



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

SUMMARY:

# EVALUATION

OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO  
**MINE ACTION**

Independent Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme



## Contributors

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Full Report can be accessed at:

<http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/thematic/mine-action.shtml>

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# FOREWORD



Landmines and unexploded ordnance remain a devastating problem in many countries, and yet the reduction in the use of landmines, and the clean-up of past landmine use, represents a successful international effort, within which the United Nations and its agencies have played a vital role.



While the removal of landmines is not typically associated with the development work of UNDP, this agency has been an important and valued partner on landmine removal in over 40 countries, with some programmes dating back nearly 30 years. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP was very interested to look into this issue, as UNDP was considering whether to continue its global mine action programme. The evaluation was therefore viewed as a timely assessment of direct and immediate relevance to UNDP programming.

The Independent Evaluation Office also took on this assignment as part of our continuing effort to better understand and determine the impact of the work of UNDP. In this case, we attempted to link UNDP national-level advisory support to impacts on the lives and livelihoods of persons in communities affected by landmines. While the connection is in many instances rather tenuous, the evaluation team is convinced that UNDP in its mine action work is positively contributing to these impacts, helping to reduce fear and improve the quality of life in many communities.

The evaluation underscores the important role that UNDP is playing in support of government landmine removal programmes. The Strategic Plan of UNDP focuses especially on the poor and marginalized segments of society, and mineaffected communities are firmly placed in this category. We find it compelling for UNDP to continue this work, and to further deepen its tie of mine action work to other development programming, so that communities freed of explosive remnants of war may also receive improved government services, better infrastructure and greater economic opportunities.

I would like to draw the attention of readers to this summary of the evaluation and UNDP's management responses to the report and planned actions as a result. The positive and proactive response from management to the evaluation recommendations is appreciated and augurs well for future achievements of UNDP in mine action.

**INDRAN A. NAIDOO**

**Director, Independent Evaluation Office, UNDP**







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## BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) continue to pose a threat to civilians in many countries. They continue to be found on roads, footpaths, fields, forest floors, deserts and surrounding infrastructure. For affected or at-risk populations, this threat manifests as restricted freedom of movement; reduced access to means of meeting basic needs; reduced access to hunting grounds, farmland and firewood; limited resettlement opportunities; and obstructed delivery of humanitarian aid.

### LANDMINES and explosive remnants of war are still a GLOBAL THREAT

Mine action is a collective term used internationally to encompass the demining of landmines and ERW; the destruction of landmines and ERW stockpiles; landmine and ERW risk education; mine victim assistance; and advocacy against the use of landmines and cluster munitions. **According to the United Nations, mine action is "... not just about demining; it is also about people and societies, and how they are affected by landmine contamination. The objective of mine action is to reduce the risk from landmines and ERW to a level where people can live safely; in which social, economic and health development can occur free from the constraints imposed by landmine contamination".**

While there has been significant progress in the mine action arena, including the adoption and implementation of international treaties, there remain areas where landmines continue to be produced, stored and used, including by non-State groups.

Landmines are explosive devices deposited on or below the surface of the ground and designed to explode based on the pressure rendered by, for example, a person, livestock or a vehicle. Unless cleared, landmines placed during war or conflict can continue to kill and injure victims for decades after the conflict has ended. Landmines include both anti-personnel mines and anti-vehicle mines.

- **Anti-personnel mines** are usually small, detonated with only a few kilograms of pressure, and are designed as either blast or fragmentation mines, often meant to injure rather than kill.
- **Anti-vehicle mines** are munitions designed to explode from the pressure rendered by heavier items such as military tanks but also, in post-conflict settings, by cars, trucks, tractors and wagons.

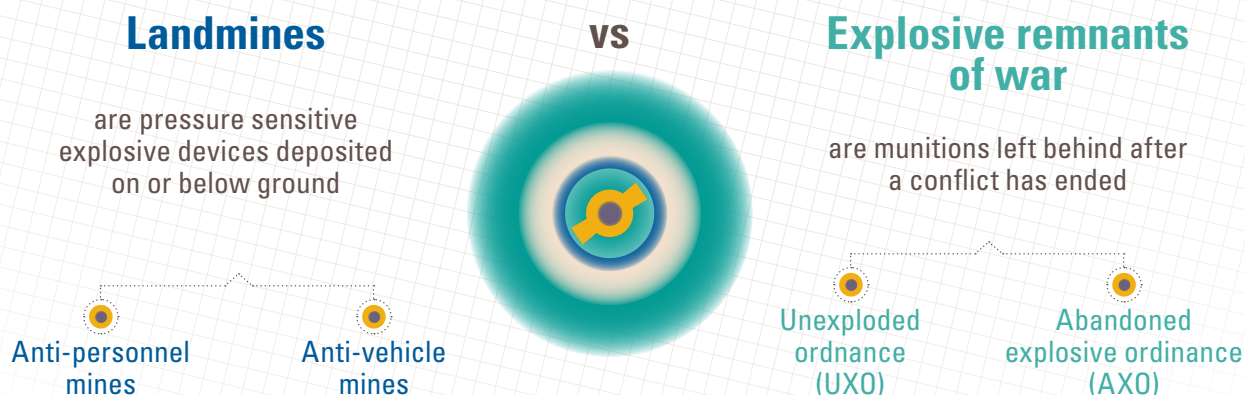
ERW are munitions left behind after a conflict has ended. They include unexploded artillery shells, grenades, mortars, rockets, airdropped bombs and cluster munitions. International law considers ERW to consist of **unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned explosive ordnance (AXO), but not landmines.**

- Explosive weapons that were used but failed to detonate as intended become **UXO**.
- **AXO** are explosive ordnances that were not used during armed conflict but were left behind and are not effectively controlled. Like landmines, ERW often have an indefinite lifespan and are usually activated by disturbance, force or movement.

UNDP, through its mine action programmes and projects, has established its role and legitimacy within a context where other actors are operational. This environment includes multiple United Nations entities, particularly the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS); multiple international NGOs typically serving as mine action operators, particularly Danish Church Aid, Danish

Demining Group, Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, HALO Trust, Handicap International, Mines Advisory Group and Norwegian People's Aid; and governments of mine-affected countries and donors.

As set out in the United Nations Inter-Agency Policy (2005) and Mine Action Strategy (2013– 2017), UNDP's role in mine action was expected to focus on assisting mine-affected countries to establish and strengthen their mine action programmes. Nevertheless, a review of the UNDP portfolio suggests that UNDP support has evolved, country by country, and now includes virtually all aspects of mine action, including mine removal operations and victim assistance projects. Where UNDP support included provision and/or facilitation of local services, it was usually to pilot new procedures and technologies for replication and scaling up by government and other mine action service providers.



## UNDP'S WORK IN MINE ACTION

AREAS OF WORK	Strategic and institutional support	Demining technical and operational support, awareness and training	Victim assistance (including rehabilitation, advocacy, reintegration support and socioeconomic development)
TYPES OF ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping governments establish and sustain national mine action institutional and legal frameworks and to develop national mine action strategic plans</li> <li>Support to establish mine action centres, including training centre staff and sometimes paying staff salaries</li> <li>Support for developing and establishing data and information management systems for demining efforts, including compiling and maintaining comprehensive databases of minefield records and operational coordination</li> <li>Mainstreaming mine action in development planning, programming and budgeting, including within UNDAFs</li> <li>Resource mobilization and trust fund management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support for mine clearance programmes, including coordinating and training demining specialists, acquiring clearance machinery and exploring cost-effective alternatives to clearance operations</li> <li>Implementing landmine and ERW general surveys, including conducting baseline surveys</li> <li>Support for the destruction of stockpiles of mines, including to improve storage sites and enhance safe disposal methods</li> <li>Promoting the release of demined land for use by poor people, development of new infrastructure and other land use activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support to mine/ERW survivors, families and communities, including physical rehabilitation, psychological support and access to basic social services</li> <li>Care and protection for disabled people, including disability awareness training</li> <li>Advocacy for mine action survivor assistance in policies and programmes</li> <li>Provision of sustainable livelihood programmes, including vocational training, access to small grants, small business start-up kits, agriculture training, livestock management and seed provision for use on demined lands</li> </ul>

The development of the mine action context and UNDP support to mine action:



### Phase 1

#### 1988–1997:

From the beginning of the first humanitarian mine action programme (Afghanistan) until the opening for signature, in 1997, of the Ottawa Convention.

