

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE
WORKING GROUP MEETING
8 September 1997**

Item No. 3.1 Demining

In his report dated 14 July 1997, "Renewing the United Nations: A Programme for Reform" (A/51/950), the Secretary-General stated that, in order to allow the Emergency Relief Coordinator to focus on his core activities, "functions (formerly held by DHA) related to demining activities will be transferred to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, together with the responsibility for the management of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance" (para. 187). It is important to emphasize at the outset that this decision did not in any way alter the Organisation's focus and policies on demining as provided under the relevant General Assembly mandates.

In carrying out the Secretary-General's decision, the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations established a working group, comprised of representatives of DPKO, DHA, UNDP and UNOPS to: a) develop a plan for the transfer of all demining-related activities from DHA to DPKO, and b) propose a comprehensive statement of the demining-related functions to be performed by DPKO (including management of the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance) and the appropriate organizational structure to be established within DPKO to most effectively perform those functions.

Discussions in the working group stressed the importance of the new entity maintaining the cooperative relationships established by the Mine Clearance and Policy Unit (MCPU) of DHA with other departments, agencies and bodies, both national and international, dealing with demining-related activities.

The working group's report, which is presently under consideration by senior management, recommended, *inter alia*, that the new entity would:

- 1) Assume responsibility as UN focal point for all mine-related activities including humanitarian dimensions of the problem, coordination, development of policies, public awareness and advocacy, as well as collecting and sharing of information.
- 2) Mobilize resources for mine action related activities.

- 3) Implement short-term demining programmes where and when required in support of humanitarian or peacekeeping operations. The responsibility for long- term capacity building would continue to rest with UNDP and the national authorities concerned.
- 4) As focal point for mine clearance, DPKO would offer technical assistance to other implementing partners, including inter alia, for assessment missions, the development of SOPs and other standards.
- 5) Assume responsibility for agreements that had been entered into by DHA on behalf of the Organization, i.e., MOUs, MOAs and other legal agreements.
- 6) Assume the posts and other resources in MCPU/DHA, including those funded by voluntary contributions, and honor contractual agreements entered into by DHA in this regard.