

***Mine Action Planning Workshop***

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*Excellencies*

*Ladies and Gentlemen*

*Dear Friends*

*My name is Mohammed Breikat and I am the Director of the Jordan National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (the NCDR).*

*[FIRST SLIDE: What is a mine action partnership?]*

First of all, I would like to thank the conference hosts, the Government of Colombia, for organizing this important workshop and for the great hospitality they have shown us so far. Thank you.

In the next hour I would like to tell you about how Jordan went from having mine action led by the military to being run by a civilian national mine action center. I would also like to

tell you how we have approached the issue of partnerships in mine action and make some general points on what I believe are some of the key ingredients to building strong partnerships.

To start I would like to touch on the definition of the word 'partnership'. The dictionary states that a partnership is a type of business in which partners (or owners) share with each other the profits or losses of the business. In the mine action world therefore, partners, in a spirit of cooperation, agree to carry out a mine action program; and contribute to it by combining resources, knowledge or activities; and share its achievements or failures.

I think we can all agree that in the aims of humanitarian mine clearance, as partners in mine action our aim is to work together towards the same goal, which is to free our countries and people from the threat of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

I would like to talk later a bit more about the networks of partners that we have been able to establish in the past few years. But first I would like to talk about our history with the

military, and how Jordan moved from a military-run to civilian-run mine action program and managed to maintain a strong relationship built on common goals, respect and cooperation.

[CHANGE SLIDE: History of Mine Action in Jordan]

Our late King Hussein bin Talal ordered the Jordanian military to begin clearing minefields in the Jordan Valley in 1993. This was a courageous step as the decision was taken a whole year before Jordan's Peace Treaty with Israel. And what is also noteworthy is that it came a few years before the Mine Ban Convention was negotiated. His Late Majesty had come to realize the horrendous impact of landmines and took the decision to demine regardless of political consequences. It was something that had to be done for the benefit of his people. So for us in Jordan the process started sixteen years ago and we are unfortunately still actively trying to complete the task. Of course in comparison to other mine-affected countries the problem that Jordan has faced and continues to face from landmines and UXOs is relatively small, however the impact has been significant since the majority of the minefields have been in Jordan's 'bread

basket' – the Jordan Valley - and also very close to numerous border communities.

[CHANGE SLIDE: Challenges faced by military-led mine action]

As I am sure many of you know, in the early days of mine action it was difficult for militaries to get humanitarian funds for demining. Jordan had a few international partners who originally provided support almost exclusively for our Military. This group included Norway, Canada, the UK, and the United States. Eventually, International resources were provided to the Royal Engineers; however it was at a very limited scale. The support was targeted primarily on supplying materials and equipment for demining.

Not that this is a bad thing, but as we all know, there is much more to mine action than simply putting a detector in a deminer's hands. The Royal Engineers did a great job, but were limited by a lack of machinery, spare parts, PPE, equipment, and training to really tackle the problem in a complete manner.

Naturally, this made it hard to plan and keep demining operations moving in the country. Added together, this resulted in a program trying its best, but not really moving along as quickly as we would have liked.

[CHANGE SLIDE: A New Approach]

Dear friends, although we got off to a slow start, my Government was watching the Article 5 clock. It realized that the 10 year completion deadline was approaching quickly, and given the amount of work that needed to be done, we needed a new approach.

Before I describe what I think are some of the key building blocks to this approach, I do want to say that a strong national, and I stress, **national** program, needs a real sense of local **'ownership'**. A second key is the need for clear and committed **'leadership.'** Be it the leadership demonstrated by King Hussein, His Majesty King Abdullah, the Chairman of the NCDR, HRH Prince Mired, or the different ministers who have a stake in ridding Jordan of landmines, the goal has always remained the same, a Jordan free of landmines.

One thing that really helped focus our mine action program was the establishment of our mine action centre, which we call, the National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation – the NCDR. The Government of Jordan established the NCDR through *Law No (34)* in 2000. In April 2002, H.M. King Abdullah II passed a Royal Decree establishing the Board of Directors for the NCDR.

