



UNMAS

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UNMAS NEWS

UNMAS GENEVA MARKS MINE ACTION DAY WITH LAUNCH OF CHILDREN'S ART EXHIBITION: "MORE THAN MINES"

In Geneva, to mark the International Day of Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action, UNMAS organized an art exhibition showcasing the paintings of children from across the world to reflect the impact of mines and other explosive hazards in their local communities. The exhibit was launched in the presence of Member States, United Nations entities, NGOs and an enthusiastic group of local school children.

Contributors included young artists from Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Colombia, Libya, Mali, Palestine, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. The striking drawings and paintings reflected the theme of the day, "more than mines". School children in Geneva responded to these pictures from the field by producing their own art.

"When I look at the work of these children, it is heartbreaking to learn the difficulties that they have gone through in conflict and post-conflict areas, where land mines and other abandoned ordnance are part of their daily lives", said Ambassador Kaji of Japan during the opening of the exhibition, "at the same time, I was touched by the artwork produced by the local Geneva-based children, who showed great compassion and imagination to respond to the situation of their peers."



Opening of the UNMAS Exhibition in Geneva, listening to the message of the Secretary-General. UNMAS Geneva Photo

more than mines

UNMAS ORGANIZES DONOR TRIP TO COLOMBIA

In March, a delegation of 12 Member States, Colombian Government Officials and representatives of the United Nations and the Organization of American States (OAS) participated in a field visit to Colombia. The trip was facilitated by UNMAS and the Dirección para la Acción Integral contra Minas Antipersonal (DAICMA) through the initiative of the Chair of the Mine Action Support Group (MASG), H.E. Mr. Yoshifumi Okamura, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations.

The delegation first travelled to Bogota to meet with Government stakeholders including the Minister of National Defence, Director for Post-Conflict and the Deputy Minister for Multilateral Affairs.

“It was extremely heartening to see all levels of the Colombian Government coming together to recognize the importance of mine action and discuss it collectively.”

- Ed Trimakas, Programme Manager of the U.S. State Department’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement



The MASG field visit participants, local authorities and beneficiaries after the second field trip. UNMAS Photo/ Matthew Williams

“The trip was an important opportunity to raise the awareness of Colombia’s mine problem to the donor community. It is clear that the Colombian Government, the United Nations, the OAS and NGOs are committed to a mine-free Colombia and as Chair of the MASG, I encourage Member States to help make this vision a reality.”

- H.E. Mr. Okamura of Japan.

NGOs across all pillars of mine action presented their activities to the delegation. The trip included a visit to minefields in Antioquia to observe the work of the military demining battalions and a humanitarian demining NGO. The delegation met with local deminers and mine-affected community members. An ex-combatant now working as a deminer briefed the delegation underscoring the important linkage between mine clearance and reintegration, sharing the story of how mine clearance has provided new opportunities to him and his family.

DANIEL CRAIG APPOINTED GLOBAL ADVOCATE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF MINES AND EXPLOSIVE HAZARDS

On 14 April 2015, the United Nations Secretary-General designated actor Daniel Craig as the first United Nations Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and other Explosive Hazards.

“Along with moviegoers worldwide, I have been on the edge of my seat watching Mr. Craig, as James Bond, defuse ticking time-bombs with seconds to spare. I am even more excited that Mr. Craig has agreed to use his star power to draw attention to the noble causes of mine destruction and mine awareness. As 007, Mr. Craig had a licence to kill. Today, we are giving him a licence to save.”

- Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon

The Secretary-General expressed hope that Mr. Craig would raise public awareness about United Nations mine action efforts, visit UNMAS programmes worldwide and assist in raising political and financial support.

Mr. Craig said that he was humbled by the designation.

“The briefing from the Secretary-General, and from all of the United Nations staff I have met, demonstrated the enormity of the task,” he said. “The use of improvised explosive devices in Iraq, Somalia and Mali; the widespread use of barrel bombs in Syria, and the landmine contamination in Cambodia, Colombia and Afghanistan must all be addressed simultaneously. It is a big job. The United Nations needs political and financial support to succeed.”

- Daniel Craig



Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon designates Daniel Craig as the UN Global Advocate for the Elimination of Mines and Explosive Hazards. UN Photo/Evan Schneider.