During this period, the United Nations as a whole became involved in 11 mine action projects, including four UNDP projects. Most of these were established in the

context of peacekeeping missions; all were created at the country level. During this time, the main international NGO mine action operators were created. A historic international civil society movement developed on behalf of mine action. Its efforts culminated in the signing of the Ottawa Convention, which came into force in 1999. At this stage, mine action was seen as an operational activity to reduce casualties. Cohorts of international technical experts arose, and played major roles in the subsequent international mine action effort.





## Phase 2

### 1998–2000:

Development of a global approach to United Nations involvement in mine action.

During this phase, the United Nations agencies most involved in mine action (UNMAS, UNDP, UNICEF and UNOPS) created special units to deal with the issue, and Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) was established to provide additional international expertise. Coordination mechanisms were established among United Nations agencies, among donors and between the United Nations and INGOs. Key lessons were drawn regarding the optimal structure and requirements for national mine action programmes, based on a review of lessons from the first four mine action programmes. Important steps were taken to professionalize the field, with the development of International Mine Action Standards and the Information Management System for Mine Action.



## Phase 3

### 2001–2004:

Expansion of mine action managed by the United Nations system and supported by UNDP.

During this period, the number of UNDP mine action support projects increased significantly, with active guidance from UNDP headquarters (Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery). The issue of national ownership became more salient. There

was growing recognition of the need for national mine action management capacity as a requirement distinct from operational capacity. Increased attention was given to the development of national institutional capacity and training of national staff. National mine action authorities became more vocal regarding the support they required to manage their own programmes and to reduce dependence on international advisors. Finally, there was increased recognition that assistance to mine victims needed a much higher level of attention and support.



## Phase 4

### 2005–present:

Continuing mine action managed by the United Nations and supported by UNDP.

During this last phase in the evaluation of mine action, mine action programmes supported by UNDP and other United Nations agencies continued. Funding for programmes managed by the United Nations increased significantly as mine action became included in peacekeeping budgets. Meanwhile, funding for UNDP-supported programmes plateaued. Attention was given to increasing the efficient use of resources and the effectiveness of demining through better information and prioritization strategies. More attention was also given to the community redevelopment aspects of mine action.

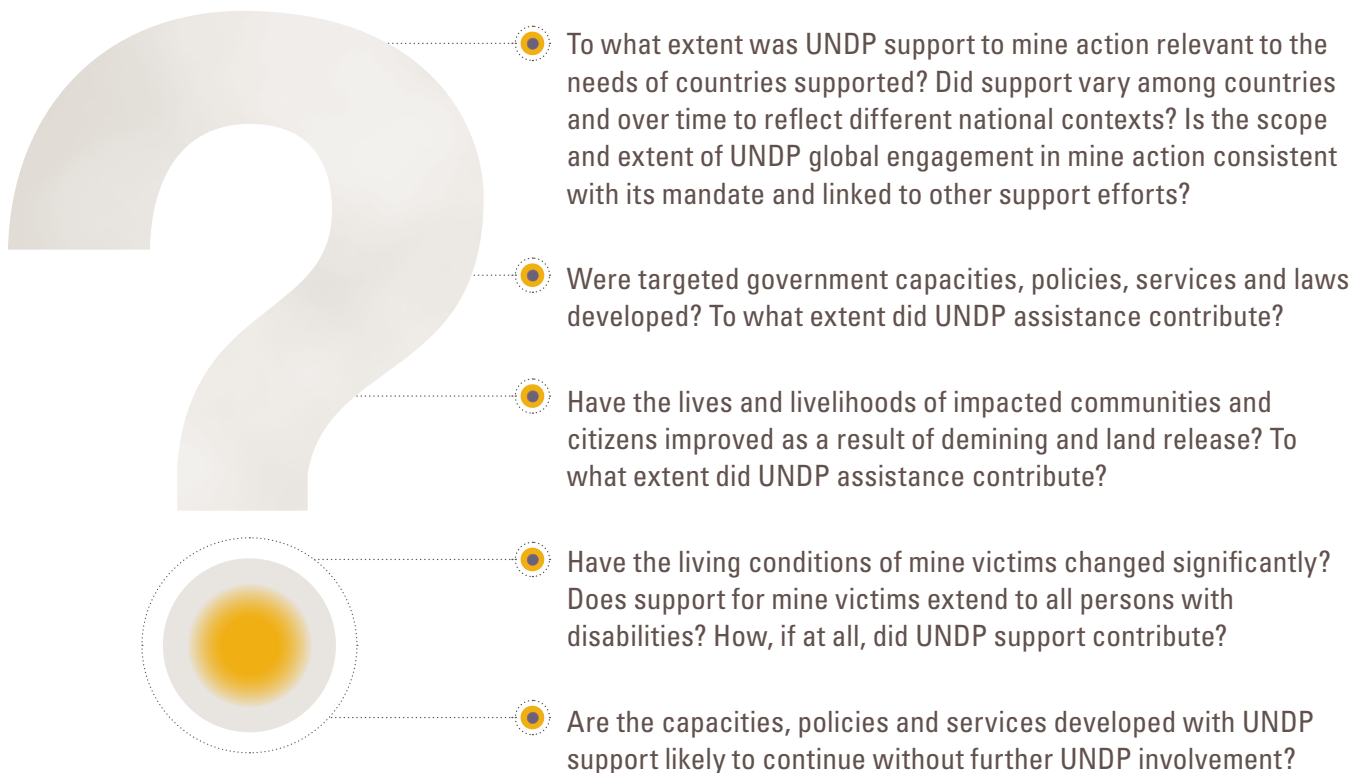
## WHAT WE EVALUATED

The evaluation was designed to help determine, to the fullest degree possible, the contribution of UNDP to national mine action efforts, and to draw upon this evidence to make recommendations for future programming, within the context of the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014–2017, and the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013–2018.

Mine action was selected as an issue for assessment for several reasons. First, it constitutes a set of activities that UNDP has supported in over 40 countries, and for over two decades. Consequently there

is a rich body of evidence to build from. Second, while the role of UNDP in mine action is mostly focused on governance and capacity-building, the main purpose of mine action is to achieve a very tangible result – the removal of landmines; therefore in theory there should be opportunities for considering not just outcomes, but also progress towards impact. Mine action was also selected for assessment based on the potential utility of the independent evaluation during a period when UNDP was considering whether and how best to continue its global mine action programme.

### KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

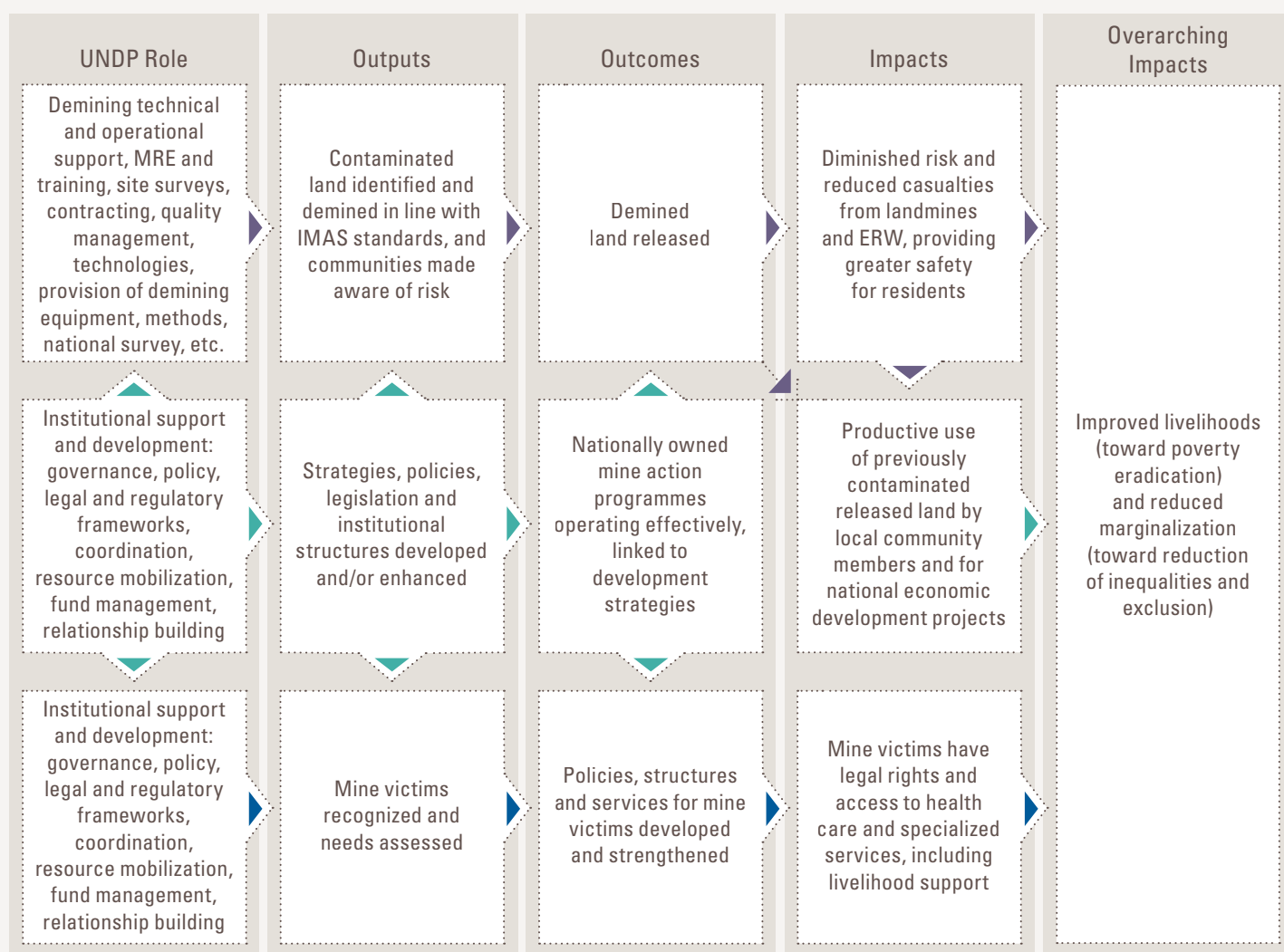


# APPROACH AND METHODS USED

Early on in the formulation of this evaluation, various approaches were considered on how best to ascertain the impact of UNDP's work on mine action. The evaluation team chose to take a theory-based approach through developing a theory of change (TOC), focusing on the causal links between intended programme

interventions and observed progress towards outcomes and impacts in countries where UNDP has provided support. The TOC was developed for the evaluation based on a background review of project documents across a sample of mine action countries, including a mapping and categorizing of project-specific results and

## THEORY OF CHANGE: UNDP SUPPORT TO MINE ACTION



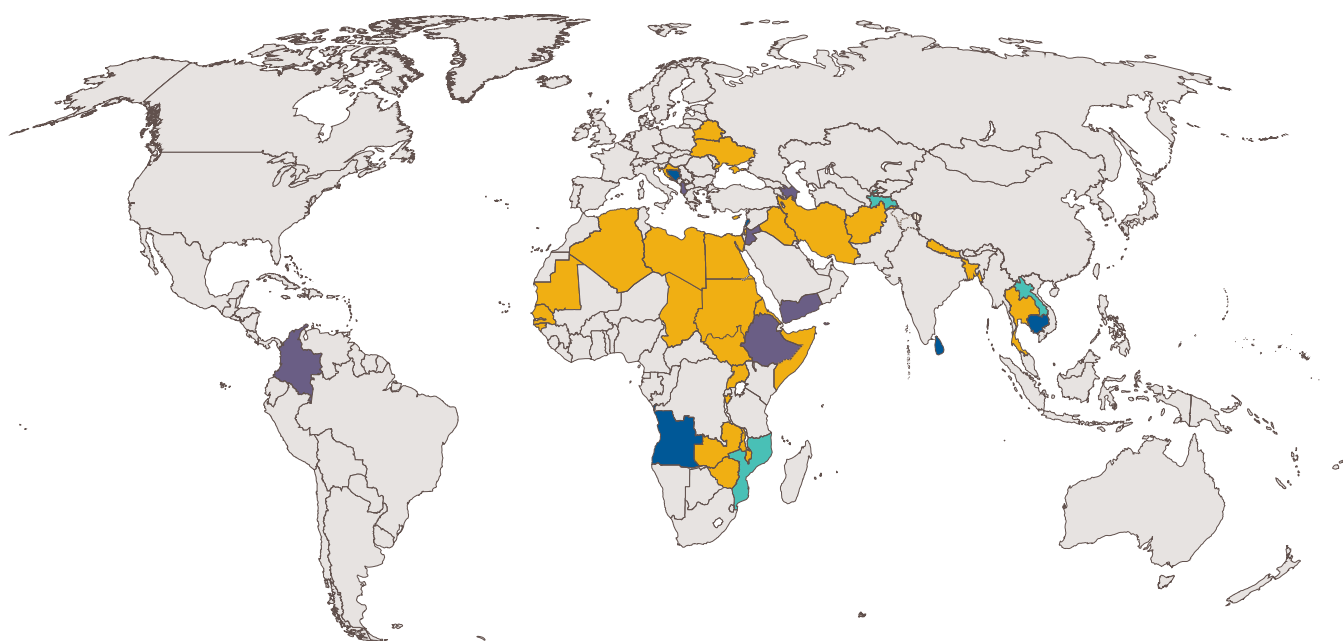
### Assumptions

Political, social and economic situations in the mined area are conducive to progress on landmine and UXO removal.  
Financial and human resources are obtainable through national and international means to address the landmine and UXO problem.

outcomes. The TOC was further refined through consultations with the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support mine action team members at UNDP headquarters. The evaluation team collected and analysed four levels of data to provide a robust assessment of the contribution of UNDP support to mine action: (a) an international overview of national programmes and stakeholders; (b) a review of the UNDP mine action portfolio; (c) a desk review of case studies of UNDP support to national authorities; and (d) three in-country case studies of the impact of mine action on communities and people.

The principal modes of data collection for the three case studies were community-based observations, interviews and focus groups of men and women, utilizing rapid appraisal techniques. Team members visited 24 mine-affected communities to consider whether UNDP support had contributed to positive impacts at the local level. During these visits, the evaluators obtained information to determine (a) how land release has affected local communities, in particular the more marginalized populations; and (b) whether the situation of landmine survivors and their families has changed and whether any such changes have extended more broadly to persons with disabilities.

## DATA COLLECTION METHODS



3

In-depth  
field studies

5

Detailed  
desk studies

6

Mapping and  
profiling studies

27

UNDP mine-action  
global studies



## COUNTRY CASE STUDIES



### LAO PDR

The UNDP-supported Lao PDR UXO/mine action programme has been in operation since 1995. UNDP has provided capacity-building, mobilized and managed resources, and coordinated and mediated among mine action actors. Over the two decades of support to the UXO/ mine action sector, UNDP has contributed to policy discussion and sector reform, and to the establishment of the National Regulatory Authority (NRA). Given limited direct government funding, UNDP and bilateral donors can claim substantial credit for the successful implementation of the programme. Other important achievements have been the signing, ratifying and implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, and linking national demining organisations (UXO Lao and NRA) with international donors and technical advice. The socioeconomic impact of UNDP's support to mine action in the country is mainly indirect and comes from the organization's long-term support to the mine action sector and its institutional role at the national level.



### MOZAMBIQUE

The Mozambique Mine Action Programme has been in existence for over 20 years, and UNDP has provided support throughout, from the period of peacekeeping until today. The UNDP partnership with the Government of Mozambique has been essential to the long-term success and completion of the

Mozambique national mine action programme and Mozambique is now considered 'mine-free'. UNDP has played an important role in enabling Mozambique to fulfil Article 5 of the Ottawa Convention, providing capacity-building, helping to mobilize and manage resources, and coordinate and mediate among mine action actors. The clearance of landmines from communities has had a significant impact on the affected populations, serving to eliminate fear, while providing marginal economic benefits to owners of demined lands. Other than the physical clearance, there is scant evidence of systematic external support from UNDP, national authorities or other actors in cleared lands, to complement clearance with enhanced economic development support.



