

UN voices concern over minefields in DRC

MONUC

Kinshasa, 5 April 2010 - Experts report that landmines and other unexploded devices remain a serious risk to populations at some 2,600 locations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Speaking at a Press conference to raise awareness of International Mine Action Day, Harouna Ouedraogo, Director of the United Nations Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) said the Centre and partner NGOs, needed about US\$2.5 million to survey minefields in the DRC.

On International Mine Action Day (4 April) United Nations Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, noted that "landmines and explosive remnants of war continue to inflict a terrible toll. These indiscriminate weapons cause grievous injuries and death, hamper reconstruction in post-conflict zones, damage the environment, and are an obstacle to socioeconomic and development activities long after conflicts have ended."

The UN supports mine action programmes in nearly 60 countries with the objective of improving human security, stabilising peace, and rebuilding the socioeconomic fabric of war-affected communities.

A UN mine action programme was established in DRC in 2002 under the auspices of MONUC which is mandated by Security Council Resolution 1291 (2000) to deploy mine action experts and coordinate their activities.

UNMACC reports that since 2002 in the DRC:

- some 14,468 kilometres of roads have been checked for unexploded devices and made safe;
- 6,452,795 square metres of land have been cleared of mines;
- 1,879,091 people have been educated about the danger of mines, and:
- 2,676 mine victims have been recorded.