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ERITREA

MISSION

"We aim
at
a better life
for all
Eritreans
especially
the poor"

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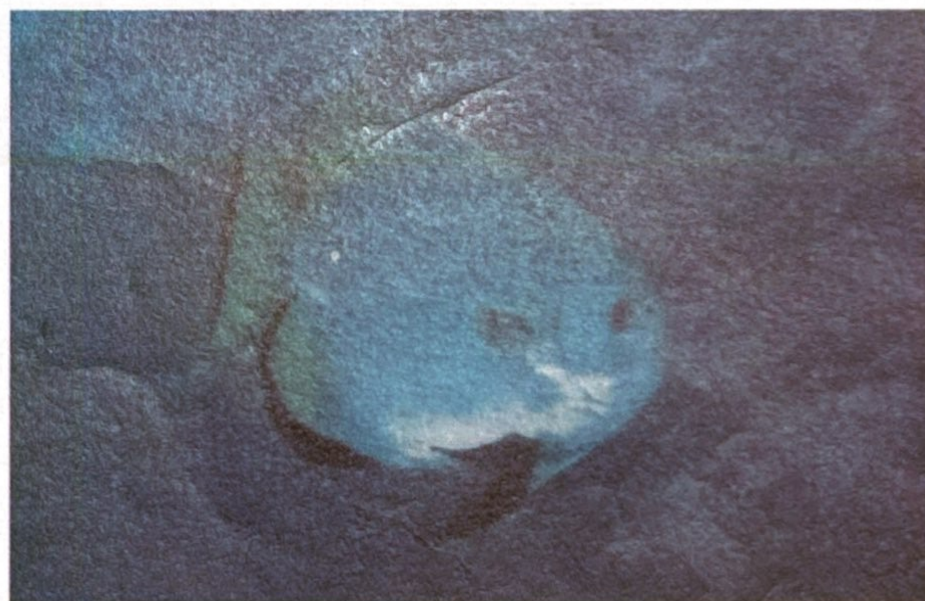
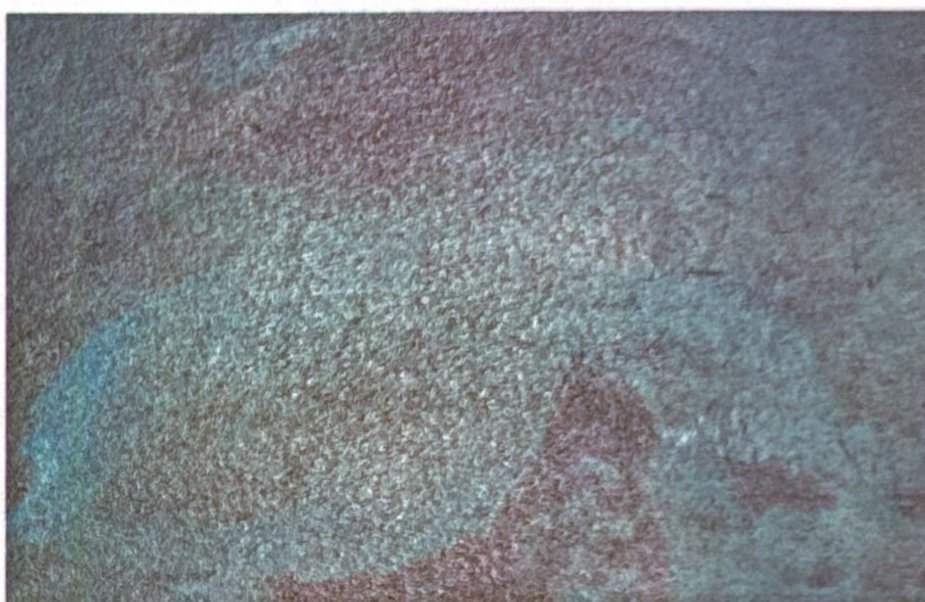
A Multi-Million UNDP/GEF Biodiversity Project Back on Track

Yoseph Admekom

Implementation of a project to conserve and manage Eritrea's Coastal, Marine and Island Biodiversity (CMI-BD) is back on track after some difficulties in implementation. A project extension of three years with new targets and streamlined priority activities reflected in a revised Action Plan, and coordination mechanism have revitalized the project.

The CMI-BD project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (USD 4.986 million), and the Government of Eritrea (USD 0.84 million) over 5 years. The project agreement was signed in December 1998 by International Cooperation Macro Policy and Economic Coordination, as the Government Coordinating Authority, the Ministry of Fisheries, as the Executing Agency, and UNDP-Eritrea as GEF representative.

This was preceded by a GEF enabling project, the Pre-Investment Facility (PRIF), implemented prior to this unique and full-sized GEF project in Eritrea. The objective of the CMI-BD project is to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the globally significant biodiversity in Eritrea's CMI ecosystems. Sustainable development and use of the coastal, marine and island biodiversity resources is to be achieved through a participatory management framework, establishing conservation (protected) areas, an operational information system, initiating a species conservation programme, and increasing



awareness of the benefits of biodiversity.