### TAJIKISTAN

UNDP has supported the Government of Tajikistan in mine action since 2003, through the creation of the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC) and the provision of technical and operational support. TMAC has coordinated, planned and monitored all aspects of mine action, and recently became a fully nationalized mine action centre (TNMAC). Of particular note, UNDP has shown leadership in Tajikistan in the area of mine victim assistance. TNMAC's Disabilities Support Unit, together with the Tajikistan Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population, developed the State Programme on Social Protection of Persons with Disabilities, which has the potential to assure the rights of survivors long after the end of mine clearance activities. UNDP has also enhanced the socioeconomic impact of mine action through its support to related policies and procedures.





## WHAT WE FOUND

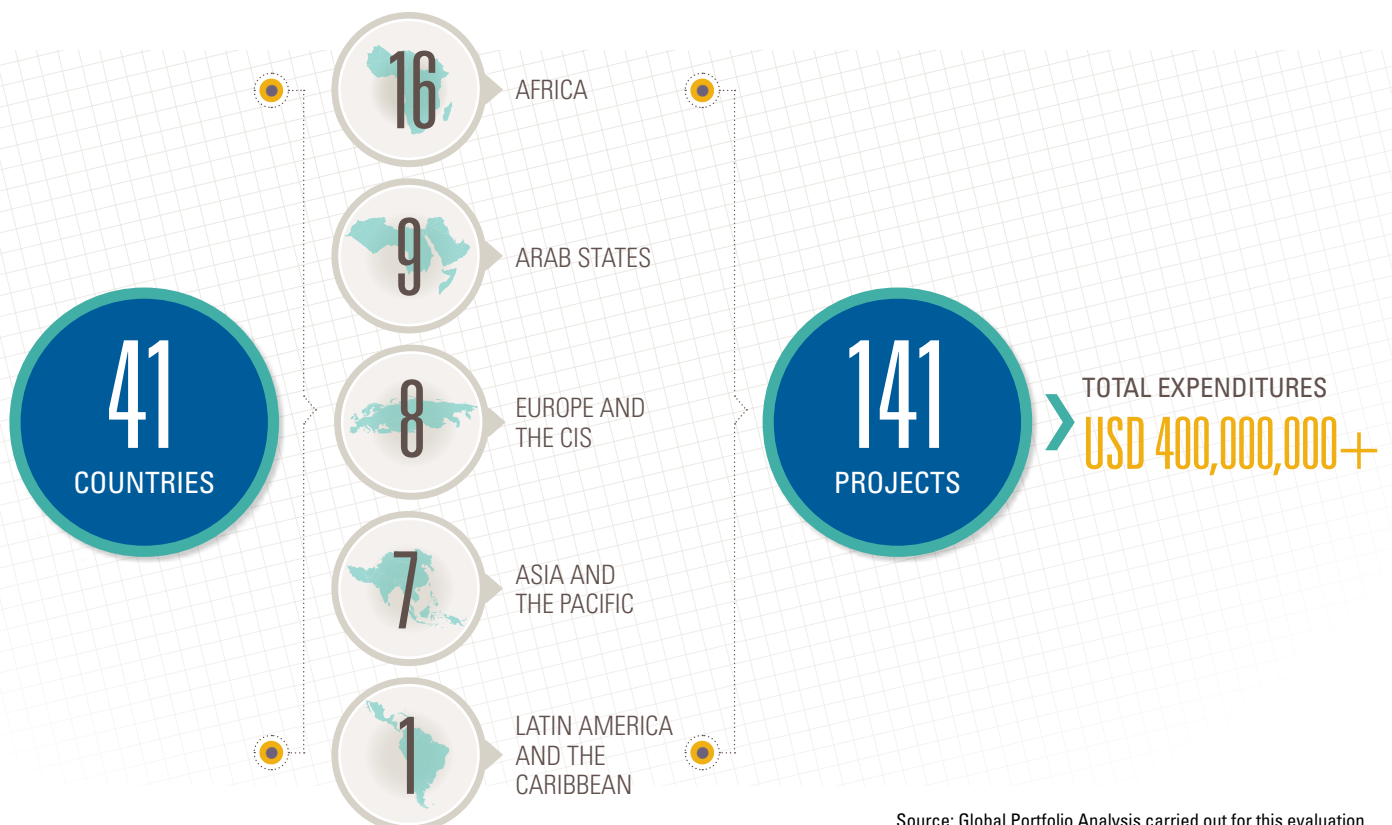
### Strategic and Institutional Support

**1. There is a general consensus among stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation that UNDP has been a valuable participant in the global mine action effort, helping national governments to establish and manage their mine action programmes.**

The stature of UNDP in the mine action field can be seen in the breadth of its worldwide portfolio of programmes and projects, and in its positioning in support of United Nations conventions, strategies and inter-agency coordination mechanisms focused on landmines and UXO. UNDP is perceived by stakeholders as especially

well positioned to advocate for government ownership and to work with central governments and legislative bodies in creating legal and institutional frameworks for mine action, including strategies to implement legal obligations stemming from the Ottawa Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Some stakeholders, in particular donors, expressed a desire to see UNDP play a stronger role in advocating for changes in government policies that inhibit the achievement of landmine removal. Some others would like to see greater transparency in UNDP's work and timelier and more complete results reporting, as well as a better framework to monitor the impact of UNDP mine action support.

### UNDP'S MINE ACTION WORK



Source: Global Portfolio Analysis carried out for this evaluation

**2. Since 2008, the profile of mine action within the UNDP strategic framework has declined, and the temporary closing of the mine action global programme caused uncertainty among stakeholders as to the long-term strategic engagement of UNDP in this area.**

UNDP's decision to end the global mine action programme in 2015 was received with concern by the United Nations, donors and NGO partners. The cancellation constituted a break from expectations as set out in the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action and called into question the continuing work of UNDP on mine action in dozens of countries. Following the 2015 closure announcement, UNDP commissioned an internal study to plan the close-out process. The results of the study, strengthened by recognition of the considerable ongoing work in mine action, led to a decision to reverse course and rebuild the global programme. This included adding expert staff to UNDP headquarters and two of the regional service centres.

**3. UNDP is viewed as a neutral and reliable partner with considerable country-level knowledge, proven experience and comparative advantages in providing institutional support. In over two dozen countries, it has contributed substantially to mine action institutional capacity.**

UNDP work in mine action is largely a capacity development effort, including information management, strategic planning and coordination, effective quality management of operations, and resource mobilization. UNDP has sought to strengthen administrative and financial management capacities and to assist governments as they set policies, strategies

and legal frameworks for mine action. Institutional support and capacity-building are aspects of most mine action support from international agencies, and are commonly carried out by UNMAS, GICHD, UNICEF, bilateral donors and also NGOs in rare cases. However, the development of capacities to manage the national mine action programme is a particular hallmark of UNDP's work. There has, however, been limited emphasis on systematically developing management capacities, including in the following areas: quality management; monitoring and evaluation; pro-poor, gender-sensitive prioritization; stakeholder communication; data management; and use of adaptive management capacities.

There is **UNCERTAINTY**  
among stakeholders whether Mine  
Action remains a **GLOBAL**  
strategic priority for UNDP

**4. UNDP support has generally been successful in stimulating governments to institutionalize mine action, including through the formal establishment of national mine action management institutions.**

UNDP has sought to ensure that mine action programmes are properly institutionalized. This has included the following measures: (a) the formal establishment of mine action management entities (National Mine Action Authority and Mine Action Centre) as public sector organizations, included in the State structure and budget; (b) national contribution to the budget of the mine action programme; (c) demining

activities set in law and regulations; and (d) legal recognition of the rights of mine survivors, and usually by extension, other persons with disabilities.