[CHANGE SLIDE: The role of NCDR as a NMAC]

The NCDR was established in 2000, but didn't start operations until 2004. When I say operations, I mean, planning, coordinating, supervising, and liaising. With NCDR on the scene, there was finally an overall management structure where domestic and international stakeholders could come and discuss any, and all, issues related to mine action, ranging from clearance to universalization to community impact.

Within the Government of Jordan the NCDR falls under the Prime Minister's Office which is available to resolve any major problems or challenges. We have excellent working

relationships with the key line-ministries, such as Foreign Affairs and Planning and International Cooperation.

The Ministers and their staff attend our meetings, help spread the message of mine action, and support our work at the **Cabinet** level, but the NCDR retains the ability to make day-to-day decisions over the mine action process.

[CHANGE SLIDE: Key points for cooperation between military and NCDR]

Despite the establishment of the civilian-run National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation, the Royal Engineering Corps have, without a doubt, remained one of our key partners.

As you would expect, when the responsibility of mine clearance was transferred from the military to the NCDR, there was a degree of tension. However, it was very important to NCDR to overcome this and establish a cooperative and equally supportive rapport with the REC. We accomplished this by opening the lines of communication between the directors and leaders of the

NCDR and the military. The directors of both the NCDR and the REC have developed a closely cooperative and transparent relationship.

Making sure the military remained involved in the planning of mine action in the Kingdom was a key step to cementing this new relationship, and has proved to be a benefit for both sides. NCDR includes the REC in the coordination of all its clearance activities. In addition the Chief of Staff is updated regularly and frequent meetings are held with the REC.

NCDR does all it can to support the work of the **REC**, be it mobilizing resources for equipment, providing training and exchange opportunities, helping on the development of annual workplans, or back-checking records.

All of this is done in the spirit of cooperation and urgency. We have several REC seconded personnel to the NCDR and also a full-time senior officer who serves as a liaison between us and the REC.

Our QA/QC teams work very constructively – actually many of our people served in the REC at some point in their

demining past. Hiring former REC officers to the QA/QC team lends credibility to both parties. So the mind-set, personal touch and understanding is already there.

[CHANGE SLIDE: Military: Mine Clearance Partner]

The North Shuna Mine Clearance Project, which was launched in 2006, was really the starting point for close collaboration with the NCDR and the REC. NCDR tasked the REC with this project, which was completed ahead of schedule and under budget in 2008. So not has the REC retained its demining role, it has also benefited from NCDR's guidance and supervisory role, which saw the introduction of international and national mine action technical standards and guidelines.

This not only lent *further* credibility to the REC's work, but they also benefited from NCDR's financial support thanks to increased international support provided through NCDR, an enhanced and safer working environment, and added resources such as vehicles, skills and training through exchanges. Overall a greater amount of cooperation and **trust** was built between the military and NCDR as we saw

that we could benefit our country more by working together rather than apart.

[CHANGE SLIDE: Key Ingredients for success]

I would like to say a few words about our international partners, after that I will say a few words about our local NGO partners, and lastly our many partners within the Government of Jordan.

Naturally, the main force behind what I am about to describe, has been the vision and determination shown by His Majesty King Abdullah and HRH Prince Mired Bin Raad, who unfortunately could not be with us here today. H.R.H. sends his best regards and hopes the discussions will be fruitful and lively and looks forward to seeing everyone in Cartagena at the Second Review Conference in November.

I think as a fundamental starting point when our partners, be they international or domestic, see the **seriousness**, **ownership**, and **leadership** that emanates from His Majesty and HRH Prince Mired, the government, and the staff at the NCDR, it helps build confidence and momentum, that things

can, and will, be done to the best of Jordan's ability. And, that everyone involved is determined to rid Jordan of landmines by its 2012 completion deadline.

[CHANGE SLIDE: planning and execution....]

Now, in terms of **international partners**, in the last few years we have been fortunate to have a great deal of support, which in most cases has come in the form of **multi-year** commitments to mine action in Jordan.

I would like to highlight to the donors present here today that having multi-year promises has made planning and execution a little less frantic and *ad hoc* and more predictable.

