

**ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT  
DEPARTMENT OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY  
OFFICE OF HUMANITARIAN MINE ACTION**



**REPORT OF THE  
MINE ACTION PROGRAM (AICMA)  
TO THE  
COMMITTEE ON HEMISPHERIC SECURITY**

**SEPTEMBER 2005**

**General.** The Organization of American States (OAS) Mine Action Program, known formally as “Comprehensive Action against Antipersonnel Mines” (or AICMA by its Spanish acronym), has registered significant successes since its initiation more than thirteen years ago. Originally conceived as an assistance program for mine clearance in Central America, the AICMA Program currently supports a wide range of mine action activities in six Member States, including:

- Support for humanitarian demining activities, including survey, mapping, marking, and clearance;
- Mine risk education for people living in affected areas;
- Victim assistance, including physical and psychological rehabilitation and the socioeconomic reintegration of cleared zones;
- Supervision and assistance for the destruction of stockpiled mines;
- Development of mine action databases; and
- Support for a total ban on use, production, stockpile, sale, or transfer of antipersonnel mines.

**Mandates.** The Program functions under a series of General Assembly mandates. The most recent of these include:

- AG/RES. 2105 (XXXV-O/05) “Support for Action Against Mines in Peru and Ecuador,”
- AG/RES. 2106 (XXXV-O/05) “Support for the Program of Comprehensive Action Against Antipersonnel Mines in Central America,” and
- AG/RES. 2142 (XXXV-O/05) “The Americas as an Antipersonnel Land Mine-Free Zone.”

**Organization.** The Office of Humanitarian Mine Action currently provides overall coordination of the AICMA Program within the General Secretariat under the Department of Multidimensional Security. Its responsibilities include solicitation of financial contributions from the international community, financial management of funds provided and integration and coordination of support from myriad international entities and organizations for mine-affected member states. The Inter-American Defense Board (IADB) provides technical assistance through teams of international supervisors and monitors in the mine-affected countries. The progress achieved by the Program is due in large measure to the support of Member States (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Peru, Venezuela, and United States), who have provided demining trainers, monitors and supervisors through the IADB. Financial contributions from major international donors (Australia, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, European Union, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Norway, Russian Federation, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom and United States) have made the Program possible.

**Humanitarian Demining.** One of the most challenging and successful program areas is the effort to clear antipersonnel mines in the Americas. Humanitarian demining operations were concluded in Costa Rica in 2002, in Honduras in 2004 and in Suriname earlier this year. Nicaragua is now programmed to complete its mine clearance programs in December 2006. However, delays in achieving national plan objectives in some programs, as well as an ongoing donor funding shortfall is now threatening achievement of long-range program goals. Guatemala was previously projected to complete its effort in June of this year but has reprogrammed conclusion of operations to December 2005. In Ecuador and Peru, demining operations have continued with the support of AICMA since 2001, but uncertainties about future funding have arisen where progress has not matched national projections, casting doubt on their ability to sustain efforts toward completion in 2009. Although Nicaragua continues to make steady progress on mine clearance, donor contributions for this year have not met budgetary requirements for one of the five major demining units. Chile has also received financial assistance from AICMA for the procurement of technical and support equipment, but shifting donor priorities this year resulted in delay of an additional equipment delivery through AICMA by at least six months. Despite very limited funding for the establishment of a humanitarian mine clearing capability by the Government of Colombia, AICMA has provided a training team which is currently training the first of several Colombian military

units that will be dedicated solely to humanitarian demining activities. Other noteworthy activities that have taken place in recipient countries this year include:

- Mine clearance operations in Suriname concluded in March 2005, with training, technical assistance and demining support from the IADB and the Honduran Armed Forces.
- In Guatemala, demining activities have been completed in nearly all departments considered to be high-risk zones, with work scheduled for completion in the last three mine-affected departments by the end of 2005.
- The Nicaraguan demining program has completed nearly 90 per cent of the clearance of more than 135,000 mines that were originally emplaced. Nicaragua is now projected to complete major mine clearance work by the end of 2006, with a significantly reduced residual capability to be supported by the Program through 2007.
- In Ecuador, demining operations are underway along the border with Peru in the Cordillera del Condor region.

**Mine-Risk Education.** The mine-risk education programs supported by AOCMA aim to reduce the number of accidents by promoting safe behavior among inhabitants of mine-affected communities. The programs emphasize involvement by affected communities in mine awareness initiatives and benefit from their participation through information received about the location of mined areas and explosive devices. Mine-risk education campaigns are carried out through community visits, radio program messages and school programs, and they are closely coordinated with demining operations in an effort to reach as many people living in mine-affected communities as possible. For example, in Nicaragua in the past five years alone, these efforts have contacted over 200,000 people living in mine-affected areas, while steadily reducing the number of new accidents.

**Victim Assistance.** The Program has assisted over 700 landmine victims since 1997. AICMA provides victims who have no social security or military benefits with transportation from their communities to the rehabilitation center, lodging, meals, prostheses, therapy, and medications. For the past three years, AICMA has supported a vocational training and placement project for landmine victims carried out by the National Technological Institute of Nicaragua, providing technical job training and small business start-up funds for 170 landmine survivors. Likewise, the Program has provided five Ecuadorian victims with prostheses and surgical care and has offered tuition assistance to an Ecuadorian prosthetics technician receiving training in El Salvador.