**5. South-South cooperation for institutional capacity-building has been a regular feature of UNDP mine action support, especially in earlier phases when new country programmes were coming on line and there was a centralized mine action unit in the UNDP Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. During the past decade, South-South cooperation on mine action has been ad hoc, initiated by UNDP country programmes and national government counterparts.**

UNDP has been in a  
**STRATEGIC** position to  
help national governments keep  
mine action **FUNDING** on  
the agenda

**6. One of the most important roles that UNDP plays in mine action is to facilitate and channel international funding.**

Because mine action can stretch over decades, donor fatigue is a constant challenge, especially as landmine and UXO accidents decline and donor support migrates to new humanitarian and development priorities. Due to its country-level presence and close donor cooperation, UNDP has been in a strategic position to help national governments keep mine action funding on the agenda. UNDP has formed key partnerships with members of the international community to mobilize funding for many national mine action programmes.

**7. UNDP has actively supported governments in transitioning to full responsibility for managing their mine action programmes. The results have been generally positive, albeit slow, and several transitions to national ownership have called into question the extent to which these capacities are sustainable without continued international support.**

Transitions of projects from United Nations-managed to UNDP-supported, and then from UNDP-supported to nationally managed, include many of the most significant demining efforts, those in Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Croatia, Lebanon and Mozambique. Most of the transitions were complicated by the fact that United Nations involvement tends to bring considerably greater resources to bear than does UNDP. In some cases, transitions have been delayed due to continuing conflict and to the promise of additional funding for continued UNMAS involvement and engagement by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. Transitions from UNDP support to full national ownership have also been complicated in some cases by the difficulties faced by governments when trying to formally establish the status of national mine action entities.

**8. While mine action programmes often refer to their supportive role for development, UNDP has struggled to effectively mainstream its mine action programming within its other development work in many countries.**

Since the beginning of its work in mine action, UNDP has stressed that its work is a logical extension of its post-crisis development efforts, and that part of its added value is in mainstreaming mine action into broader development support. Donors and

other stakeholders have indicated they view this to be a key part of the UNDP mine action contribution. While national mine action programmes have engaged with other sectors and economic actors regarding potential landmine threats to their activities, this has generally taken place through intra-governmental channels, with minimal involvement of UNDP. There is little evidence that UNDP has made it a priority to link mine action support to other development support. Nor has UNDP refocused its other governance and poverty alleviation programming to better address the needs of mine-affected communities and individuals.

**9. UNDP has promoted gender equality in its mine action work and stressed the need for gender-disaggregated data. Many partner countries have shown a general commitment to gender equality.**

UNDP has generally promoted awareness of the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes and has requested and facilitated specialized input on gender aspects of mine action through the Gender and Mine Action Programme hosted by the GICHD. UNDP has also stressed, through its mine action centre support, the need for gender-disaggregated data. The evaluation evidence suggests that UNDP efforts have not substantially altered the commitment of partner countries to taking gender aspects into account in their mine action programming.

## **Operational Support and Prioritization of Demining Activities**

**10. UNDP has played a limited role in support of operational demining activities,**

**the issuance of national mine action standards and the destruction of landmine and UXO stockpiles.**

The comparative advantage of UNDP is not seen to carry over to the technical side of demining, where some INGOs, UNMAS and UNOPS have particular skills and a stronger mandate. Likewise, organizations other than UNDP are perceived to offer stronger technical training on operational aspects of mine action. Clearance of landmines and UXO is the direct result of the work of demining operators, and UNDP is not a demining operator. UNDP has in some cases contracted operators to conduct demining and to train local deminers. In many cases, it has served as a funding channel from donors to operators. In the countries where it has helped to establish mine action programmes, UNDP has supported the issuance of national mine action standards to guide the management and implementation of mine action projects. Stockpile destruction has been a relatively minor aspect of UNDP's mine action support.

INFORMATION  
MANAGEMENT is  
a challenge for national mine  
action programmes

**11. The capacity of national partners in the area of information management for mine action remains a challenge.**

A primary concern of UNDP in nearly all the mine-affected countries it has supported has been the establishment or

strengthening of a database unit to manage information regarding suspected and demined areas, together with a survey of the national situation. Unfortunately, in many programmes, when mine action database systems were upgraded or a new baseline survey was conducted, the previous data were set aside. Development and management of information systems within government structures has been an especially difficult capacity-development challenge in many countries due to the problem of retaining qualified staff

**12. Over time, the prioritization of mine clearance has evolved and become more systematized, and UNDP has been a strong proponent of strategic planning and evidenced-based clearance methodologies. More recent national mine action strategies have benefited from greater national ownership, better information and more reasonable expectations.**

There was limited evidence  
of **PRO-POOR BIAS**  
and attention to  
marginalized populations

**13. UNDP has sought to frame its support for mine action in terms of the contribution to poverty reduction. In most villages visited, there is some evidence of improvements in standards of living over the course of the mine action programme, although the extent to which this is a direct result of the demining effort is difficult to quantify.**

The extent to which there has been socio-economic improvement in communities

following mine clearance has been harder to discern, as it was not possible in this evaluation to carry out 'before' and 'after' surveys, or to compare the situation of mine-cleared areas with that of similar areas that were still affected by mines. The case study teams saw very little evidence among the communities visited of organized external assistance from the government, the United Nations or NGOs to promote development following clearance.

**14. The UNDP pro-poor orientation was not evident in day-to-day support to mine action. Nonetheless, continuing UNDP support to mine action has an inherent pro-poor bias, as remaining landmine problems in mature programmes typically concentrate on poor rural areas.**

In general, UNDP promotes a pro-poor agenda and indicates that it is strategically focused on marginalized populations. With respect to mine action, this orientation should be evident in the priority-setting processes used to determine mine clearance sequencing. Yet, this orientation is not evident in most cases. The evidence from this evaluation shows little in the way of UNDP achievement in championing the rights of minority communities to have access to demined land.

**15. The evaluation did not find evidence that the release of previously mined land was a significant source of conflict.**

Short of a land reform process, mine clearance does not create a new asset to be distributed at the will of the government (or of any international actor). Accordingly, it is not surprising that across the three case study countries, while there were communities where demined land was the subject



of land tenure dispute, the causes of dispute were not the release of demined lands.

## Safety and Support to Mine Victims

**16. UNDP has contributed to an increased sense of safety in demined areas, which is reported by community members as the major impact of mine action at the community level.**

Across the communities in the three countries visited, and based on evidence from interviews, focus group discussions and documentary evidence, it is abundantly clear that community members and local officials perceive that the main problems caused by landmine and ERW contamination are the following: (a) heightened levels of fear; (b) reduced freedom of movement; and (c) restricted access, particularly to natural resources.

**17. UNDP has had limited engagement in support to mine victims and survivors. In the instances where it has provided support in this area, it has mostly focused on institutional aspects and its work has been well received by national partners.**

The Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action indicates that WHO has primary responsibility for the development of standards, provision of technical assistance and promotion of institutional capacity-building in the area of victim assistance. Nevertheless, some countries have turned to UNDP for assistance as they strengthen services for mine victims. UNDP's greatest involvement in victim assistance has been in supporting national efforts to identify and survey mine victims/survivors in order to

more clearly understand the extent of the situation, the nature of needs and the availability of and access to support services. This has then enabled advocacy for other sector actors (such as ministries of health, social welfare and labour) to better respond to the needs of mine victims.

