**Director’s Message**

Dear Readers,

The mine action world keeps changing, and this is apparent in *The Journal* and in our other work at the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) at James Madison University (JMU).

In June 2014, CISR successfully completed the first Regional Senior Managers’ Course in ERW and Mine Action (SMC) in partnership with the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The three-week SMC was funded by the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA), and attended by 24 participants from five countries. Participants received business management instruction from four JMU College of Business professors and visited Norwegian People’s Aid’s clearance project and Tajikistan’s first all-female demining team. High-level representatives from the U.S. and Japanese embassies, local and international implementing partners, and Tajikistan government officials joined the SMC’s Donors’ Forum, a highlight of the course. Using this model, CISR plans to hold future SMCs to meet training needs in other regions.

In May 2014, CISR staff spent two weeks with the Association for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in Dong Hoi, Quang Binh province, Vietnam, providing capacity-building training for disabled people’s organizations (DPO) in central Vietnam. The training provided DPOs with the skills to conduct a public relations campaign promoting the rights of people with disabilities and the obligations of the government according to Vietnam’s landmark 2010 Disability Rights Law.

Expanding on topics in this issue of *The Journal*, the Focus section highlights the expansion of mine action to include small arms and light weapons (SA/LW) and conventional weapons destruction emergency responses. Retired U.S. Army Colonel George Zahaczewsky discusses the significant threat that ammunition depots present to surrounding communities in his article, “Conventional Weapons Destruction Response to Ammunition Depot Accidents.” In the Feature section, we look at mine action in the Sahel and Maghreb regions of Africa. Philippe Houliat from Handicap International and MAG’s Chris Loughran, Julie Wittig and Greg Crowther look at surplus SA/LW and arms management and destruction in the region, while Jin-Hee Heiu from UNMAS discusses building national explosive ordnance disposal capacity in Mali. And in our Special Report Section, Lourdes Rincón of the Organization of American States discusses the need for firearms marking in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Reflecting on other issues in the mine action community, the Notes from the Field section touches on a variety of topics such as disability rights, mine risk education, and training. Also of interest, Sean Moorehouse of Mine Action Consulting makes a case for “Liability in Land Release” in his editorial.

As always, *The Journal* aims to meet the evolving information needs of the global mine action community. We hope to hear from you about your work and any important topics you would like *The Journal* to cover.

Sincerely,
Ken Rutherford