[CHANGE SLIDE: Networks of Partnerships]

Looking at our international partners they can really be divided into those who have supported us **financially** and **politically**, and those who have supported our **capacity development** objectives.

*Now I realize not every programme can have a Prince!* But every society has its leaders and champions, and if there is anything that comes out of our discussions today, it is the need to identify and educate, a committed leadership to what mine action really is.

[CHANGE SLIDE: International Partnerships]

So it was really against this backdrop that the **Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation** and **UNDP** began to discuss the possibility of launching a capacity development project at the NCDR. In 2004 UNDP provided a chief technical advisor who was to help the NCDR develop some of the key policy and strategic planning instruments that were limiting mine action's partnership base to finish the job. I am proud to say that we made tremendous progress in these areas.

This was also the first time that mine action was viewed as more than an engineering problem, but rather, a development and humanitarian issue and therefore needed a broad partnership base if it were to succeed.

[CHANGE SLIDE: How to increase partnerships base]

The priority for us in those early days was to broaden our **international** and **domestic** partners base, and we did this through a great deal of lobbying and hard work explaining what mine action was about and the bigger issues that it really touches.

We stressed that mine action was much more than demining and that the fledgling National Mine Action Authority – the NCDR – was also concerned with coordination and overall management of MRE, SVA, and Universalization issues. And, that collectively addressing these so-called ‘pillars’ of mine action actually also helped reduce poverty and suffering amongst some of the poorest communities in our country.

But as we all know building up networks is a slow and difficult thing. It needs a great deal of leadership and commitment, and fortunately for us, His Majesty King Abdullah, appointed HRH Prince Mired to the position of Chairman of the NCDR near the end of 2004.

[CHANGE SLIDE: National Mine Action Plan 2005- 2009]

Another key aspect of our strong partnership base, was the formulation of our first-ever 5 Year **National Mine Action Plan** which was launched in June 2005 and provided clear indicators for how Jordan was going to meet its Article 5 deadlines. One of the key pillars of the Plan therefore was the Mine Ban Convention.

Although we had been demining for over 10 yrs by this time, we never had an integrated national plan. One that looked at the broader development and international legal obligations that Jordan had assumed by signing the Mine Ban Convention.

Once we could describe and explain what mine action was about to our potential partners we quickly expanded our international partners base and the amount of funds that we were able to mobilize more than doubled in 2 short years.

The key spin-off of this increased partnership based is we were also able to mobilize greater **domestic support** from the Government and civil society.

I would like to point out here that the Jordanian military played a large role in developing Jordan's National Mine Action Plan. This is significant because, by helping to build the plan, they then **owned** a part of it. As I mentioned earlier, local ownership is key to building a successful mine action program.

[CHANGE SLIDE: International Technical Partners]

The **second** group of partners I would like to highlight are those who support us technically. I have already mentioned UNDP, who provide support on strategic planning, resource mobilization, and capacity development matters. Over the past 5 years UNDP has been one of our core partners and we have had an excellent working partnership.

But there are also the specialized institutions, such as the **GICHD**. Who are always available to provide insight, training, and technical support when asked. Their many useful publications are also staples of our operations and MRE departments and offer much food for thought.

As most of you are aware, Jordan hosted the 8<sup>th</sup> MSP in 2007, and the strategic inputs and energy that we received from the ISU and Mr. Brinkert in particular on the **do's** and **don't's** of hosting the meeting have been invaluable.

The training offered by **James Madison University** and **Cranfield** University is also deeply appreciated and we count on it to make our organization stronger and more efficient, which helps build further trust with our donor partners as they see the NCDR as a well functioning and productive place.

Our **third** group of partners falls into the category of International NGOs and here I would like to focus on NPA for a moment, with whom we have had an outstanding working relationship, accomplishing a great deal in 3 short years.

Indeed NPA works as an operational extension of the NCDR. We meet, report, and collaborate daily. The sharing of information and technical ideas is constant and open.

NCDR has seconded to NPA a national programme manager and our QA/QC team is well received and always treated with dignity and respect.

