

Minutes of the meeting of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) Steering Group
Wednesday, 25 November 2020
Held virtually via Microsoft Teams (90 mins)

Participants

Chair	Ms. Ilene Cohn, Deputy Director, OiC UNMAS
Secretary	Mr. Rory Logan, Secretary to the IMAS Review Board
UNICEF	Ms. Meritxell Relaño Arana, Director, Office of Emergency Programmes- Geneva, assisted by Mr. Hugues Laurence, UNICEF, NY
UNOPS	Mr. Amir Omeragic, representing Mr. James Provenzano, General Counsel & Director, UNOPS NY
UNDP	Mr. Steinar Essen, Development and Mine Action Specialist
GICHD	Ambassador Stefano Toscano, Director
Drafting Committee	Mr. Richard Boulter, (Co-Chair) Senior Programme Manager – UNMAS, South Sudan, and Observer-Member IMAS Review Board, UNMAS and Mr. Rory Logan, (Co-Chair) Secretary to the IMAS Review Board, GICHD
Review Board	Ms. Abigail Hartley, Chair of the IMAS Review Board.

The meeting commenced at 0800 EST / 1400 CET.

Ms. Cohn opened the meeting and, after introductions the agenda was adopted. Ms Cohn also thanked the Drafting Committee (DC) and Review Board (RB) for all their work in preparing new guidance for the SG to consider.

Update from the IMAS Drafting Committee

Mr. Boulter provided an update on progress made by the DC since the last SG meeting on 01 September. The drafting has been a collaborative effort which has proceeded smoothly, to date all meetings have been attended by all parties. The DC developed a plan whereby proposed amendments to IMAS 01.10 would be sequenced, and it has elected to prioritize recommendations relating to the SG so that substantive amendments could be ready in time to be endorsed by the IACG-MA on 08 December.

Issues relating to the SG have generally been uncontentious and discussions have resulted in a set of amendments that the DC believes address all of the concerns raised in the EY report. There had been some discussion on the implications of having permanent (UN, GICHD) and rotating (NMAA, Donor) members on the SG, the DC agreed that in principle there should be as little difference as possible in terms of the rights and responsibilities of these two categories.

The Chair of the Mine Action Support Group (MASG) has already indicated (via the MASG Secretary) that he would accept an invitation to join the SG if one was sent. Determining an appropriate mechanism through which a NMAA representative should be selected had been the most challenging aspect.

Consideration of recommended changes to IMAS 01.10

There was some discussion over the process and sequencing for submitting updated guidance for endorsement by the IACG Principals. Co-chairs of the DC noted that the intention had been to deliver amendments so that they could be endorsed at the 08 December IACG meeting, that there have never been issues further adapting IMAS where required and that they are often seen as living documents. The point was also made that gaining endorsement of a clear set responsibilities for the SG would help properly frame discussions at RB level in the new year.

Ms. Cohn opened the floor for specific comments from SG members.

Amb. Toscano made two specific comments:

The notion of 'Executive Direction' is well articulated in section B.2.1. (page 12)¹ but that minor edits are required to ensure consistency of language with respect to this notion and to avoid any potential confusion over the role of the SG.

Amb. Toscano also questioned the suggestion that the SG members be responsible for ensuring that new and revised IMAS are in line with relevant treaties and policies recalling that the decision had already been made to provide a rotating observer position on the RB to Implementation Support Units of the APMBC, CCM and CCW. Providing a check on IHL was therefore more appropriate as a function of the RB.

Ms. Relaño and Mr. Omeragic noted through the 'chat' function that UNICEF and UNOPS supported the text that has been developed by the DC. Mr. Essen also indicated the endorsement of UNDP.

Ms. Cohn made several comments relating to clarity and consistency of terminology and possible structural changes (including the way Rules of Procedure are outlined). Other notable feedback included questioning whether the SG should have any role in overseeing Technical Working Groups (TWG) that are established by the RB and whether the table of management structure included as Appendix 3 to Annex B is really necessary. Ms. Cohn will provide detailed feedback to the DC, who would then be free to contact other SG members bilaterally if any of the suggestions appeared contentious.

The SG determined that it should be possible to incorporate editorial updates swiftly and submit amended IMAS 01.10 for endorsement by the IACG on 08 December. This would be done on the understanding that there is possibility to re-open aspects as necessary when further updates are incorporated.

Selection of an NMMA member of the SG

Following some discussion over the complicated nature of selecting an NMAA member it was agreed that the principle that NMAA should put forward a candidate themselves was sound.

The DC proposed that an on line event arranged during which NMAA might be invited to nominate a representative from among themselves (see minutes of DC meeting dated 16 November). Whilst the

¹ including; strategic direction and policy guidance (through the IMAS Workplan), a quality management function as well as ensuring that the composition of the RB remains appropriate and representative.

annual NDM-UN would lend itself well to this, the NDM in 2021 may be postponed or even cancelled as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It was agreed that a letter explaining the situation would be drafted and distributed to NMAA Directors on behalf of the SG. The letter will be used as a means of soliciting their feedback including whether they would like to nominate any of their counterparts to take a seat on the SG. A remote event could then be held at an appropriate time so that a representative can be selected. It is understood that this initiative may require considerable coordination by the Secretariat to ensure that the objective and process are well understood.

The SG agreed that rotating members would be invited to future meetings once a representative has been selected in both categories.

Approval of draft IMAS

Mr. Logan provided a short introductory summary covering each of the IMAS that have been put forward by the Review Board. The following standards were approved without further comment: IMAS 07.31, IMAS 09.41, IMAS 10.40 and IMAS 10.60. IMAS 12.10 was approved after a short discussion and following confirmation that the TWG had given due consideration to gender and diversity.

Consideration of IMAS 13.10

IMAS 13.10 'Victim Assistance'(1st Edition, 2020) was published in draft in April 2020.

Since publication in draft, substantive feedback has been submitted to the SG by the Harvard Law School Project on Disability, the correspondence highlights a number of inconsistencies and disconnects between the draft standard and the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The SG was also informed that the Secretary of the RB has received a request for amendments, based on the Harvard law letter, from one of the members that was heavily involved in drafting the document.

In addition to the Permanent Mission Colombia has written a letter advising that their country has elected to 'abstain' from the standard for legal reasons.

The SG decided to return IMAS 13.10 to the Chair of the Review Board to ask for it to be re-worked in view of the above. This IMAS should not be assigned to a TWG until the new rules and procedures for TWG have been devised and endorsed. The Secretary of the Review Board has been asked to remove the draft from the IMAS Website until further updates have been made and approved.

AOB

Ms. Relaño requested that 90 minutes are set aside for SG meetings in future, a suggestion which was supported by the Chair.

The Secretary was asked to provide SG members with an overview of current IMAS workplan, including which workstreams are ongoing or outstanding.