



04 October 2010

Dear Mr. Thieulin:

**Subject: Final Evaluation of Contribution Agreement 9 ACP RPR 44/01**  
**(FED/2006/196074)**

I am pleased to submit your office UNDP's comments on the Draft Report of Final Evaluation conducted under Contribution Agreement 9 ACP RPR 44 for the Action entitled *Mine Action in the Tigray, Afar and Somali Regions of Ethiopia*.

We thank you for the draft report once again, and wish to request your office that our comments will be attached to the final version of the aforementioned evaluation report as an integral part of the report when it is published.

Let me thank you once again for the generous support provided by the European Union to this critical development programme in Ethiopia.

Looking forward to continuing our fruitful working relationship.

Yours faithfully,

Alessandra Tisot  
UNDP Country Director



Mr. Denis Thieulin  
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UNDP comments on the draft final evaluation report for mine action in Tigray, Afar and Somali regions, EU Contribution Agreement 9 ACP RPR 44/1.

#### 1. Administration, reporting and documentation

Mine action project 2007 – 2009 or *Mine Action in Tigray, Afar and Somali regions of Ethiopia* was administered by UNDP based on the *Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA)* between the European Community and the United Nations signed in April 2003, more particularly based on the *EU Contribution Agreement for 9 ACP RPR 44/1* between EU and UNDP signed in December 2006 and riders (or amendments) to the Contribution Agreement subsequently approved by the EU. The overall context of the project implementation was established by the *relevant EU Financing Agreement between EU and the ACP States* signed in August 2006 and a rider to the Financing Agreement subsequently approved by the EU.

Based on the project agreement concluded in January 2007 between MoFED, EMAO and UNDP, this project was implemented by the Implementing Partner, Ethiopian Mine Action Office (EMAO) under the National Execution/Implementation (NEX/NIM) modality, which is one of the four implementation modalities that UNDP employs in providing its support to technical cooperation projects. The NEX/NIM modality relies on the government's capacities to undertake the functions and activities of the project, namely technical, managerial, administrative and financial capabilities and the implementation of the NEX/NIM projects are guided by Programme Implementation Manual (PIM) issued by MoFED in Ethiopia.

In the draft report, a number of critical observation and assessment were made by the evaluators on the UNDP's role and responsibilities in administering the project, including reporting and documentation. Prior to the field phase of this final evaluation, in our letter to EU dated 12 July 2010, our office requested that the assessment would be based on the adequate understanding on the terms and conditions of the relevant agreements above explained as well as evidences. However in our view, many of the assessments noted in the draft report appear to have been made without an adequate level of understanding on the FAFA and the relevant EU Financing and Contribution Agreements on the part of the evaluators.

To attest the point we made above, we wish to note the following:

- UNDP duly submitted narrative and financial reports to the EU at the intervals and contents that were defined by the Article 2 of the General Conditions of the relevant Contribution Agreement in close consultation with EU as well as EMAO. After submission of those reports, UNDP also provided the EU with additional information, as requested by the EU, in order to fully satisfy reporting obligations under the agreement. After such due processes, the EU cleared all the UNDP reports submitted for the project, and subsequently released due pre-financing payments and final payment to UNDP according to the defined payment schedule in support of the project.
- It should also be noted that as per the Article 2 of the General Conditions of the Contribution Agreement, UNDP always submits to the EU narrative and financial

reports that cover the whole of actions and the whole implementation period of the agreement.

- Budgeting under the EU Contribution Agreement is not activity-based but line-item budget, for which a specific budgeting template was provided by EU. In preparing financial reports to the EU, our office was indeed explained by the Finance and Contract Section of the EU that EU contribution is not earmarked to specific activities, and subsequently we were invited to report total costs, independently from the source of funding, finally applying the % of the EU contribution, as per the Article 3 of the Special Conditions to the relevant Contribution Agreement and its subsequent rider.
- Substantial changes to the EU Financing Agreement between EU and the ACP States may include changes to original objectives, indicators and logframe of the project. In 2007, upon request by EMAO, through a close consultation between EU, EMAO, MoFED and UNDP, a rider was duly prepared and approved by the EU to the original Financing Agreement to make substantial changes to include Somali region as the target region of the project, as well as to include additional EUR 2 million allocated by the EU to the project and to extend the end date of the project from December 2008 to December 2009. Subsequently the same changes were made to the Contribution Agreement between EU and UNDP. UNDP has been informed by the EU that substantial changes may be made to the EU Financing Agreement only once during the project implementation period.
- During the project period, two riders were timely proposed by UNDP in consultation with EMAO, and these were duly approved by the EU to make amendments to the budget attached to the relevant EU Contribution Agreement as per the Article 9 of the General Conditions of the Contribution Agreement. Final financial report submitted to the EU was prepared against the project budget officially approved by the EU by rider 3 to the Contribution Agreement.
- In administering the donor funds under the project throughout the implementation period, UNDP successfully undertook risk and issue management as per its corporate policies and procedures. By timely taking mitigation measures, UNDP assisted EMAO in overcoming late delivery of funds or EU-fund cash-flow issues, and consequently ensured smooth implementation of the planned activities under the project.
- On the delivery of planned benefits, Section 2.1. of the final report submitted to the EU contained EMAO's contribution to development outcomes including the number of returnees supported and % of cleared land used for different purposes i.e. farming / herding, housing and infrastructure development, according to EMAO's periodical reports, in addition to the references made by the evaluators in their draft report in this regard.
- To indicate that EMAO's MRE is effective, the final report to the EU duly contained the quantity of explosive remnants of war reported by communities after they receive MRE under Result 5 and in Table 7.
- When UNDP mobilized resources through *UN Portfolio of Mine Action Projects* from 2007 to 2009, it was done cash-basis, as this was clearly explained to the evaluators during the interview. UNDP signed the relevant EU Contribution Agreement for this