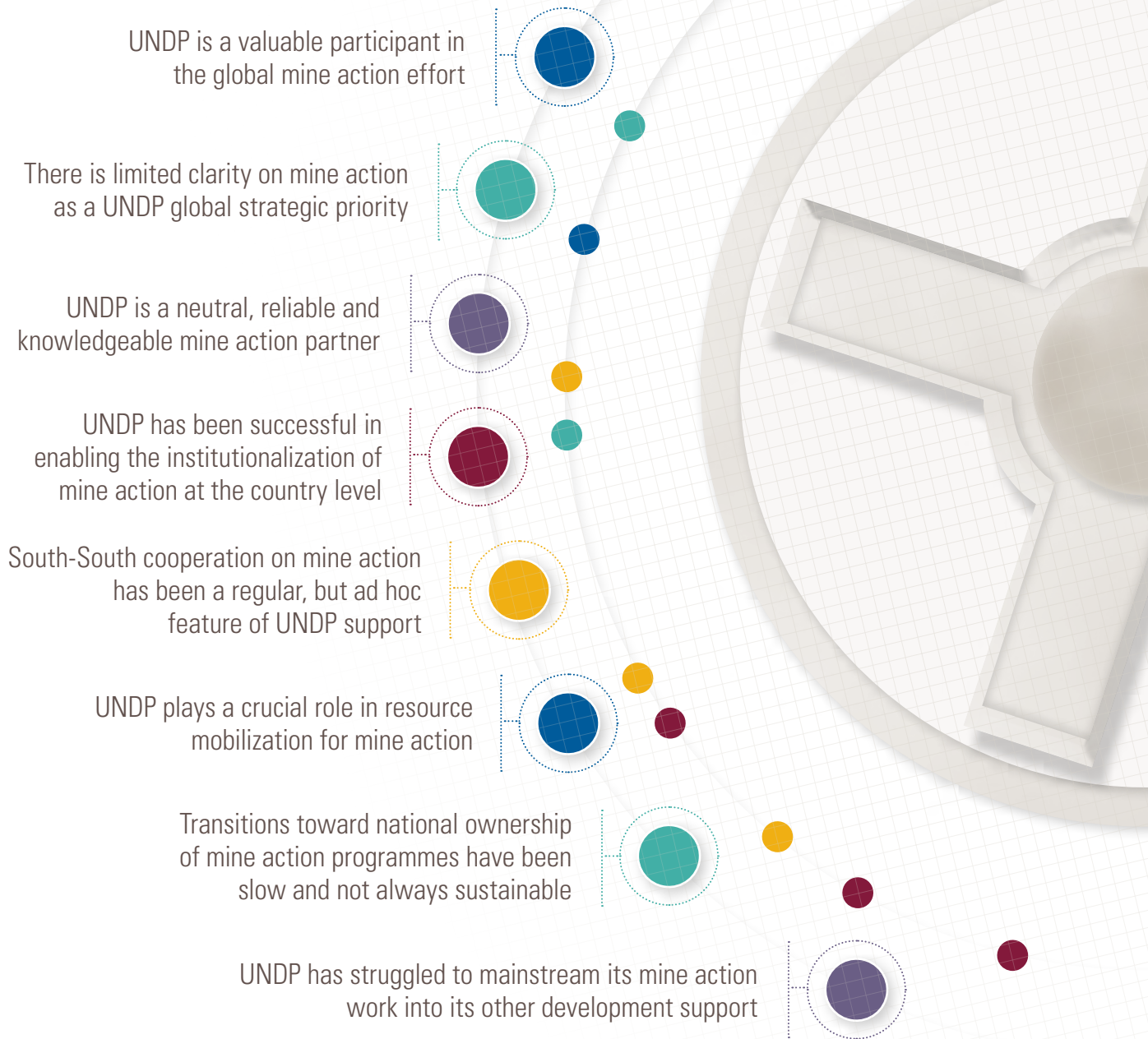
UNDP Mine Action support  
has helped **REDUCE RISK**

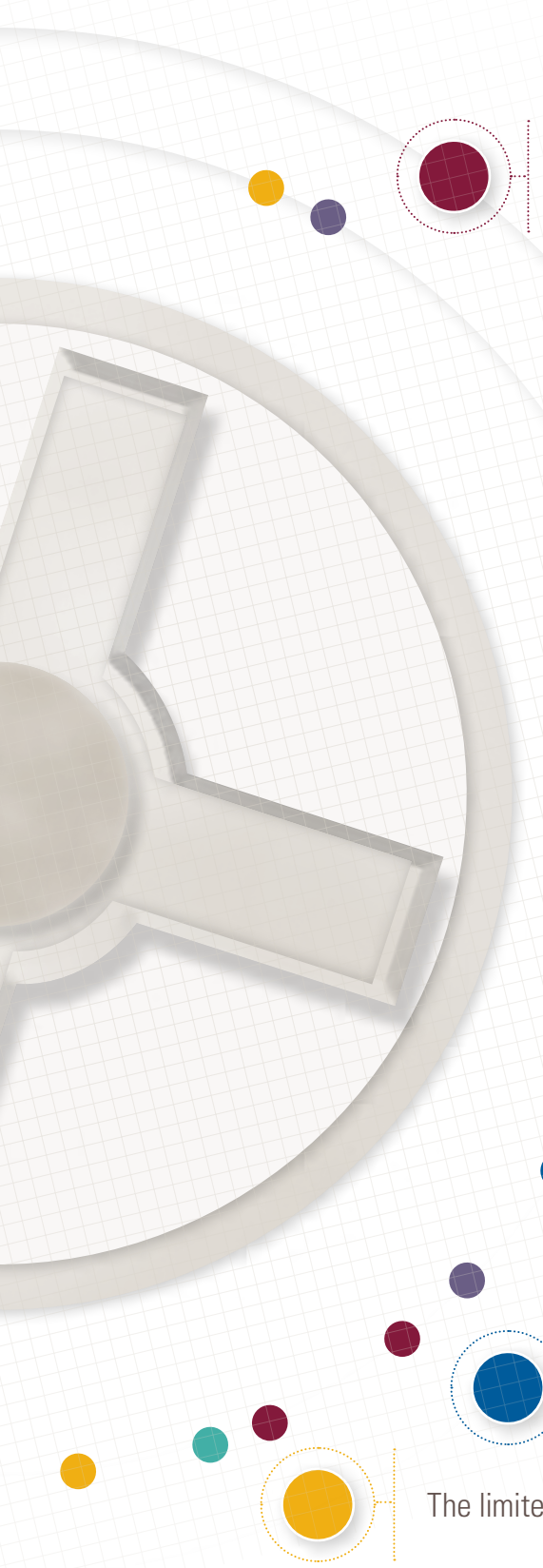
**18. In the few cases where UNDP has provided substantial, long-term support to countries for victim assistance, some improvement in services can be discerned, including more generally for persons with disabilities.**

While not enough evidence was gathered through the research to determine the success of victim assistance, those questioned who had received income-generating support said they had benefited significantly from the assistance. However, most community members interviewed in the three case study countries reported that, aside from immediate medical attention, no support was provided for mine survivors and their families. Community members went on to state that, in the absence of victim support, the socioeconomic conditions of mine survivors were consistently worse than they had been prior to the landmine or UXO accident.

# SNAPSHOT

of the **EVALUATION'S FINDINGS**





UNDP has promoted gender equality and women's empowerment in its mine action work



UNDP has played a limited role in operational demining activities



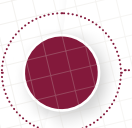
Information management for mine action remains a challenge



UNDP has been a strong advocate for the planning and prioritization of demining activities



There is some evidence of increased productivity of previously contaminated lands and improved livelihoods



There is limited evidence of pro-poor orientation and attention to marginalized populations



The release of demined land has not been a significant source of conflict



UNDP mine action support has contributed to a reduced risk from landmines



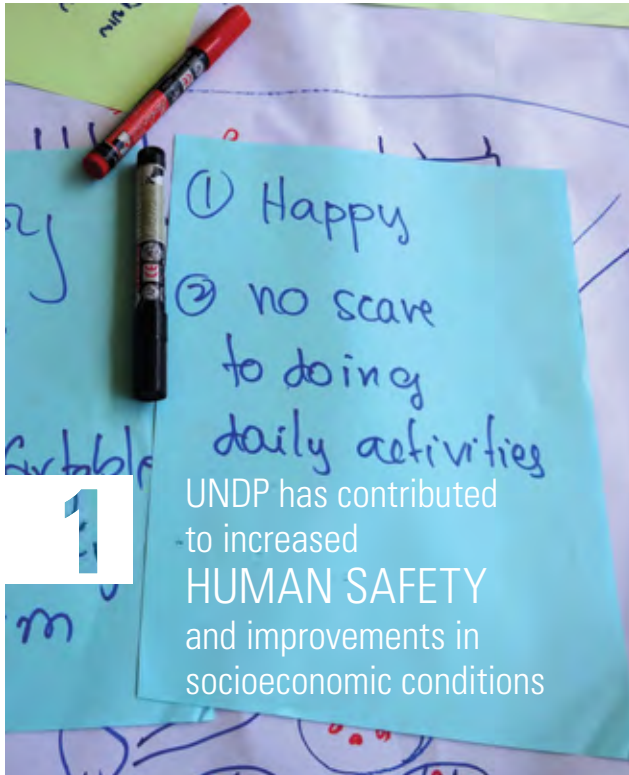
UNDP has contributed to the development and strengthening of policies, services and structures for mine victims



