Mine Clearance Planning Agency (MCPA) — Afghanistan, Mine Detection Center (MDC) — Afghanistan, Medical Care Development International, Messiah College, Mine Action Information Center, WRA. These partners have contributed resources that reinforce United States government efforts to combat the global landmine problem. Recognizing that donor governments alone cannot solve the problem soon enough—even with the U.S. government’s more than $1.2 billion in mine-action assistance since 1993—these groups are speeding the pace at which affected countries can be freed from the humanitarian impact of landmines and other explosive hazards. PM/WRA is especially pleased to welcome our newest partners to the program: Coalition Against Land Mines (CALM), Demining Institute, Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, Washington, DC 20522, (202) 647-0483, Fax: (202) 647-0489, Email: BPAIMail@state.gov.

Welcome New Partners

In the past few months, the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement has welcomed eight new partners to our decade-old Public-Private Partnership Program. We hope all partners will be able to network and collaborate with each other in the future.

CALM (Coalition Against Landmines) is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization founded in 2006 to serve child landmine survivors and to promote awareness, education and rehabilitation. CALM focuses on facilitating vital rehabilitation services and education to child landmine survivors and also works to raise public mine awareness, particularly of the young people in the United States. To learn more, please visit www.calmint.org or e-mail calm@calmint.org.

The Demining Agency for Afghanistan (DAFA) has been clearing hazardous and mine-contaminated areas in Afghanistan since 1990. DAFA operates with a complete tool box of manual-demining teams, mechanical-demining units, explosives-ordnance-disposal (EOD) teams, and mine-detecting dog sets. For more information, please contact the Director of DAFA at sattar_dafa@yahoo.ca and daffinance@yahoo.com.

The Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement is pleased to mark the 10th anniversary of its Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) Public-Private Partnership Program, which enlists civil society support for clearing persistent landmines and explosive remnants of war, teaching mine-risk education, and rendering assistance to survivors of landmine accidents around the world. Since its founding in October 1997, this Public-Private Partnership Program has grown to include 61 non-governmental organizations, civic associations, educational groups, and corporations. These partners have contributed resources that reinforce United States government efforts to combat the global landmine problem. Recognizing that donor governments alone cannot solve the problem soon enough—even with the U.S. government’s more than $1.2 billion in mine-action assistance since 1993—these groups are speeding the pace at which affected countries can be freed from the humanitarian impact of landmines and other explosive hazards.

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PeaceTrees Vietnam Celebrates 12 Years of Post-War Renewal at Embassy of Vietnam
by Jerilyn Brusseau, Founder, PeaceTrees Vietnam

PeaceTrees Vietnam, a nongovernmental organization based in Bainbridge Island, Washington, has been helping to strengthen ties between the United States and Vietnam by removing landmines, providing mine survivors benefits, teaching and mine-risk education (MRE), and planting trees in Vietnam for over a decade. On Thursday, June 28, Vietnam’s Ambassador to the United States co-hosted with PeaceTrees Vietnam a reception at the Embassy of Vietnam to raise funds for the PeaceTrees Friendship Village, built on a former U.S. Marine combat base in Quang Tri province.

“More than three decades have passed since the end of the war in Vietnam, yet its consequences keep lingering in my country. People are still suffering and dying from landmines, unexploded ordnance, and Agent Orange,” said His Excellency Nguyen Tam Chien, Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to the United States of America. “Therefore we welcome and deeply appreciate efforts by PeaceTrees Vietnam along with other American organizations to help heal the wounds of war and to foster a new and lasting friendship between our nations.”

Guests gathered in celebration and support of PeaceTrees Village in Quang Tri province, where 100 homes for 650 residents are nearing completion on the safely cleared site of a former U.S. Marine combat base. The village, once infested by landmines and various explosive remnants of war, is being built by PeaceTrees Vietnam with support from the Vietnamese government and the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) to encourage humanitarian mine action and peace-building in Vietnam and around the world.

PeaceTrees Vietnam was founded in 1995 by the family of 1st Lieutenant Daniel B. Cheney, U.S. Army helicopter pilot killed in action in 1969, in cooperation with the Vietnamese government. PeaceTrees Vietnam’s mission is to clear landmines and unexploded ordnance, provide medical and social assistance to survivors, and build communities in the former combat zones of Vietnam.

The reception was made possible by the generous sponsorship of the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) and the Office of Political-Military Affairs.

Love is in Her Heart: Mary Wilson of the Supremes Helps Combat Global Landmine Problem
by John Stevens, PM/WRA

Mary Wilson, one of the singers who formed the world-famous Supremes, visited the U.S. Department of State on September 26 to meet with Ambassador Stephen Mull, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs, and members of the Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (PM/WRA) to discuss the global landmine problem. Wilson, who was appointed Cultural Ambassador by former Secretary of State Colin Powell, is now a spokesperson for the nongovernmental organization, the Humpty Dumpty Institute (see http://www.thehdli.org/mary.html). She will help the HDI raise public awareness about the landmine threat and encourage civil society support to help solve it.

In partnership with PM/WRA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Humpty Dumpty Institute, whose tagline is “Putting the Pieces Together Again,” has launched several initiatives over the years to raise over $9 million to clear landmines and render support to landmine survivors in Angola, Armenia, Eritrea, Laos, Lebanon, Mozambique, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Accompanied by Ralph Cowerman, the President of HDI, among others, Wilson traveled to Sri Lanka and Laos from November 1 to 10 to review HDI’s mine action programs and raise awareness of the continued devastation of landmines around the world. She visited former battlefields and mined areas where the government has fought with the terrorist group, the Tamil Tigers, for many years, as well as HDI’s two year, $4 million Food for Progress project to clear mines and redevelop the dairy industry on the war-ravaged Jaffna Peninsula. The highlight of the tour was Wilson’s fund-raising concert to benefit Sri Lankan landmine survivors.

She then proceeded to Laos to learn first-hand about its significant problem with unexploded ordnance (UXO) that dates back to the Vietnam War, and to visit a UXO clearance and school-feeding program. HDI received a $2.93 million Food for Education grant from the USDA to improve basic education and address Laotian UXO as a barrier to school attendance.

As a Supreme, Wilson imagined a day in which “Every head would be held up high, there’d be sunshine in everyone’s day.” Thanks to her humanitarian efforts and the love in her heart, more people in landmine and UXO-impacted countries will have sunshine in their days.

Alameda High School’s Pennies for Peace Campaign
by Charlene Chui, student

The Roots of Peace Pennies for Peace Campaign has been running in Alameda High School (California) since the start of October 2006. Students of the Medical Society Club have actively advertised this campaign by putting up posters around the school and by using individual donation buckets, which capture everyone’s attention.

Each Friday, two or three club members staff a booth in the main hallway by the school’s entrance. They spend their lunchtime greeting fellow students and convincing them to donate spare change for us to connect with other communities and to raise money for a good cause. It has been a productive learning experience for us all.

Alameda High School’s Pennies for Peace Campaign

Schonstedt Humanitarian Demining Initiative

Schonstedt Instrument Company, based in Kearneysville, West Virginia, announced on October 10 that it would donate 15 of its most rugged magnetic locators to Laos to assist the country with clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO). The devices are being offered by Charlene Chui, student at Alameda High School, for one of the most severely UXO-contaminated countries in the world, and the 3.5 pound Schonstedt handheld locators have proven to be the ideal tool for landmine clearing.