

**Press Release****United Nations completes demolition of explosive items at Maoist Cantonment Site****Kathmandu****24 December 2009**

The United Nations Mine Action Team (UNMAT) today carried out the safe destruction of the last of the explosive items stored at the seven Maoist Cantonment Sites (MCS).

The demolition of 65 explosive items held at MCS 6 in Dasharathpur, district of Surkhet is the culmination of an ongoing programme involving close cooperation between the Maoist Army, UNMAT and the United Nations Mission in Nepal (UNMIN) to destroy all dangerous items held within the main cantonment sites as agreed under the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) signed by the Maoists and the Government of Nepal in 2006.

Following the signing of the CPA, an audit of the stockpiles held in the MCS categorized all items as Priority 1 or Priority 2. Between April 2007 and July 2008, a total of 18,642 Priority 1 items including improvised explosive devices, detonators, bulk explosive factory-made munitions and other explosive accessories were systematically destroyed by the UN-contracted Armor Group.

In 2009, UNMAT, in coordination with the Maoist Army and UNMIN, undertook to revisit and destroy all Priority 2 items all of which had become unfit for storage since the initial categorization. From June 2009 to date UNMAT destroyed a total of 28,273 dangerous items at the seven MCS. The cooperation of the Maoist Army, the support of UNMIN and the support of the Joint Monitoring Coordination Committee (JMCC) were essential to achieving this aim.

The Nepal Army is also continuing the clearance of its minefields and improvised explosive devices consistent with a protocol of the CPA and with the help of the UNMAT. To date 15 of the 53 minefields have been cleared and 105 of the 275 IED fields.

‘The destruction of the final explosive items in the MCS and the continued minefield clearance efforts of the NA are an important part of the CPA and provide a win/win for everyone in Nepal. We must remember there is still work to be done, especially with regard to clearing the remaining minefields and IED fields’ said Steve Robinson, the UNMAT Programme Manager.

The management and destruction of improvised explosive devices at the cantonment sites also helped avert any possible accidents that would have disrupted the peace process. Clearance of Maoist improvised explosive devices directly demonstrates to the public that the Comprehensive Peace Accord is being implemented and that the parties remain committed to the peace process.

The Representative of the UN Secretary General, Karin Landgren said; “This is a concrete step forward in the peace process. I commend the leadership of the Maoist army and the Nepal Army for the measures they have taken to purge their country of dangerous unexploded mines and improvised explosive devices.”