

**INTER-AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE WORKING GROUP
54th MEETING**

17-18 September 2003

UNFPA Headquarters, Rafael Salas (19th Floor)

AOB: Explosive Remnants of War - ERW

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1. The presence of massive quantities of Explosive remnants of war (ERW) in war-torn countries is a serious threat to the civilian population and a real burden to the humanitarian actors. Various documents on Cambodia, Laos, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Afghanistan present the severe impacts caused by ERW on the civilian population, on humanitarian action, post-conflict reconstruction and development. Today, in Iraq the humanitarian community is facing many difficulties due to the presence of large quantities of unexploded ordnance (UXO).
2. While there are international conventions concerning antipersonnel landmines (APLC and CCW¹), little exist to regulate ERW and the munitions more likely to become ERW such as cluster bombs. States are currently discussing various aspects of the issue in the framework of the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). These discussions could lead to new regulation under this international instrument.
3. The UN System, as a key actor in humanitarian aid, has not yet come up with a position or recommendations on this issue, which seems to increase in relevance for each new conflict. The IASC is a logical way to build a common position on the issue.
4. At the July 2003 IASC-WG, during the discussion item on Iraq, the issue of ERW and cluster munitions was raised as being a burden in the provision of humanitarian assistance and a real threat for the civilian population. It was thought that the Task force on human rights and humanitarian action would be the more appropriate place to start to approach the issue. UNICEF and UNMAS brought it to the TF on Human Rights and Humanitarian Action, as that body deals with humanitarian law, and the ERW issue is very much one of humanitarian law (not least as the current discussions within the CCW focus on legal instruments).
5. However, while recognising the importance of the issue, members of the TF felt it was not the appropriate IASC forum/TF to deal with the issue (citing that the individual members were not experts in the field and the TF workplan was already heavy) and instead recommended that the way forward be taken up directly with the IASC-WG.

¹ Antipersonnel Landmine Convention, and CCW amended protocol II.

Expected Decisions/Action Points by IASC-WG:

- The establishment of a task force with immediate focus on preparing an IASC statement for the November CCW meeting.
- The development of a TOR for the TF of key tasks and deadlines on how the issue of ERW and its effects can be best addressed.
- Agreement of a statement and to present the draft TOR of the TF.

Prepared by UNICEF, 5 September 2003