mine action project for 2007-2009. However, signing on the Contribution Agreement did not necessarily ensure that UNDP would certainly receive the planned total contribution of EUR 9,750,000 to the project from the EU. Every year, the EU was to release the subsequent pre-financing payments to UNDP according to the set schedule only when UNDP fulfilled reporting obligations and was cleared by the EU to move onto the subsequent phase of the project. At the time of the preparation of *Portfolio of Mine Action Projects 2009* for example, UNDP had not received subsequent pre-financing payments from EU. Thus the costs that were expected to be covered by the EU in 2009 was not yet secured, therefore it was so indicated in the portfolio. There was no intention of duplicating "the whole EC funded project (page 21)" as far as the strategy of UNDP with regards to the *UN Portfolio of Mine Action Projects* was concerned.

## 2. Implementation of recommendations from mid-term review

On the implementation of recommendations from the mid-term review of the project, the draft report states that UNDP has not acted upon the recommendations of mid-term review by making a number of statements such as "little implementation of the recommendations of mid-term report... (page 1)," "the lack of attention given to all but one of the clear recommendations of the mid-term report... (page 31)" and "the exception is the considerable improvement to the IMSMA system by training and updating (footnote 46, page 31)."

We observe this assessment on the implementation of the recommendation from mid-term review as groundless by highlighting the following key actions taken by UNDP in necessary consultation and cooperation with EMAO, MoFED and EU in this regard:

Recommendation 6.2.1. Need for an EMAO road map to comply with mine clearance obligation under Mine Ban Convention:

In consultation with EMAO, MoFED, EU and other relevant partners, preparation of a road map was incorporated into the project 2010-2011 as one of the key results of the project. A budget allocation was also made to deploy a short-term consultant to facilitate the road map preparation process, as necessary.

Recommendation 6.2.2. Need for GoE financial support to EMAO from 2010:

This issue was duly discussed between EMAO, MoFED, UNDP and EU when preparing the project 2010-2011 during 2009 and MoFED's official stance on this matter was communicated to the partners in its communication of 22 July 2009. Subsequently, the contents of the relevant EU Financing and Contribution Agreements for 2010-2011 project were revised with assistance of UNDP in terms of duration, target and budget as per the instruction of MoFED.

Recommendation 6.2.3. Organized and systematic coordination mechanism to be set up by EMAO.

During 2009 a high-level donor conference was organized by UNDP in cooperation with EMAO, Ministry of Federal Affairs (EMAO's supervisory ministry), MoFED and EU. The meeting co-chaired by the Minister of Ministry of Federal Affairs and UN Resident Coordinator successfully informed the representatives of donors, NPA and ministries / agencies that were beneficiaries of mine clearance about EMAO's past achievements and future needs for donor support. Through a series of partnering actions including organization of a donor conference, UNDP together with EMAO successfully mobilized required funds to implement the project 2010-2011. Moreover, while maintaining periodical technical and strategic meetings with EMAO, MoFED, NPA and EU, UNDP also assisted EMAO in holding technical meeting with partners for EU NIP review, UNDAF / PASDEP review, UNDP / MoFED programme refinement, and project formulation.

Recommendation 6.2.4. EU and UNDP should engage to enhance mine action in the national development agenda:

A series of efforts were made by UNDP throughout 2009 both at the top management and project levels in enhancing mine action in the national development agenda through UN / GoE strategic talks on PASDEP, UNDAF, and refined UNDP programme. It should be recalled that during the donor conference, UN Resident Coordinator requested GoE representatives to ensure mine action is captured in the next PASDEP. As a result of all those efforts made by UNDP in cooperation with EMAO, a new UNDAF and UNDP Programme are expected to contain EMAO's work in those strategic partnership documents.

