ACAP III Kicks-Off Mine Awareness Programme Among Primary School Children on International Day of Mine Awareness

To mark the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action on 4 April, the Afghan Civilian Assistance Program III (ACAP III) hosted a risk awareness event for children at Amena-e-Fedawi School. The event was well attended, with Government officials and key donors present, and kicked off a nationwide campaign to raise awareness of the risks of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW). The school, located in Shah Shahid, Kabul, is close to the site of a recent mine accident that claimed several lives.

School principal, Sultana Noor, said, "We have lost some of our students in the recent explosion that took place nearby our school. These mine awareness sessions are helpful for the students, especially when they go away from the centre of the city on holidays." She added, "We need to have more of these events, and at least one representative from each class should attend and share the knowledge with fellow students".

The programme, which is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), also distributed 500 schoolbags imprinted with risk awareness messages to the schoolchildren.

Some of them have seen the impacts of mines and ERW up close. Setara, a 12 year old student at the school, shared the story of her brother-in-law, who became a victim of ERW when he was very young. "My brother in law was hurt by a remnant that was launched by aircraft and had not exploded. As a result he lost his leg".

ACAP III plans to distribute a total of 60,000 school bags with mine/ERW risk awareness messages among school children in high-threat areas across the country.

The United State Agency for International Development (USAID) is providing support to victims of conflict through the ACAP III. The programme’s goal is to mitigate short- and long-term impact of conflict on civilians, including victims of mines, and ERW. The programme supports eligible victim families with immediate assistance and targeted long-term assistance to support victims’ recovery. The programme also incorporates an awareness component on risk education of the communities to help safeguard them from mines and other explosive threats in conflict-affected areas of Afghanistan. It uses the country-wide schools network to spread risk awareness to communities in need.