The limited support of UNDP to victims assistance has proven beneficial

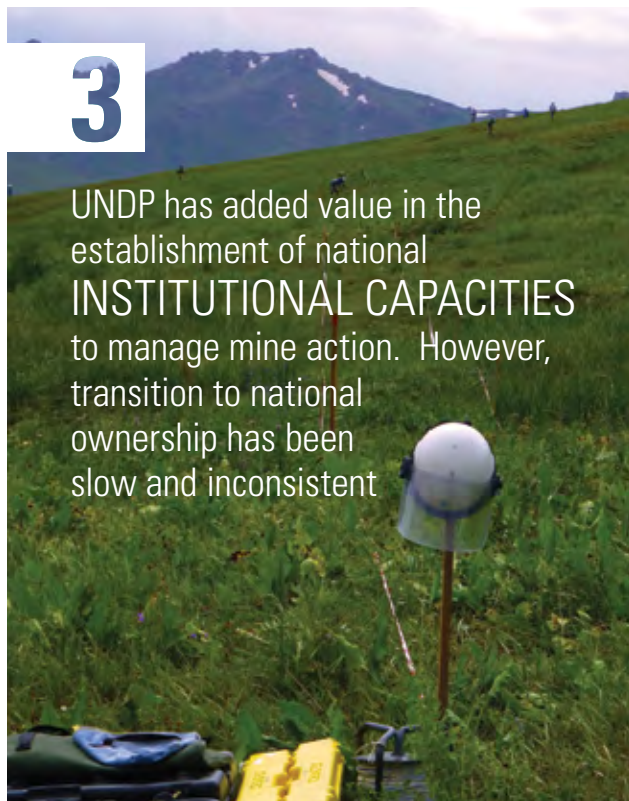


# OUR CONCLUSIONS



1

UNDP has contributed to increased **HUMAN SAFETY** and improvements in socioeconomic conditions



3

UNDP has added value in the establishment of national **INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES** to manage mine action. However, transition to national ownership has been slow and inconsistent



2

**STRATEGIC COHERENCE** and UNDP capacity of headquarters to support country level staff has lessened



4

UNDP has recognized that there are important **DEVELOPMENT LINKAGES** for mine action, yet limited evidence of linking with or targeting of other development programming



## Conclusion 1:

**UNDP support to mine action has contributed substantially to increased human safety, through the reduction of risk. To a lesser degree, it has also led to improvements in socioeconomic conditions at the community level.**

Over the past 25 years, international support to national mine action programmes has had a major impact on the landmine problem. International trade in anti-personnel landmines has essentially ended, as has the use of landmines by nearly all States that once used them. The number of new victims per year globally has fallen by two thirds, and in many countries the annual total has fallen by much more. National mine action activities supported by UNDP have contributed to this overall reduction in casualties. Indeed, the greatest contribution of UNDP's support to mine action at the community level has been the reduction of fear and anxiety. The benefits of this sense of increased safety are shared by all community members, even as the economic benefits may be uneven and difficult to quantify.

As the number of new casualties has fallen globally, greater attention has been given to economic development, support to landmine victims, integration of gender in mine action and land rights. UNDP has partly justified its mine action work as contributing to socioeconomic development and poverty eradication. While small-scale livelihood improvements are evident after landmine clearance in the communities observed for this evaluation, these

improvements were mostly due to local initiatives enabled by the reduced risk, rather than specific economic development or job creation programmes sponsored by UNDP or national partners.



## Conclusion 2:

**The phasing down of the UNDP global mine action programme over the past decade has lessened its strategic coherence and limited the capacity of headquarters to fully support staff at the country level.**

Most UNDP headquarters mine action staff were phased out of the Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery between 2008 and 2013. Prior to this period, the headquarters mine action staff produced several strategy documents for use by country offices and contributed to development of United Nations Guidelines on Gender in Mine Action (2005), Victim Assistance Policy and overall Mine Action Strategies. A common perception shared by participants and stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation is that over the past decade, UNDP has lacked clear policies and guidance for its mine action work, and has supported only limited interaction and information-sharing with and among staff in various country offices. Some country-level personnel noted they received little practical guidance from UNDP headquarters and relied on other organizations for technical support. Strategies and techniques for advocacy programming on mine action should logically exist as part of the UNDP support for mine action.





### Conclusion 3:

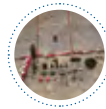
**The main value-added contribution of UNDP is the establishment of national institutional capacities to manage mine action. Nevertheless, the transition to national ownership of mine action in some countries aided by UNDP has been slow and inconsistent, and the sustainability of some nationally managed programmes remains in question.**

Most UNDP support has been for capacity development of national mine action institutions, and there is substantial evidence of UNDP achievement in helping over two dozen governments to establish policies, strategies and legal frameworks; set up mine action centres; and strengthen core institutional capacities for strategic administrative and financial management in this area.

National ownership is an indication of political support and engagement, and is evident through (a) formal establishment of a national mine action authority as a public entity; (b) significant contribution of government funds for mine action; and (c) reference to mine action in national planning and policy documents. These thresholds have been reached by many but not all countries supported by UNDP. In two of the three case study countries for this evaluation, the national mine action entity remained under UNDP projects until very recently. The Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre was a UNDP project for 11 years before the transition to national ownership began in 2014. In the case of Lao People's

Democratic Republic, the entities are still temporary and staffed by personnel on UNDP project-funded positions.

Several nationally managed mine action programmes have struggled to maintain momentum and to retain skilled employees. Information management is an area of particular concern in this regard, since the specialized skills involved present difficulties in attracting and retaining capable staff.



### Conclusion 4:

**As mine action programmes mature, they tend to become increasingly more focused on poor rural communities with a wide array of development challenges. UNDP has recognized that there are important development linkages for mine action, yet there is scant evidence that this recognition has led to linking with or targeting of other development programming in poor communities that have been demined.**

In its strategic plans and mission statements, UNDP indicates that it emphasizes support to poor and marginalized populations, and the majority of mine-affected communities are indeed poorer and more marginalized than other communities. The evaluation considered each of the countries where UNDP has done mine action work and assessed whether UNDP had been successful in getting governments to establish and utilize pro-poor, gender-inclusive prioritization criteria. The results suggest that

UNDP has had little success in this regard. In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, no livelihood analysis was carried out. In Lebanon, a 2011 review noted that a shortcoming of UNDP's programme included a lack of mainstreaming of mine action into other priority development sectors. In Mozambique, the country office is hoping to focus more attention on development only after the completion of all demining efforts.

UNDP has shown little evidence of responding to mine-affected communities or individuals through other UNDP programming, although its mine action support has typically referenced the importance of mine action for development. In Tajikistan, the 2006 mine action strategy was designed to restore access to land and infrastructure to ensure that economic activity and development projects were unimpeded by landmines. UNDP in Sri Lanka likewise made efforts to link mine action with other development priorities, especially focusing on increased equity in socioeconomic opportunities and services for conflict-affected communities and internally displaced persons.

UNDP efforts to mainstream gender in its mine action programming has not significantly altered national mine action programmes. UNDP has supported the

integration of gender perspectives in mine action primarily by calling attention to the United Nations Guidelines on Gender in Mine Action. The most direct implications of these guidelines were already widely accepted (for example, the value of including women as well as men in surveys to obtain information regarding suspected areas; the relevance of sex-disaggregated data on mine victims).

