

## SUMMARY REPORT OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE MAPG

Hanoi, 15 March 2017

With the endorsement of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) established the Mine Action Partnership Group in Vietnam (MAPG). This was announced on the 20th October 2016 at the Development Partnership Conference on Mine Action in Vietnam and Inauguration ceremony of Vietnam National Mine Action Center in Hoa Lac, Hanoi.

On the 15th March 2017 in Hanoi, the MPI in collaboration with the Standing Board of Steering Committee of the National Mine Action Program in Vietnam for the period 2010-2025 (Program 504) organized the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the MAPG.

More than 100 representatives from relevant Ministries, agencies, the Standing Board of National Steering Committee 504 (NSC 504) and its subordinates, representative from some of the most heavily contaminated provinces in Vietnam, the Vietnam Association for Supporting Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)/Mine Action (VNASMA), representatives from Embassies and Ambassadors, UN agencies and INGOs attended the meeting. Some local and international news agencies and broadcasting agencies joined the event and published information on the first meeting of the MAPG. List of participants can be accessed here:

Since it was the 1<sup>st</sup> MAPG meeting, the meeting agenda focused on two contents (i) Strengthening the organizational structure of MAPG and (ii) highlighting focal activities in the 2017 MAPG work plan. The agenda of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the MAPG can be accessed here:

The Co-chairs of the 1<sup>st</sup> MAPG meeting are Mr. Nguyen The Phuong, Vice-Minister of MPI, Member of NSC 504 and H.E Ted Osius, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam.

In the opening remarks, Mr. Nguyen The Phuong, Vice-Minister of MPI, Co-chair of the MAPG highlighted that Vietnam's achievements in mine action could not be obtained without the support of other countries, he said: *“On the occasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the MAPG, as a member of NSC 504, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Governments, International Organizations, International Non-governmental Organizations who have shown their interest, shared experience, knowledge, provided financial supports over years to support Vietnam in implementing Program 504. I highly appreciate the contribution of U.S. Department of State through the technical and logistic support of IC for this important and meaningful event”*. The full opening remarks by Mr. Nguyen The Phuong can be accessed here:

In the remarks by international co-chair of MAPG, H.E Ted Osius, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam appreciated the efforts that Vietnam has put in overcoming consequences of war. He said: *“We come together at a very pivotal and profoundly heartening moment. Along with this forum, Vietnam has made other important steps to integrate its National Mine Action program with the international community. The Vietnam National Mine Action Center opened its doors in October and a new mine action decree is pending approval”*. The full remarks by H.E Ted Osius can be accessed here:

On behalf of the MAPG Executive Committee, Mr. Cao Manh Cuong, Deputy General Director of Foreign Economic Relations Department (FERD), MPI, Co-Chair of MAPG Executive Committee presented a summary introduction of MAPG, including: (1) Overview, (2) Agenda, (3) Discussion. The introductory presentation of MAPG can be accessed here:

On behalf of the Standing Board of NSC 504, Mr. Phung Ngoc Son, Director General of VNMAC gave a presentation on Summary of key achievements of Program 504 in 2016 and Priorities in 2017, including two main contents: (1) 2016 Activity Report and (2) 2017 Plan of Action of Standing Board and Program 504. The full presentation can be accessed here:

Under the facilitation of Co-chairs of MAPG, many representatives of Ministries, local agencies, international partners actively participated in discussion and provided opinions on main contents of the Agenda of this meeting.

During the meeting, Mr. Kim Jinoh, new Country Director of KOICA provided updates on implementation of the technical support project on mine action, which is dedicated to VNMAC and some provinces of Vietnam. He also thanked the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam for being a pioneer in the field of providing international support for mine action in Vietnam.

Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director of the Geneva International Center of Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) appreciated the implementation of initiative on MAPG establishment based on the partnership initiative between MPI and GICHD with the participation of the International Center (IC). Concerning the importance of collaboration, he emphasized *“GICHD’s projects funded by many donors such as Australia, Switzerland, UK and U.S. have contributed to today’s achievements. I’m very happy to see GICHD supports to the Government of Vietnam and national authorities, we would like to continue receiving cooperation and collaboration from MAPG in Vietnam”*. The full speech can be accessed here:

The Representative of the German Embassy in Vietnam informed that the Seminar on Convention of Cluster Munitions would be held on 16-17/3/2017 in Bangkok and would like to receive representatives from Vietnam to attend the important regional event.

Representative of Norwegian Embassy highlighted the opportunity of joining Convention on Cluster Munitions and Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty for experience sharing and technical support. Vietnam has good experience and experts in the field of mine action. Norway encourages Vietnam to join these Conventions.

To start the floor discussion, Vice-Minister Nguyen The Phuong focused attention on the importance of the MAPG's establishment, leading to mutual understanding and more dialogues between Vietnamese and international partners in order to coordinate and collaborate with each other in mine action sector. He encouraged all local and international stakeholders to register to become members of the MAPG.

To encourage partners' participation in the MAPG, in his remarks, the U.S. Ambassador pictured MAPG as an eco-system for international cooperation in mine action sector. He said: *“The great thing is U.S. cooperation with Vietnam has created a “UXO ecosystem” for international cooperation. Partners can easily plug in to our projects for humanitarian survey and clearance, mine risk education, victims assistance, and capacity building. We have always welcomed partnerships with other donors. “*

During the floor discussion, Mr. Jonathon Guthrie, Senior Technical Advisor of VNMAC emphasized the coordination between relevant agencies and organizations in mine action sector. It was important to clearly identify the roles, positions and coordination mechanism between VNMAC and MAPG to avoid duplication and move towards a common goal.

In response to the opinion of Mr. Guthrie, Vice-Minister Nguyen The Phuong shared that NSC 504 is an inter-ministerial body established by the Government to provide direction for the implementation of Program 504. VNMAC is a governmental agency who is in charge of implementing tasks assigned by the NSC 504, including also being focal point of coordination for mine action activities throughout the country. On the other hand, MAPG is an open forum with voluntarily participation of interested local and international partners, who wish to support the implementation of Program 504. The Vice-Minister acknowledged the opinion of VNMAC's STA for further implementation of the MAPG activities.

Mr. Rory Logan, from GICHD, asked about the formation and operation of thematic working groups under the MAPG. He suggested that focal subjects should be identified to ease the formation of the working groups. Regarding this issue, Vice-Minister Nguyen The Phuong said that based on needs and proposals by relevant stakeholders, in review of 2017 MAPG plan of action, the Executive Committee will discuss and send proposal to Co-chairs of MAPG on which thematic working groups should be established in order to conduct necessary studies.

Representative of Canadian Embassy mentioned that as VNMAC and the MAPG finalize their working plans, the question of how the Executive Committee would determine which subjects are prioritized to reflect the voice of affected communities, population and UXO/mine victims was raised. He also questioned which organizations should participate in MAPG and the position of affected population and what can be done to support them.

During the floor discussion, Mr. Phan Duc Tuan, General Secretary of VNASMA – an organization who carries out victim assistance (VA) activities since its establishment 2 years ago – shared the same opinion with representative of Canadian Embassy. Mr. Tuan recommended that in order to ensure the effectiveness of VA activities, Vietnam needs an updated and accurate information management system to well reflect the status and needs of affected population, including vulnerable groups. The system should allow updating and sharing information on implementation of VA projects of Ministries, agencies and provinces, international organizations and create information exchange mechanism among interested partners in a timely and consent manner. The MAPG, as an open forum and needs to enable broader participation and advocates for support to achieve these goals.

The representative from Quang Tri Province, Mr. Nguyen Duc Quang, Vice Director of Department of Foreign Affairs, mentioned that the Province has 20 years working in mine action. Quang Tri province established Provincial Legacy of War Coordination Center (LWCC) with the support from the Governments of Norway, U.S. and Ireland. The Province would like to develop its partnership and coordinate with national level in management of mine action activities at provincial level.

