



April 4th: Humanitarian Impact of Mine Action Highlighted Around the World

In 2005, the General Assembly declared that 4 April shall be observed as the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action. To mark this day, UNMAS organised a series of events and activities around the world. UNMAS selected the theme “mine action is humanitarian action” to highlight the intrinsic humanitarian value of mine action and linking it with the Secretary-General’s “agenda for humanity” which highlights critical areas of focus for the World Humanitarian Summit. In his message on 4 April, the Secretary-General stated that mine action is “an investment in humanity,” that “helps nurture peaceful societies, where those in need can receive aid, and refugees and internally displaced persons can safely return home and children can go to school.”



Opening of the exhibition “Mine Action is Humanitarian Action” at UN HQ/ UNMAS photo

On 30 March, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and UNMAS co-hosted a high-level reception to open a photo exhibition entitled “Mine Action is Humanitarian Action” in the Visitors Lobby of the United Nations Headquarters. High-ranking officials including the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Jan Eliasson, the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Mark Rutte, the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Saikal and the Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards, Mr. Daniel Craig spoke about the importance of mine action. The photo exhibit which will be on display through 10 May,

highlights the humanitarian mine action work carried out by UNMAS in Afghanistan, Cyprus and South Sudan.

Also in New York, a high-level lunch briefing on humanitarian mine action in Colombia was hosted by the Permanent Mission of Italy. The meeting, co-organized by UNMAS and the Permanent Missions of Italy and Colombia, brought together Ambassadors and senior representatives from 25 Member States underscoring the global commitment to support clearance efforts in Colombia. Speakers included Brigadier General Rafael Colón, Director of the Colombian national mine action authority and UNMAS Operations Officer, Ms. Nathalie Ochoa Nino, who shared her experience of working as a deminer and the important role of women in the mine action sector.

To coincide with 4 April, Saatchi & Saatchi Denmark launched a cutting-edge Instagram-based game of Minesweeper, designed to raise awareness and funds for UNMAS. It can be played by following @minesweepergame on Instagram.

In Geneva, online interactive discussions were organised with UNMAS programmes allowing members of the public to speak with experts on the front line of mine action. UNMAS Geneva also held an “Art, Essay and Poetry Contest” inviting contestants to unleash their creativity through drawings, paintings, photography, short essays or poetry on the subject of mine action. UNMAS, in partnership with the digital marketing agency and pro-bono partner of UNMAS Critical Mass, installed the “digital minefield” at the Palais des Nations enabling visitors to experience the fear of landmines and explosive remnants of war.



UNMAS running race in Abyei / UN photo

Throughout the world, UNMAS programmes held a variety of sporting events including running and cycling races, as well as football, basketball and volleyball matches. On 10 April, staff and friends of UNMAS, participated in a 5-kilometre “Runway Run” at John F. Kennedy International Airport, raising funds and awareness for UNMAS.

This year’s International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action brought together a diverse global community including high-level Government and UN officials,

representatives of the private sector, civil society and the public. Around the world, in both affected and donor states, UNMAS and its partners brought attention to the humanitarian value of mine action and called for increased support for its lifesaving work.

For more information, please contact Donor Relations Officer Kurt Chesko at chesko@un.org.

www.mineaction.org/news