce violence and casualties, is of high direct relevance, the cross-cutting nature of mine action also underpins several other SDGs indirectly, ranging from poverty reduction, gender equality, and food security to reducing inequalities and land degradation. Based on the literature review and questionnaire responses, **Figure 2** illustrates some of the direct and indirect relations found in the initial analysis across relevant SDGs.
- The example of land release offers some interesting links and opportunities. One of the major aims of land release is to reduce violence and casualties, benefitting particularly marginalised and vulnerable groups of society, which correlates with SDG 16. It also has direct influence on SDG 5 related to reducing violence against all women and girls. The re-establishment of safe physical living environments is, however, not only an objective in itself, but also an enabling pre-condition for other development activities, as illustrated in **Figure 3** below.

**FIGURE 2**

**PROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MINE ACTION TO THE SDGs**

**1 NO POVERTY**



- Productive use of previously contaminated land provides livelihood opportunities and generates income, unlocking beneficiaries from poverty.
- Safe access to economic and natural resources builds resilience of previously affected communities.
- Victim Assistance ensures social protection systems and measures for survivors.

**2 ZERO HUNGER**



- Released agricultural land enables communities to grow crops, improving food security and nutrition.
- Safe routes (re-)open access to markets and opportunities for value addition.

**3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**



- Safe access to healthcare facilities and services in previously affected communities improves health and well-being.

**4 QUALITY EDUCATION**



- Safe access to education for women, girls, boys and men in previously affected communities promotes literacy and numeracy.
- Through Victim Assistance, survivors enjoy equal access to education, including through disability-sensitive education facilities.

**5 GENDER EQUALITY**



- Removing explosive hazards and providing education on safe behaviour reduce violence against women and girls.
- Employing women in mine action and their participation in setting priorities and plans empowers women as agents of change in political, economic and social life.

**6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION**



- Land release promotes safe and equitable access to drinking water and sanitation previously denied to communities.

**7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**



- Land release permits development of power infrastructure, making energy services accessible for previously affected communities.

**8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**



- Land release enables safe access to natural resources, promoting economic growth and sustainable tourism.
- Mine action provides decent work and transversal skills for affected communities, including youth.



**9** INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



- The removal of explosive hazards fosters industrialisation and the development of sustainable and resilient infrastructure.
- Mine-free roads provide access to transportation systems, integrating enterprises into value chains and markets.

**10** REDUCED  
INEQUALITIES



- Handing over released land to beneficiaries, particularly the poor, generates income growth, reducing inequalities and promoting inclusion of all, particularly survivors.
- Through international cooperation, mine action donors support countries where need is greatest, addressing inequalities between countries.

**11** SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



- Re-establishing safe access to housing and basic services for all, mine action contributes to the reconstruction of safe and inclusive cities and human settlements.
- Environmentally-sensitive mine clearance contributes to the protection and safeguarding of cultural and natural heritage.

**12** RESPONSIBLE  
CONSUMPTION  
AND PRODUCTION



- Safe access to previously denied natural resources enables their sustainable and efficient management and use.

**14** LIFE  
BELOW WATER



- Environmentally-sensitive underwater clearance restores degraded aquatic ecosystems and supports their healthy and sustainable use.

**15** LIFE  
ON LAND



- Environmentally-sensitive mine clearance contributes to conserve, restore and sustainably manage biodiverse terrestrial ecosystems.

**16** PEACE, JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS



- Removing explosive hazards and providing education on safe behaviour reduce violence and casualties everywhere.
- Mine action develops effective capacities, institutions, and promotes national ownership, including through international cooperation.

**17** PARTNERSHIPS  
FOR THE GOALS



- National, regional and international partnerships in mine action (e.g. governments, private sector, academia and civil society) enhance the exchange of resources, expertise, innovation and technology.
- Mine action information enhances the availability of timely and disaggregated data for SDG measurement, monitoring and progress reporting.

FIGURE 3

PROSPECTIVE RELEVANCE OF LAND RELEASE ACROSS THE SDGs



### **C. Raising awareness of mine action's strategic contributions**

- Respondents underlined the importance of raising awareness at international and national levels of the role that mine action can play in achieving the SDGs, including by documenting country case studies.
- Awareness should be increased both within and beyond the sector, in particular with practitioners and stakeholders who rely on mine action as an enabling activity and with whom stronger cooperation might need to be developed in the future. This would also enhance the voice of mine action in current and future humanitarian and development thinking and practice.

### **D. Anchoring mine action with the SDG framework at national and organisational level**

- As a global framework, the SDGs address many of the policy and planning challenges needed for development to become truly sustainable. Given the global nature and vision of the SDGs, practice areas, such as mine action, were not explicitly included, but rather were expected to be addressed through national level SDG adaptation exercises.
- Mine-affected countries should try to capture the contribution of mine action to sustainable development explicitly in national SDG frameworks by developing the most appropriate national response – national goals, targets and indicators – when applicable.
- Anchoring mine action in a national SDG framework will facilitate its integration into national and sectoral development Theories of Change, plans and strategies and/or United Nations development frameworks.
- Lack of national mine action capacity will lessen mine action outcomes and hamper mainstreaming efforts.
- The study found that mine-affected countries (e.g. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Lebanon, South Sudan, and Vietnam) intend to use the SDG framework for revising their national mine action strategies and/or as a basis for national mine action priority-setting. Likewise, in their quest to respond to a mine-affected country's development priorities, that are now expected to be underpinned by the 2030 Agenda, several mine action organisations (e.g. Danish Church Aid and Handicap International) and donor agencies (e.g. EU, Switzerland, and UK) have also aligned, or are currently in the process of aligning, their strategic planning with the SDG framework.