Recommendation 6.2.5. UNDP support should be reinforced to EMAO:

Considering recommendations from the mid-term review, UNDP provided EMAO with a sample reporting format for the improvement of EMAO's reporting format, and continued offering advice and support in improving quality of EMAO's periodical reports for the project throughout 2009 with special attention to the areas such as:

- Accuracy of data and codes in financial reports.
- Accuracy of statistical data of results in the narrative reports, including arithmetic correctness.
- Inclusion of gender-disaggregated data.
- Results of post-clearance survey and contribution to development outcomes.
- Results of addressing cross-cutting issues such as gender, capacity building / training, EU visibility and communication, and sustainability.
- Results in promoting mine action in national and UN strategic plan documents.
- Results of mine action advocacy efforts and support to annual transparency reporting.
- Challenges faced and measures taken.
- Strategic partnerships.

- Lessons learnt.
- Separation of results supported EU from that of NPA

At the end of the mid-term review, EU, EMAO and UNDP together reviewed the recommendation made by the evaluation team on the need to clearly attribute the results achieved by EMAO to two separate projects of EU/UNDP and NPA and their respective donor funds. EMAO was requested by EU as well as UNDP to duly implement this recommendation during 2009.

On the additional UNDP support recommended by the mid-term review, during 2010, without UNDP support, an EMAO's management and organizational review has been undertaken by EMAO in consultation with its Supervisory Board as a part of implementation of an EMAO's exit strategy.

**Recommendation 6.2.6. MRE should be expanded:**

As also recommended by the mid-term review, from 2008 to 2009, UNDP facilitated a series of meetings to possibly forge a partnership between EMAO and UNICEF in expanding MRE coverage in the country. However, by the end of the project period, no joint programme was planned between the two parties on this issue. But while EMAO continued providing MRE in and around its operations areas under the project, UNICEF also provided child protection activities including mine awareness-related services through its partners in the areas where EMAO was not operating.

**Recommendation 6.2.7. EMAO should improve gender balance in its workforce especially in MRE/CL department and increased efforts should be made for gender mainstreaming:**

During the mid-term review of the project 2007-2009, a review of gender balance and mainstreaming in EMAO's demining programme was indeed carried out jointly by EMAO and UNDP by utilizing a reporting tool developed for the assessment of the implementation of *UNDP's 8 Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment, Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery*. Considering the results of this gender review and recommendations of the mid-term project review, UNDP then duly advised EMAO to try 1) increasing female staff in its work force especially in MRE/CL department/teams; and 2) providing an increased number of female community members, as deemed necessary, with mine awareness sessions during 2009 in order to further ensure gender mainstreaming into EMAO's demining programme. Moreover in 2009 UNDP ensured that EMAO's quarterly reports all contained gender-disaggregated data of MRE/CL beneficiaries and that the final report for the project 2007-2009 submitted to the EU contained gender-disaggregated data on MRE/CL beneficiaries for the entire project period. EMAO's successful gender mainstreaming into MRE/CL activities is also noted by the evaluators in this draft report by stating "EMAO is successful at listening to women and the data on MRE beneficiaries and on casualties is disaggregated (page 19)." However, the same draft evaluation report states that addressing gender issues is one of the areas of concern in terms of roles and responsibilities of UNDP (page 49). In the knowledge sharing front, UNDP assisted EMAO in sharing its gender mainstreaming experience with



other mine action programmes around the world through the contribution of a case study from Ethiopia to the *UN Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes* issued by the UN globally in April 2010.

Recommendation 6.2.8. Technical assistance to EMAO has to be continued:

Besides successful facilitation of IMSMA capacity development support from MSB/SIDA and GICHD, which is according to the evaluators only mid-term review recommendation that UNDP acted upon, as requested by EMAO during 2009 UNDP provided the Implementing Partner with new technology learning and equipment use and maintenance training with support of Vallon and Ceia companies as well as UNMEE. UNDP also ensured the assignment of a UNDP Programme Advisor to support EMAO till the end of the project and even into the new project period from 2010 to 2011. Moreover, as explained during the interviews by the evaluators, during 2009 UNDP tried facilitating EOD capacity building for EMAO with an interested donor through a "train & equip" programme.