The Province acknowledged that there're 3 national-level agencies in the field of mine action, including VNMAC, VBMAC and now MAPG and wanted to know the relationship between these 3 agencies in mobilizing resources for mine action.

Concerning the focal activities in the 2017 MAPG agenda, Mr. Resad Zunuzagic, representative of Norwegian People's Aid recommended that MAPG would (i) support VNMAC in fulfilling its proper role as a national mine action center; (ii) coordinate with INGOs to provide technical and information management support to VNMAC; and (iii) enhance legislation, which could be priorities to MAPG in 2017.

In terms of the focused activities in 2017 MAPG agenda, representative of the International Center (IC), Ms. Nguyen Thu Ha, Deputy Country Director, suggested that two focuses of MAPG activities in 2017 could be: (i) Support to issuance of the Decree on management and implementation of mine action activities and development of relevant Circulars guiding the implementation of the Decree and (ii) Integrate mine action activities into Socio-economic Development Plan (SEDP).

Mr. Rory Logan, representative of GICHD, shared the same opinion with Ms. Nguyen Thu Ha on the integration of mine action into SEDP. Besides, Mr. Logan also suggested one subject to be put in the agenda, which is management of residual ERW (also known as MORE) by learning experiences of other developed countries around the world. The latter are still dealing with thousands of tons of ERW, mostly from the 2nd World War. This approach suggests the combination of two methodologies: active searching and responsive method, through surveys to evaluate the contamination risks and development of procedures, standards and policies to handle the contamination at different levels. It informs the decision-making process and enables the effective use of existing resources to serve the socio-economic development goals.

Representative of International Cooperation Department, Ministry of Labors, Invalids, and Social Affairs (MOLISA) agreed with representative of Canadian Embassy that VA activities should receive as much attention as clearance activities. MOLISA has put many efforts to VA activities and encouragement of international interest. However, these activities seem to receive less attention. It may be due to the fact that it lacks a comprehensive victim database and an effective assistance mechanism. MOLISA is developing social protection centers providing public services to UXO/mine victims together with supporting program for persons with disability. The representative wished to have one more representative of MOLISA (relating to international cooperation and social protection) to be a member of the MAPG Executive Committee.

Representative of CRS shared that CRS is an US-funded organization having more than 10 years working in MRE and 05 years in VA in Vietnam. CRS expressed the same opinion with MOLISA that VA should receive more attention and that MAPG should have VA-related thematic working group to share achievements and challenges. The 2017 MAPG Agenda should also put this issue into consideration.

With respect to VA, Vice Minister Nguyen The Phuong gave an example of mine action project funded by Korea, where the VA component is put at the same level as other project components. Vice Minister highlighted that MAPG would continue to cooperate with other partners to promote VA and MRE activities.

In conclusion of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the MAPG, on behalf of H.E Ted Osius, U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, and Vice Minister Nguyen The Phuong noted that the meeting was successful and thanked all participants for their active participation. Thus, the meeting agenda has reached its expected goal.

Concerning the focused activities in the 2017 MAPG Agenda, Mr. Nguyen The Phuong, Vice Minister of MPI, Co-chair of MAPG, concluded as follows:

1. Relevant agencies advocate for the issuance of Decree on management and implementation of mine action activities in Vietnam. The MAPG will support VNMAC in developing relevant Circulars guiding the implementation of the Decree.
2. Development and operation of information and database system on mine action, including VA
3. Strengthening information exchange between local and international partners on mine action activities in Vietnam, including VA activities
4. Acknowledging opinions collected during the meeting, the Executive Committee with the support of Secretariat will draft the 2017 MAPG Agenda based on its vision of activities toward 2020

Finally, Vice-Minister of MPI, Co-chair of MAPG encouraged local and international stakeholders to register to be members of MAPG following the provided registration form by March 31, 2017. Members can register to join the Executive Committee, the Secretariat, the Thematic Working Group or other positions in order to support Vietnam in mine action./.