

MAG ANGOLA Programme update: April - June 2009



Houses being constructed on cleared land in 4 de Fevereiro
This land was cleared during the previous quarter and the speed at which it is being occupied by families illustrates the demand for land for returnees.

SUMMARY

Reporting Period: 01 April to 30 June 2009

Activities & Outputs:

- Clearance of 213,480m² of land and 25 km of road
- Mechanical preparation of 97,832 m² of land
- 117 Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) spot tasks completed by the Rapid Response Team, destroying 1,035 items (9 AT mines, 11 AP mines, 347 items of Small Arms Ammunition, 629 Light Weapons and 39 other items of Unexploded Ordnance - UXO)
- 194 communities visited by Community Liaison (CL) teams and 171 UXO reports collected
- 101 Mine Risk Education (MRE) sessions conducted, reaching 6,277 beneficiaries

Impact:

- Creating a safer and more secure environment by reducing risk of death or injury and working to improve the daily lives of the people in Moxico affected by the Remnants of Conflict.
- Facilitating local reconstruction by clearing land and opening access routes, therefore contributing to livelihood regeneration and infrastructure projects.
- Contributing to economic growth and stability by creating safer environments and improving economic opportunities for communities

Completion of Tasks

Two of MAG Angola's tasks were completed in this quarter and the land is now in use by the communities. One of the tasks was located in the community of Musseringinge, where MAG was called to respond to the discovery of an Anti tank mine which was discovered by a construction company. After MAG's Rapid Response team removed 1 Anti tank mine and 5 UXOs, UNICEF asked MAG to clear a suspected hazardous area in front of the water tower, close to the school in the same community. A total area of 37,338 m² was cleared and as a result 1,239 people will have safe access to the water tower when it is rehabilitated and children can now play in safety near their school.

The first section of the 4 De Fevereiro task has also been completed and communities are already moving into the cleared area, of 288,107m² to build houses and to cultivate. Such is the demand for space that some families are moving to plots that are in close proximity to where the deminers are continuing to clear land, violating safety standards for demining. In cooperation with the National Intersectoral Commission for Demining and Humanitarian Assistance, MAG's Community Liaison team went house to house to talk to the homeowners and to alert them to the dangers of this practice, reinforcing Mine Risk Education messages on the importance of staying out of mined areas and obeying the warning signs. MAG altered its clearance plan to clear the areas closest to the houses first and the new arrivals agreed that they would heed the signs and would leave their plots and the area while the deminers were working during the day. For more information on MAG's most recent clearance work please visit <http://www.maginternational.org/MAG/en/news/angola-improving-infrastructure-in-moxico/>



MAG Angola's mission is to build futures for people affected by the remnants of conflict (ROC) in Angola in general and in Moxico in particular. MAG Angola will remove the physical threat of injury and death and alleviate economic devastation through clearance and destruction of mines UXO and other ROC, land release and Mine Risk Education.

Golf Day

In May, MAG Angola and the Luanda International School (LIS) held their third annual Golf Day. It was a sunny and fun day and there was a good turnout from the sponsors of the event, which included companies operating in Angola as well as supporters from the LIS. This was a valuable opportunity for MAG not only to raise funds, but also to raise awareness about landmines and the extent of the contamination in Moxico, the most landmine affected province in Angola. A locally based artist, Mathu Martin designed the trophy for the competition which was proudly raised by the teams which tied in first place, Chevron and the Luanda golf course team. Funds raised from this event will go towards the maintenance and repair of the machines which play a vital role in increasing safety and improving the efficiency of MAG's clearance work. MAG would like to thank the LIS for their continued support, both in the preparation for the event and on the day itself. MAG would also like to thank all those who sponsored the Golf Day and we hope to see them again next year!

For more information on this event please visit:

<http://www.maginternational.org/MAG/en/news/angola-business-community-to-the-fore-for-mag/>



Participants at the MAG LIS Golf Event

New Technology Field Tests

During this quarter MAG staff also participated in HALO and NVESD¹ led field testing of new ground penetrating radar (GPR) technology known as Mine Stalker, in Cuando Cubango. The Mine Stalker is a machine which can be operated manually or using a remote control and it uses radar to detect mines at various depths in the soil. For MAG it is vitally important to remain up to date with new developments in mine detection technology. "Clearing roads and land inch by inch using hand held detectors is time consuming and requires a lot of resources", says Technical Field Manager Abel Tesfai. "Using new technology such as the GPR system can help to identify and eliminate threats more easily and could drastically improve clearance efficiency, this means that safe access to roads for communities can be improved and lives can be saved." MAG will lead the piloting of a new Rapid Area Preparation Tool in the next quarter.



MAG TFM Abel Tesfai (right) at the HALO and NVESD led Minestalker field test

MAG would like to formally express its gratitude to the following current donors to the Angola programme:

- Chevron Oil – Angola
- Department for International Development (UK)
- Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- United States Department of State, Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement

For more information on this or any of MAG's programmes, please visit www.maginternational.org, or contact:

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¹ Night Vision and Electronic Sensors Directorate (US Army)