### 3. EU Visibility

As reflected in the *EU-UN Joint Action Plan on Visibility* and the *EU-UN Joint Visibility Guidelines for EU-UN Actions in the field*, EU visibility is very important for UNDP to ensure in implementing projects in partnerships with EU. Considering these Action Plan and Guidelines, UNDP duly made efforts in visibility action during the project period. Thus, though the draft report states "The EU has had only very limited visibility... (page 48)," we do not agree to this statement by noting the following key visibility efforts made by UNDP under the project:

- Although the draft report states "the EU logo and donor statement was not included on any project documents... (page 48), both 2007-2008 and 2007-2009 reports submitted by UNDP to EU duly contained EU logo on the front page, just like this draft final evaluation report bearing both logos of EU and Landell Mills on the cover page.
- During the project period, UNDP Ethiopia Country Office website duly posted EU logo as a contributing donor to the 2007-2009 mine action project along with other donors from 2007 to 2009 as per the corporate guideline. But it must be understood by the evaluators that from June 2010 to date, which is coincided with the period of this final evaluation, UNDP has been undertaking transfer of content management system from an old one to a new one for publishing content on the websites of all UNDP Country Offices around the world, including the website of UNDP Ethiopia Country Office. Due to this ongoing technical work being undertaken, some contents including logos of EU and other donors etc under the mine action project and even other projects have yet to be properly placed back on the website.
- As also mentioned in the UNDP final report to EU, UNDP ensured that EU's significant contribution to the project 2007-2009 was duly recognized through the presentations, speeches and press releases issued during the official events, such as

- donor conference, annual mine action day events and donation ceremonies, some of which were attended by the government representatives, UN, CSOs and donors including EU and covered by the media including news papers, radio and TV. UNDP publications such as Fast Facts and Country and Project Briefs for mine action also contained due recognition of EU's contribution to the mine action programme in Ethiopia.
- Contrary to the statement made by the evaluators in the draft report, "annual Portfolio of Mine Action Projects...there is no mention at all of EC/EU (page 21)," UN Portfolio of Mine Action Projects for 2008, 2009 and 2010 all contained due recognition to the significant contributions made by EU to the Ethiopian mine action programme in the summary section of Ethiopia chapter. Moreover, in all three annual Portfolio of Mine Action Projects published from 2007 to 2009, UNDP ensured due recognition to the EU's previous contribution to the Ethiopian Landmine Impact Survey in the Scope of the Problems section of Ethiopia chapter.
- While providing EMAO with EU logo stickers that were obtained from EU during the EU-UNDP follow-up meeting of 2009 monitoring mission, UNDP advised the Implementing Partner to ensure visibility of EU at the field level, as recommended by the mid-term evaluation of 2008 and monitoring report of 2009. Though this is a status of this year 2010 after the end of the project being evaluated, it is important to note that a budget allocation was made to visibility action under the new project 2010-2011. As also recalled, the current status of the implementation of a plan to ensure EU visibility at the field level was duly explained by EMAO during the interviews by the evaluators in August 2010. It is also worth noting that during 2009, invited by UNDP, EMAO representative completed Communication for Development training for the effective communication.

In addition, we also disagree to a general statement made by the evaluators as unfounded, "This lack of visibility is a general problem for all mine action donors in Ethiopia (page 49)." The visibility action has been planned and implemented in close consultation with major mine action donors such as Germany and Japan along with EMAO in the past in order to duly recognize and publicize their significant contributions to Ethiopian mine action programme.

#### 4. Other comments

Page1, Par.1. 1.

The war in Ethiopia was not successive. It was in many decades intervals e.g. 1940s, 1970s, 1990s.

Page 2, Par.1. 2.2 Food Security and IDP Return in Ethiopia

No refugee as a result of flood.

Page 11, Par. 2. 3.2.1.

Continued mine incidents in the area will affect healing of the wound created during the Ethiopia-Eritrea war.



EMAO's financial management which could have initiated UNDP's action. Apart from the report, audit findings should be the bases for any financial reporting concern where management is expected to take corrective measures. EMAO has the most neat audit report among UNDP government partners.

Page 52, par 4-

In the UNDP project management system (ATLAS), there is provision where issue log, risk log along management response and monitoring report are updated quarterly to inform management and take corrective actions. The mine action project was quarterly updated in the system which is accessible to the CO & HQ. This can be shown indicating the dates updated.

Page 52, par 5-

UNDP is willing to follow reporting format agreed by all parties involved. However, simplification and harmonization of donor reporting is desired.

#### **5. Suggested correction**

Page 11, Para 1:

Total area clearance target for 2007 – 2009: According to Rider 1 to the EU Contribution Agreement, total area clearance target is 21,682,000 square meter.

Page 11, Para 1:

Total square meter demined from 2007 to 2009 under the project: According to the final report submitted to EU, it is 22,232,795 square meter. This data was verified by EMAO prior to the submission of the final report to the EU.

Page 20, Para 5:

In-kind training support: This was provided by not only Sweden but also by Germany during the project period.