GEF support came after Eritrea prepared the National Environment Management Plan (1995), ratified and signed the Global Convention on Biological Diversity on 21 March 1996. It is also part of the Red Sea Strategic Action Programme which, along with other countries bordering the Red Sea, contributes towards conserving the resources and habitats of the sea. The aims of the CMI-BD project reflect the priorities of the Framework Marine Conser-

vation Strategy of 1996 whose objectives are contained in the National Biodiversity Action Strategy (NBAS) prepared in 1999.

The project, which was going on practically unnoticed for a while, was severely affected by the acute shortage of full time technically competent staff, resulting in poor coordination and goal setting. The situation was made worse by the war between Ethiopia and Eritrea as the few remaining personnel were mobilized for the national emergency.



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COMMENTARY

UNDP in Mine Action

Rita Mazzocchi

Eritrea has a major landmine and unexploded ordnance (UXO) problem

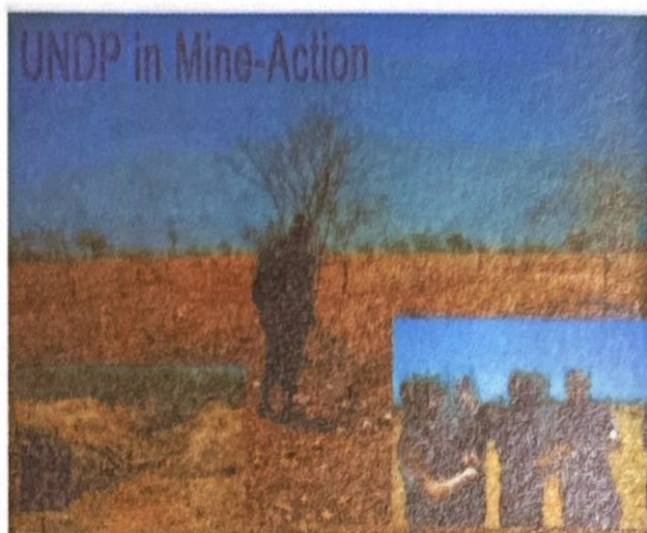
dating back to World War II and the struggle for independence from Ethiopia (1961 – 1991). During the struggle for independence alone, approximately 1-2 million landmines were scattered over much of Eritrea. Landmines were used to defend strongholds around cities and populated areas, military camps and roads. Landmines were also placed in farmlands, near water sources, and are generally found in areas of former battle zones. The recent war between Eritrea and Ethiopia (1998-2000) is a source of further landmine and UXO contamination.

Upon signing of the Peace Agreement on the 12th of December 2000, both Eritrea and Ethiopia requested the assistance of the UN system to rid their countries of the threat of landmines and UXO – the “eternal soldiers.”

Eritrea followed up its request of assistance by signing the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (the Ottawa Convention) on the 27th of August 2001.

The National response to the landmine and UXO contamination includes the setting up of the Eritrean Mine Action Programme (EMAP) followed in July 2002 by a Proclamation establishing the Eritrean Demining Authority (the Authority). The

Authority has the mandate to co-ordinate and regulate all mine action activities in the country.



The first to respond to the Eritrean Government request for assistance in the area of mine action was the UN Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), through its Mine Action Co-ordination Centre (UNMEE-MACC).

This initial response was soon followed by the setting up of a Mine Risk Education Programme first by UNHCR and, later by UNICEF, and the Mine Action Capacity Building Programme (MACBP) by UNDP. Non Governmental Organisations, such as Halo Trust, Danish Church Aid and Danish Demining Group, with the assistance of donors, also responded to the request. The results of these responses has been that many areas such as the valley below Tericho (Senafe) have been demined and, in many places, land is now accessible to communities. Though a lot has been accomplished, much remains to be done.

The overall objective of mine action in Eritrea and

specifically of the MACBP is to :

“Enable increased economic development by reducing the socio-economic impact of landmines and UXO contamination by assisting the Eritrean Government to set up, develop and strengthen in a national capacity to plan, manage, co-ordinate, execute and monitor mine action and related activities.”

As yet, there is no precise data in Eritrea as to the effects of landmines on communities. However, for the period May 2000 to August 2002 there have been 369 landmine and UXO accidents reported to the UNMEE-MACC -most involving young people. The most tragic landmine UXO accident, to date, is the Senafe incident of the 22nd of January 2002 in which eight (8) school age boys were involved; 4 died and 4 were badly injured.

While the UNDP Mine Action Capacity Building Programme (MACBP) is not directly involved in demining it is a key component of the national response to the landmine and UXO contamination. The MACBP will support the Eritrean Demining Authority to develop and implement a national strategy for demining based on data collected by the Socio-Economic Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) currently underway. The MACBP will also assist the Ministry of Labour and Human Welfare to develop and implement a national policy on disabled people, including mine victims.



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EVENTS

UNDP Assisted Rehabilitation Project Handed Over

Alessandro Campo

A UNDP supported project aimed at restocking backyard poultry in war-affected areas was handed over to the Ministry of Agriculture in Senafe on 27 November 2002. The project, implemented by an Italian NGO, Gruppo Volontario Civile (GVC), cost UNDP US \$ 220,000—sourced from the Italian Government through PoWER.