## **E. More effective and coherent mine action support mainstreamed into broader sustainable development**

- As with many other sectors, mine action has sometimes been conducted in a silo, removed from broader humanitarian or development activities. As one respondent noted, mine action should try to move away from being “a stand-alone sector as it was presented in some countries”. To achieve greater results in planning and implementation as well as to maximise impact, efforts for more coherent policies and programme implementation should be pursued.
- It was noted that exploring the interactions of mine action with other policy and practice areas – such as agriculture, education, environmental protection, health or tourism for example – would constitute a significant step towards increased policy coherence and maximised impact. It would help to understand synergies, win-win interventions, possible conflicts and trade-offs between these areas, and prioritise mine action as an accelerating element to advance multiple SDGs.
- To make mine action interventions more effective and coherent, it will be necessary that they are not only mainstreamed into strategic frameworks for broader national sustainable development, but also that they are aligned with other non-mine action sectors and mechanisms at the implementation level (such as in national budgets, planning, delivery, monitoring and reporting).
- Increased effectiveness and coherence of mine action interventions could also be sought within organisations that operate with broader humanitarian / development mandates.

## **F. Outcomes and indicators to document mine action contributions to sustainable development**

- Not only is the 2030 Agenda about “making a difference” to the lives and livelihoods of people in all societies, it also calls on stakeholders to measure and record development and change. To document exactly how mine action is catalytic, more evidence is needed to demonstrate outcomes that change people’s lives.
- Monitoring and measuring mine action outcomes, including against the SDG framework, is important. Yet, some respondents felt this area was lacking in policy guidance on developing SDG-linked indicators. Stakeholders can then rely on these indicators as evidence to understand the effectiveness of their interventions, plan operations, ensure accountability, and learn and adjust to what works and does not work. While it has been observed that many mine action stakeholders already operate with outcome-based monitoring systems, a strengthened focus is needed on defining sound outcomes and indicators that are SDG compatible. **Table 1** below gives an example of possible SDG-aligned mine action outcome indicators related to SDG 4 and SDG 16.

TABLE 1

POTENTIAL SDG-ALIGNED MINE ACTION OUTCOMES  
AND INDICATORS (SDG 4; SDG 16)

RELEVANT SDG AND TARGET	POTENTIAL INDICATIVE MINE ACTION OUTCOME	POTENTIAL INDICATIVE MINE ACTION INDICATOR	RELEVANT GLOBAL SDG INDICATOR (ABBREVIATED)
<b>4: Quality education</b> 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes	Increased (primary/secondary) enrolment of students at schools in previously contaminated area [number] months after handover of released land	No of (primary/secondary) students at school in previously contaminated area, disaggregated by sex, age and disability (and other relevant criteria)	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people:  (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary education (...)
<b>16: Peace, justice and strong institutions</b> 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Increased safety perception by population in previously contaminated area [number] months after handover of released land	Proportion of population that feel safe walking around previously contaminated area, disaggregated by sex, age and disability (and other relevant criteria)	16.1.4 Proportion of population that feel safe walking alone around the area they live

## G. Managing and analysing information

- One of the biggest challenges to achieving the SDGs is data collection, analysis, use, and reporting; national systems will be stretched in this regard. Notably, mine action has long been a leader in the area of data collection and visualisation. However, some respondents identified national capacity to analyse and use data as a bottleneck.

## H. Financing and new partnerships to galvanise efforts

- The study identified resource mobilisation as an area of concern. Recent trends in mine action financing have been downwards, dropping from approximately USD 683 million in 2012 to USD 471 million in 2015 according to the Landmine Monitor. Competing issues – climate change, HIV/AIDS, migration, etc. – will require mine action to think innovatively (e.g. private sector, foundations, and trust funds) to reverse this trend.
- Respondents to the study noted that funding for mine action from development and non-traditional mine action sources is an increasing possibility – notwithstanding there are still donors who fund specifically in support of humanitarian action activities – if they were able to better demonstrate the development outcomes of their work. The SDGs offer a strong framework to do so.

# RESEARCH WAY FORWARD

Although the above analysis and recommendations are preliminary, they do offer a good sense of the important potential that the 2030 Agenda represents for mine action at this critical juncture in its 20-year history. In the coming months the findings will be refined and complemented by further research and consultations which are expected to be completed in the first half of 2017.

The full study will, in particular, entail a more detailed analysis of the connection of each mine action pillar to SDG targets, as illustrated by land release in this brief. It will also address the link between the 2030 Agenda and international mine action conventions, and provide good practice examples from countries and organisations on various aspects of mainstreaming in mine action. It will further contain substantive implementation resources such as guiding questions for 2030 Agenda mainstreaming and an expanded indicative list of possible SDG-aligned mine action outcomes and indicators.



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