NPA's working relationship with the Royal Corps of Engineers is also very open and respectful and this approach is paying off handsomely in significant increases in production rates. In fact NPA and the REC are working jointly in the planning and clearance of our last remaining major minebelt– which runs 104km along our northern border with Syria.

NCDR operations staff have also traveled to Bosnia to learn about NPA's dog programme and when asked, dogs from the programme were readily sent to Jordan to help clear a particularly challenging minefield along the Israeli border. We now have 10 MDD teams working on the Northern Border Mine Clearance Project.

We have also had excellent cooperation with other militaries on technical matters; this includes Switzerland, France, Canada, and Belgium. For example, last year the Belgium Navy worked with NPA, NCDR, REC, and the Jordan Navy

to help determine if mines had been swept into the Gulf of Aqaba; one of our most important tourist destinations. This year they also worked with the NCDR and the REC again to investigate certain areas around the River Jordan in the Jordan Valley, another important agricultural and touristic area.

In fact, due to many of these new partnerships, in 2008 we cleared more mines and area and then at any other time in the demining history of the country.

Another key partner is the formerly named Landmine Survivors Network (LSN), now known as Survivor Corps in Jordan. Survivor Corps provides basic support and training to victims of landmines and is a concerned advocate for victims rights and also works with us on issue related to the Convention.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (**ICRC**) is also a close working partner of ours and we collaborate closely on planning, policy, and technical matters in the area of Mine Risk Education. ICRC is always prepared to help our cause in any manner that we request.

In fact ICRC and UNICEF have just finished an intense period in helping NCDR formulate its MRE programme. **UNICEF** provided an international technical advisor for over 6 months. The TA then worked with NCDR, GICHD, and ICRC to harmonize MRE in the country and suggest programme activities that we are now looking forward to implementing.

Mines Action Group (MAG) has also recently provided a quality management technical advisor to provide strategic assistance to the QA/QC team at NCDR.

[CHANGE SLIDE: Domestic Partners]

*Now, for my **fourth** and final grouping; our **domestic partners**.*

The Royal Medical Service (RMS) is also an important operational partner, as it supplies the nurses, doctors, and ambulances for the engineers. In fact, a representative the RMS sits on the Board of Directors of the NCDR.

The **Royal Medical Service** (RMS) is also the major supplier of physical rehabilitation services to survivors of landmines in the Kingdom. We share data on victims and their socio-economic conditions as well as their physical needs.

NCDR mobilized funds for prosthetic equipment, training, as well as the construction of the **National Amputee Rehabilitation Center**, which is now fully operational and helping more than 4000 people annually. This total includes mine victims and victims of car accidents, etc. The total number of survivors in Jordan is around 700.

The Hashemite Commission for Disabled Soldiers – *which is also led by our Chairman, HRH Prince Mired!* – is another important partner for the NCDR and we work closely on sharing information and have been successful in mobilizing financial support for it as well.

We also work closely with the Higher Council for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities, ensuring that victim's assistance is mainstreamed in the overall development plans in the

Kingdom. HRH Prince Mired is also Vice President of the Higher Council...!

Another long-term domestic partner is the **Jordan Red Crescent** (JRC), with whom we work together in the area of MRE. Once again I would like to point out that we share all information with each other, while NCDR provides the overall management umbrella under which the JRC's activities are carried out.

NCDR has also been working closely with a new Mine risk education provider, Lifeline for Consultancy and Rehabilitation, whose leading partner is James Madison University, and which has been carrying out a theatre production called "We Love Life" that is usually performed to students and community members of landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) affected communities in the north of Jordan.

[CHANGE SLIDE: 5 Key things...]

I think I had better stop here and leave some room for questions. But I do just want to summarize that from our

experience in Jordan and suggest that there are really five key things to successful partnerships in mine action:

- 1. Strong local leadership**
- 2. Political will**
- 3. Bureaucratic Support**
- 4. Clear vision and robust coordination**
- 5. Transparency**

*Thank you very much for your attention and I would be happy to answer any questions.*

*[LAST THANK YOU SLIDE]*