UNDP has undertaken very little systematic engagement on victim assistance within its mine action work. Where UNDP has been engaged, the most common activities are surveys of victims and advocacy for national mine victim policies, preferentially within the context of broader support to persons with disabilities. In Tajikistan, where UNDP has made a significant contribution to victim assistance, UNDP broadened the work of its mine action victim assistance programme in 2012 to include support to all persons with disabilities, renaming it the Disabilities Support Unit. The substance of such policies and related services transects the sectors of health, rights and social welfare, labour and economic development. They should closely link to support from other international and United Nations organizations, such as WHO, the International Labour Organization and UNICEF.

# WAY

## Recommendation

1

**UNDP should reaffirm its strategic commitment to mine action support globally and ensure that the dozen countries with ongoing mine action programmes are fully supported at the headquarters and regional levels.**

UNDP should support mine action over the long term as a result of obligations created by the Ottawa Convention and as a result of its long-standing post-conflict redevelopment support to national governments. The legal obligation to eliminate all known and suspected mined areas, including low-density and low-risk areas, implies that some mine-affected countries will continue to seek international assistance over the long term. For the immediate future, roughly 12 national governments can be expected to continue requesting UNDP support for mine action.

## Management Response



**UNDP management agrees that UNDP should support mine action over the long term, both to comply with obligations created by the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention and as part of its long-standing post-conflict recovery support to national governments.**

UNDP management will also: (a) ensure that mine action technical advisers have requisite management and capacity-building skills; (b) ensure that UNDP is providing practical guidance to countries on transitioning to national implementation and enhancing development support in demined areas; and (c) maintain high-level headquarters engagement with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, the Mine Action Support Group and the annual meetings of Mine Action National Programme Directors and United Nations Advisers.

## Recommendation

2

**UNDP should further enhance its institutional capacity support services to governments on mine action, building on lessons from successful transitions to sustainable national ownership and utilizing South-South cooperation opportunities and closer engagement with United Nations and other international partners.**

# FORWARD



In keeping with the UNDP Strategic Plan and in consideration of the results of UNDP mine action support highlighted in this evaluation, UNDP should continue and enhance its support to national governments in the areas of: (a) institutional capacity assessment for mine action, including the use of relevant indicators; (b) development and management of comprehensive databases of suspected and released mine areas; (c) land release prioritization; (d) strategies for transition to national ownership of mine action programmes; (e) mainstreaming mine action into broader development imperatives, with special emphasis on marginalized communities; (f) taking gender aspects into account in mine action programming; (g) linking victim assistance support, where it exists within mine action programmes, into broader support for persons with disabilities; (h) efficiently channelling donor funding; and (i) utilizing partnerships with other United Nations agencies and international organizations. UNDP should update its mine action programme guidance to clarify priorities, elaborate practical methods and utilize its roster of capable consultants for technical support and policy research in the above areas.

**UNDP management agrees with the recommendation that UNDP should continue and enhance support to national governments in the following areas:**

(a) institutional capacity assessment for mine action, including the use of relevant indicators; (b) development and management of comprehensive databases of suspect and released mine areas; (c) land release prioritization; (d) strategies for transition to national ownership of mine action programmes; (e) mainstreaming mine action into broader development imperatives, with special emphasis on marginalized communities; (f) taking gender aspects into account in mine action programming; (g) linking victim assistance support, where it exists within mine action programmes, into broader support for persons with disabilities; (h) efficiently channelling donor funding; and (i) utilizing partnerships with other United Nations agencies and international organizations. UNDP will update its mine action



## Management Response

programme guidance to clarify priorities, elaborate practical methods and utilize its roster of qualified consultants for technical support and policy research in the above-mentioned areas. UNDP management also agrees that a stronger focus on Strategic Objective 3 is needed and will actively participate in the midterm evaluation of the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action, and advocate for greater emphasis within this Strategic Objective on the capacity development of national institutions, with clearer indicators for measuring success. It is, however, important to note that UNDP's contribution is also key for Objective 1, *Reducing risks to individuals and socioeconomic impacts of mines and ERW*, which is an important area of focus for UNDP's development and mine action work. In early 2015, the UNDP Support Framework for Development and Mine Action was prepared and identified the following two areas of focus:

- (a) Translating mine action into sustainable development dividends in the form of jobs and livelihoods;
- (b) Strengthening national institutions that accelerate development benefits, including livelihoods and human security.

In view of this and in the context of the UNDP Strategic Plan, a sharper focus on the development and mine action agenda will be pursued. This approach will follow three tracks:

- (a) Context/assessment: ensuring that the impact of landmines/ERW on development is well understood and includes policy and institutional capacities required to enhance jobs and livelihoods through mine action programming;
- (b) Capacities/areas of focus: the selection of the areas of focus will be informed by the assessment/analysis;
- (c) Development outcomes: development outcomes will be measured either directly or indirectly through jobs/livelihoods generated, particularly for women and marginalized groups; hectares of land cultivated, human security, etc. Under the first area of focus, UNDP mine action programmes will concentrate on three themes: protecting lives; restoring livelihoods; and supporting recovery and development.

Under the second area of focus, UNDP will concentrate on strengthening national institutions that accelerate development benefits, e.g., human security or other opportunities. Links to the UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, will



be ensured through alignment of mine action with the plan's Outcome 1 (Growth and development are inclusive and sustainable, incorporating productive capacities that create employment and livelihoods for the poor and excluded) and Outcome 3 (Countries have strengthened institutions to progressively deliver universal access to basic services).

**In the near term, most of the requests for UNDP support on mine action will focus on mature national programmes in non-conflict circumstances where the residual mine problems are located in poor rural areas.**

This suggests an important development need that UNDP is well suited to support by providing strategies and techniques for job creation and market development, and by channelling targeted donor support towards improving the socioeconomic conditions in mine-affected communities. The capacities of rural communities, especially poor ones, to improve standards of living is dependent on many factors such as access to labour, credit and markets. Nevertheless, in nearly every community visited for the three country case studies, the lives and livelihoods of impacted communities and citizens were improved as a result of demining and land release. At the same time, in every case far more could have been achieved if additional resources had been made available simultaneously to stimulate the local economy. Landmine clearance should not be seen as an end result but rather as an initial step in a much longer development effort.

**UNDP management fully agrees that the capacities of rural communities, especially poor ones, to improve standards of living is dependent on many factors such as access to labour, credit and markets. In nearly every community impacted by landmines, the lives and livelihoods of the communities and citizens are improved as a result of demining and land release. Management agrees that UNDP should do far more to support national and subnational authorities and affected communities in stimulating the local economy. The clearance of landmines should not be seen as an end result, but rather as an initial step in a much longer development effort.**

Moving forward, one of the main objectives of UNDP initiatives should be the attainment of socioeconomic benefits. In essence, project developers and implementers will need to ensure that released land is used for

3

## Recommendation



## Management Response

socioeconomic development. In order to pursue this strategy and overcome all possible bottlenecks, the UNDP approach to mine action will follow three tracks, as identified above in the management response to Recommendation 2:

- (a) Context analysis and needs assessment. This will help to ensure that the impact of landmines/ ERW on development is well known and understood, and that this information is factored into the selection of recovery and development priorities. The assessment will also cover the policy and institutional capacities required to enhance jobs and livelihoods through mine action programming;
- (b) Careful selection of the areas of focus. The selection and packaging of the areas of focus will be informed by the assessment/analysis and guided by their relevance to and synergy with related focus areas of the UNDP Strategic Plan;
- (c) Emphasis on results and outcomes. Results achieved will be measurable contributions to development outcomes, and will contribute either directly or indirectly to jobs created, livelihoods restored and other social and environmental indicators (depending on the focus of any particular mine action intervention).

In the context of partnering with national institutions, UNDP will work not only with national mine action authorities but also with relevant ministries for sector-led development. A key focus for UNDP will be to strengthen the capacities of civil society organizations that enable people's participation in development planning and acceleration of peace and development dividends, in particular livelihoods in areas previously affected by mines. UNDP will work with other development actors, in particular the private sector and national public service institutions, to ensure that planning is done for development. In addition, UNDP will maintain its role of initiator and nurture South-South and triangular collaboration, including a wide range of development practitioners. This will focus on the creation of development benefits for affected women, men and communities.



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Evaluation of the UNDP Contribution  
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