



MAG Sri Lanka Programme Update October 2009



MAG staff providing a site brief for returnees to Palaikuli village where clearance work had just been completed, Mannar District, Northern Sri Lanka, October 2009.

Reporting Period: 01 – 31 October 2009

Activities & Outputs Summary:

- **Rapid village assessment operations ongoing in Vavuniya and Mannar Districts**
- **Ongoing General Mine Action Assessment (GMAA), technical survey and clearance in Mannar District**, in support of the planned return of families displaced by conflict
- **Four clearance tasks completed** in Manthai West Division of Mannar District
- **170 anti-personnel mines and 262 items of unexploded ordnance (UXO) uncovered**
- **Search and clearance of a total of 3,023,736m² of land** through a combination of manual and mechanical methods

Impact Summary:

- Survey and clearance in support of IDP returns
- 23 IDP returnees to Palaikuli village and 81 to Vannakulam in areas cleared by MAG in the month
- Creating a more secure environment for the people of Sri Lanka
- Building safer communities and working to improve the futures of people affected by explosive remnants of conflict
- Contributing to national reconstruction, economic growth and stability by freeing up land for essential livelihood activities

ACTIVITIES

The programme is working in support of efforts to declare villages safe for the return of IDPs currently being housed in camps around Vavuniya. Approximately 190,000 IDPs from across the Northern Province of the country remain in camps. MAG is currently working in support of this initiative by undertaking survey and clearance in support of return of IDPs to Mannar and Vavuniya Districts, and will be seeking to expand the area of operations over the coming months.

MAG Community Liaison (CL) teams completed General Mine Action Assessment (GMAA) at Thachanamaruthamadhu tank, which can irrigate an area of 530 hectares, in the Madhu Division of Mannar during the month. Due to the identification of suspected hazardous areas, technical survey and clearance will start immediately. GMAA work is currently ongoing in the Thandikulam irrigation scheme and adjoining areas in the Musali Division in Mannar and Periyapandivirichchan tank area in Vavuniya District, with an irrigable extent of 606 hectares, and will be complete early next month. The completion of these tasks will be essential for establishing livelihood activities for local communities and returnees.

Technical Survey and Clearance tasks were completed in Pallaikuli, Alkadaveli, Karunkandal/Vannakulam and Sirunavatkulam in the Manthai West Division of Mannar District in October. Technical Survey and Clearance work started in the latter stages of the month in Adampan also in Manthai West and 29 anti-personnel mines and 26 UXO were found in the space of a week here. In all 170 anti-personnel mines and 262 UXO were found in the task areas for the month.

During the month 23 individuals (9 families) were resettled in Palaikuli, and 81 in Vannakulam. All individuals moving back to these areas were given site and safety briefings by CL staff.

During November, it is anticipated that clearance of the Adampan task, a large area of over 4km² will be ongoing. In addition, clearance will also commence in Madhu Division of Mannar District.

PROGRAMME VISITS

Mike Foster, International Development Minister in the UK Government, together with British High Commissioner Dr Peter Hayes, visited MAG operations in the Mannar District on the 6th of October.

There was also a visit from a Japanese Government delegation on the 30th of October to see MAG's work in Mannar. The delegation comprised Ms. Sato, Deputy Director for Second Country Assistance of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs together with Noriaki Sadamoto from the Embassy in Colombo

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