

LANDMINE CLEARANCE A KEY DRIVER FOR FOOD SECURITY

World Food Prize laureate highlights importance of post-conflict clearance in delivering food security for world's poorest

MOXICO, ANGOLA, March 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The winner of the 2023 World Food Prize has called for increased funding to enable the clearance of land contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war in the global battle against food poverty.

The call for action from World Food Prize Laureate Heidi Kuhn, founder of the humanitarian organisation Roots of Peace, came as she visited the minefields of Angola to witness deminers working to make land safe for farming.

Mrs Kuhn spent time with female and male deminers of international NGO MAG (Mines Advisory Group), a humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisation that employs some 6,300 people globally and destroys landmines, cluster munitions and unexploded bombs in places affected by conflict.

Mrs Kuhn said today: "Landmines continue to devastate communities, with long-term and reverberating effects. They not only maim and kill but they blight development and prevent some of the poorest families in the world from feeding their loved ones.

"Food security is one of the world's most pressing issues and having witnessed first-hand the scale of the problem and the skill of the deminers who are seeking to overcome it, I today ask the world's governments to increase their support for this vital work."

Mrs Kuhn, who spent two days with MAG's deminers in Moxico province, Angola, founded Roots of Peace from her Marin County, California, home nearly 27 years ago, driven by a vision to transform mines to vines —replacing deadly landmines with life-giving vineyards and orchards.



Heidi Kuhn and MAG deminer

Her visit to Angola was timed to coincide with International Women's Day and follows the publication of a research paper that indicates the critical role that landmine clearance can play in improving food security for hard-pressed communities.

The study, based on qualitative research conducted in southern Lebanon, showed that humanitarian mine action strengthened local and regional food systems and supported progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal of zero hunger.



MAG female deminers Angola

Angola ranks among the world's most heavily mined nations following four decades of war. Prior to the conflict, which ended in 2002, the country was a net food exporter but has since been forced into dependency on food imports.

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equivalent of 1,400 soccer pitches.

Jamie Franklin, Executive Director of MAG America, said: “Roots of Peace and MAG are together dedicated to highlighting the essential role of landmine clearance in advancing agricultural development and ensuring food security in Angola and globally.

“In countries across the world, including in the Middle East, Africa and south east Asia, we see the incredibly positive impact that landmine clearance can have, bringing land back into productive use for sometimes extremely impoverished communities.”

Roots of Peace and MAG are exploring the potential to collaborate in support of post-clearance

More than 73 million square metres of land in the country are believed to be contaminated with over 1,100 known and suspected minefields. In 2022, at least 41 Angolans were killed and 66 injured in incidents. Globally, some 15 people are killed or injured every day and more than 60 million people still live with the threat of contamination.

MAG has been working in Angola since 1994. In the last decade alone, and currently with the support of the US and UK governments, MAG has cleared more than 10 million square metres of minefields for communities—the

food production projects in Angola, Ukraine and elsewhere.

Mrs Kuhn highlighted how Angola's agricultural potential was of strategic significance in the context of plans to develop a major freight rail line – the so-called Lobito Corridor – that would run from the Atlantic coast of Angola to Zambia.

Supported by the US, EU, and African Development Bank, the initiative is designed to transport raw materials such as minerals and is expected to ease the transportation of farm products from Moxico to international markets, unlocking new possibilities for Angola's farmers.

ABOUT ROOTS OF PEACE

Roots of Peace supports the world's most vulnerable farmers and traders, removing the remnants of war and restoring agricultural productivity and prosperity. Roots of Peace is a humanitarian organization dedicated to the removal of landmines and the subsequent replanting and rebuilding of war-torn regions. Founded in 1997 by Heidi Kuhn, the goal of Roots of Peace is to turn minefields into farmland and support victims of landmine accidents.

ABOUT MINES ADVISORY GROUP (MAG)

MAG is a humanitarian, development and peacebuilding organisation global organization that delivers humanitarian mine action in more than 30 countries globally, clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance, and delivering risk education programmes, so communities can live in



Villagers at an explosive ordnance risk education session in Moxico province



Heidi with female deminers Angola



Heidi Kuhn with MAG deminers Angola

safety. MAG also delivers weapons and ammunition management programmes to reduce the risk of armed violence. MAG is a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for its role in the campaign that led to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. www.maginternational.org

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