**Stockpile Destruction.** One of the most important achievements of the Program has been the technical and financial support provided to member states for the destruction of their antipersonnel mine stockpiles. From 2000 through 2004, AICMA assisted the governments of Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Peru in meeting this obligation under the Ottawa Convention, as more than one million stockpiled mines were destroyed, supported largely through contributions from the Government of Canada.

**Support for Antipersonnel Mine Ban.** The Program promoted the interest expressed in OAS General Assembly Resolutions to make the Americas a landmine-free zone by coordinating mine action issues and assisting the Member States with preparation for the Ottawa Convention Review Conference, which took place in November 2004 in Nairobi, Kenya. This November, AICMA will again participate in the meeting of the States Parties in Croatia, in order to share practical achievements and lessons learned with other global mine action programs and strengthen contacts with international donors. The Program is also working to develop a regional conference to take place in Santiago, Chile in March 2006 that will be aimed at improving mine action cooperation within the Americas.

**Resource Mobilization.** Financial contributions received in 2005 have amounted US\$ 3.13 million, significantly short of the projected budgetary projection of approximately US\$ 6.42 million for the year. Contributions in 2004 amounting to approximately US\$ 7.86 million slightly exceeded 2004 requirements for that year, providing some funds to support 2005 requirements. However, the overall funding shortfall threatens to halt or seriously delay progress toward completion of mine clearance projects in several areas. Currently, approximately US\$ 500,000.00 are needed to avoid the imminent suspension of support in three programs. Guatemala faces a suspension of program funding as early as 1 October of this year without the additional US\$ 150,000.00 needed to complete its program in December. Similarly, support for operations in Peru will be suspended also beginning in October due to a lack of donor response to funding request for Peru's program since 2004. In Nicaragua, operations of one of the five 100-man demining units may also be suspended if some US\$ 250,000.00 in additional financing are not received by the end of next month. The prospect for improvement with current financial difficulties do not appear to improve into 2006, when budgetary requirements are actually expected to grow to US\$ 7.97 million to ensure program consolidation and closure in Nicaragua, sustainment of operations in Ecuador and Peru, limited support for logistical needs in Chile, and an expansion of program activities in Colombia. However, overall funding from member state donors appears to be on a downward trend over the last two years, while contributions from non-member states have also declined despite an increase in program requirements through 2006. Direct solicitations by the Program to the donor community for near-term contributions to continue uninterrupted activities have not been successful to date. The likely effects of even short periods without funding for some program areas will be suspension of operations, delay in meeting program objectives and goals, and the loss of personnel whose expertise will be difficult to replace. Program budgetary projections for the remainder of this year through 2009 are as follows:

Country	Year	Budget 2005 (US\$)	Budget 2006 (US\$)	Budget 2007 (US\$)	Budget 2008 (US\$)	Budget 2009 (US\$)	Total 2005-2009 (US\$)
Guatemala		\$766,800.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$766,800.00
Nicaragua		\$3,628,350.00	\$5,086,000.00	\$1,500,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$10,214,350.00
Central America ERW		\$0.00	\$82,320.00	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$150,000.00	\$732,320.00
Suriname		\$120,000.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$120,000.00
Colombia		\$319,000.00	\$1,112,500.00	\$1,500,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	\$2,000,000.00	\$6,767,500.00
Ecuador		\$789,280.00	\$783,740.00	\$900,000.00	\$1,100,000.00	\$1,100,000.00	\$4,673,020.00
Peru		\$792,610.00	\$790,250.00	\$900,000.00	\$1,100,000.00	\$1,100,000.00	\$4,682,860.00
Chile		\$0.00	\$112,500.00	\$250,000.00	\$250,000.00	\$120,000.00	\$732,500.00
<b>Total AICMA</b>		<b>\$6,416,040.00</b>	<b>\$7,967,310.00</b>	<b>\$5,300,000.00</b>	<b>\$4,700,000.00</b>	<b>\$4,470,000.00</b>	<b>\$28,689,350.00</b>

**Conclusion.** The AICMA Program faces serious challenges in the coming months. The principal issues are to reenergize donor contributions to the Program and to encourage mine-affected member states to sustain their efforts at a level that donor states will be willing to support in the coming years. Accomplishing these two important goals will enable the Program to continue to build on a record of success by completing mine and unexploded ordnance clearance in Guatemala and Nicaragua in accordance with current plans. Funding for projects in Ecuador and Peru are also at a critical juncture and will require renewed commitments by both national authorities and donor governments if long-term objectives are to be met. At the same time, Colombia, which faces the most serious landmine problem in

the Americas, needs the support of the international community on a much greater scale than is currently available in order to deal with the growing problems of mine contamination and victims. With reinvigorated support from the donor community and a renewed commitment by the member states, the prospects for achievement of the Program's long-term goal of eliminating the threat of landmines to the people of the Americas can remain positive.

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