



MAG Sri Lanka Technical Field Manager – Team Leader, Tony Retief, discusses progress with a clearance task during a visit to the east by the British High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Dr Peter Hayes, in January 2009

SUMMARY

Reporting Period: 01 - 31 January 2009

Activities & Outputs Summary:

- **Search and clearance of a total of 311,713m²** of land through a combination of Battle Area Clearance, manual and mechanical techniques
- **Removal of 7 anti-personnel mines and 2 items of Unexploded ordnance**
- **Completed clearance on one task** started during 2008, consisting of 3 hazardous areas
- **These activities benefitted a total of 690 families**

Impact Summary:

MAG's principal impact this month was to support safe return to former conflict areas and encourage economic regeneration through access to land for livelihood activities. By clearing land, MAG meets the critical first criterion of the returns process. Furthermore, cleared land enables returned communities to engage upon livelihood support activities, such as cattle grazing and agriculture as well as traditional vocations such as cane cutting, brick building and fishing. During January, MAG continued to deploy its operational teams in the eastern district of Batticaloa, thereby contributing to the post conflict development of the country and supporting the peace-building process.

ACTIVITIES

During January, all operational activities continued to be undertaken from the base in Batticaloa in the east of the country. MAG is also currently undertaking planning to respond to emerging needs in the north of the country. Activities are being coordinated with a range of stakeholders, including the Government of Sri Lanka, UN agencies including UNDP, UNICEF and UNOCHA, and other local and international organisations.

As part of a visit between to the Eastern Province between 22 and 24 January, the British High Commissioner in Sri Lanka, Dr Peter Hayes, conducted a visit to a MAG clearance task site in Pankuneveli, Batticaloa District. The overall regional visit focussed upon discussion of the security and development challenges in the east, and the visit to the clearance site enabled Dr Hayes to view first hand MAG's contribution, through the removal of mines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) and the release of land in support of resettlement and development activities.

Manual & Mechanical Clearance

In January, MAG's manual teams completed clearance of 3,453m² using the raking method. The teams also completed 287,800m² of Battle Area Clearance.

The operational phase of a new grant from the Japanese Government started this month. The mechanical teams continue to use 2 Bozena-B4 mechanical flails, originally purchased with funds from the Japanese Government under a previous grant agreement. This capacity continued to work in an integrated fashion with the manual clearance teams undertaking ground preparation and verification of low risk areas within clearance tasks. During January, the Bozena teams completed 20,460m².

A total of 7 anti-personnel mines and 2 items of UXO were cleared.

Community Liaison

The CL team members focussed on interviewing IDPs and other local people in Batticaloa district to determine future land use on current and planned tasks, together with completing post-clearance reports on previous task sites.

Northern Sri Lanka

MAG is currently preparing to respond to the mine and UXO contamination in the north of the country. It is anticipated that the initial requirement will be for emergency survey in order to assess clearance requirements for land affected by mines and UXO, and facilitate quick release of safe land for resettlement, allowing Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) to return to their home communities.

MAG is now actively seeking funding to enable rapid deployment into the north for emergency mine action survey and clearance

MAG would like to express its gratitude and sincere thanks to the following donors who currently support the Sri Lanka programme:

- *Actiefonds Mijnen Ruimen (AMR)*
- *UK Department for International Development (DFID)*
- *Good Gifts*
- *Hurvis Foundation*
- *Embassy of Japan, Colombo*
- *Kirby Laing Foundation*

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

Matt Thomas (Regional Desk Officer)
MAG, 68 Sackville Street, Manchester, M1 3NJ, UK

e-mail: Matt.Thomas@maginternational.org
Tel: +44 161 236 4311 Fax: +44 161 236 6244