Addressing the participants, Ato Arefaine Berhe, Minister of Agriculture, pointed out that the UNDP/GVC Project should be taken as an example and that similar initiatives should be undertaken in other areas of the country. He also stressed that the poultry farm would support and improve the lives of the war-affected people in the area. Similarly, H.E. Emanuele Pignatelli, Italian Ambassador to Eritrea, expressed his satisfaction with the achievements and successful completion of the rehabilitation works of the UNDP/GVC project.

The ceremony was also attended by Mr. Batha Tedros, Head of the Ministry of Agriculture in Zoba Debub, Dr. Okbazghi Kifle, Head of ARD in Zoba Debub, Mr. Firouz Sobhani, UNDP Senior Deputy Resident Representative, Prof.



Techeste Ahderom, UNDP Senior Advisor on Recovery, Mr. Marino Martin, UNDP/PoWER Programme Coordinator, and several representatives of the government and civil society, including Project beneficiaries.

This project was assisted by UMEE/CIMIC (Indian Battalion) who provided a bulldozer. The Italian Government is a major donor of the UNDP/PoWER Programme.



EVENTS

UNDP Supports Functional Review of Ministry of Agriculture

Michael Tewoldemedhin

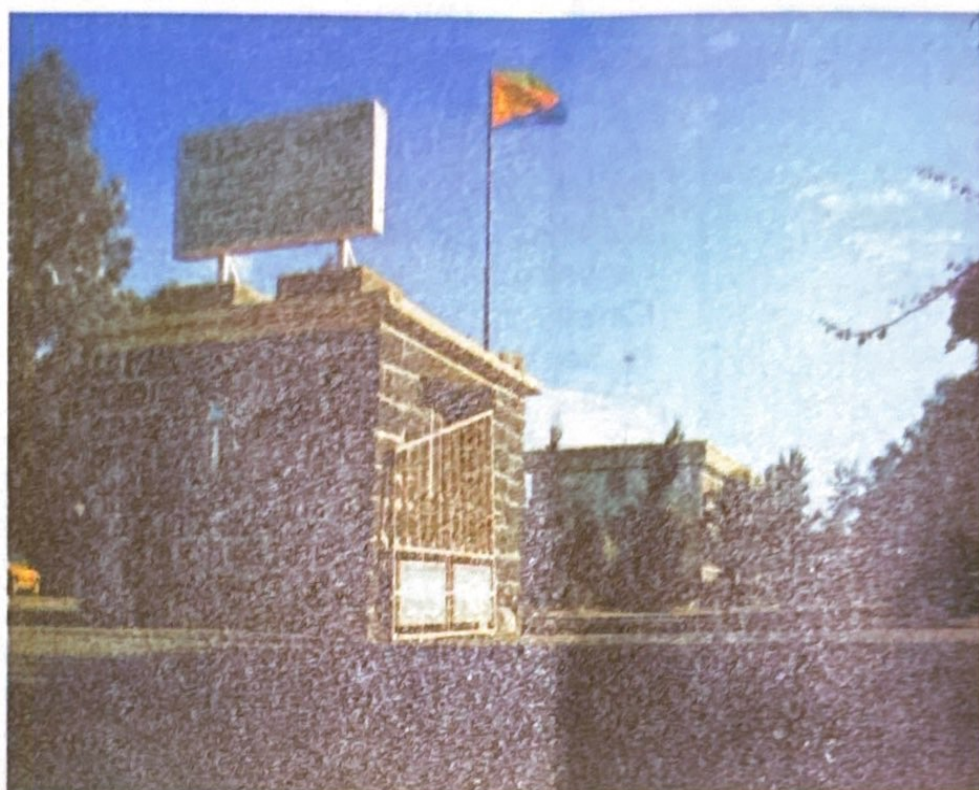
UNDP and UNOPS secured funds from a Danish Trust Fund to support the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) to undertake a Zoba/Sub-Zoba Organisational Study and to prepare an Agricultural Sector Policy and Strategy.

The purpose of the Organisational Study was to define the most efficient and effective way of organising the outreach functions of the Ministry at zoba and sub-zoba levels.

The objective of the Development of an Agricultural Sector Policy and Strategy, which was carried out concurrently with the above component, is to elaborate both sectoral and sub-sectoral policy in a manner that can provide guidance and direction to stakeholders and serve as a platform for establishing investment priorities.

The Organizational Study started with the preparation of a concept paper, which was discussed during a consultative workshop that culminated in the production of a Needs Assessment Report on Zobas/Sub-Zobas and a Decentralization Model for the MoA. The needs assessment identified the roles, mandates and functions of zoba and sub-zoba offices of the MoA.

Similarly, the Agricultural Sector Policy and Strategy framework document (final report), which started with preparation of the Docu-



ment Review and Inception Report, was a result of extensive discussions at a national consultative workshop.

In order to effectively implement the restructured organization, UNDP/UNOPS plan to mobilize more resources from the Danish Trust Fund to undertake Management Development and Training at Central, Zoba and Sub-Zoba levels.

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