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12 MSP to the AP Mine Ban Convention

Assisting the Victims Plenary session

4 December 2012

Statement by Tajikistan

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

First of all, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present the progress of Tajikistan's Victim Assistance (VA) Programme and to reconfirm our commitment in fulfilling the objectives of the Cartagena Action Plan (CAP)!

To ensure the application of the VA provisions contained within the CAP, our Program is guided by the 5-years Tajikistan National Mine Action Strategic Plan and Annual Work plans.

In accordance with our plan in 2012 we undertook a situational analysis of the disability sphere in Tajikistan by the International Consultant on VA and Disability issues and identified priority areas for disability sector. The Situation Analysis highlights that TMAC's VA programme has made a valuable contribution to the disability sector in Tajikistan, particularly through awareness raising, capacity building, and the production of guidelines. The report reiterates that the services available to promote the inclusion and well-being of children and adults with disabilities in Tajikistan are inadequate to meet the needs, particularly in rural communities. It is also clear that the government lacks the human, technical and financial resources to build the capacities needed, not only for the provision of services but also to implement a rights-based approach to disability in the country. The consultant recommended strengthening the capacity, to enhance the coordination among the national and international agencies involved in the disability issues. She also developed a project proposal on Disability for UNDP Tajikistan.

Based on the gaps identified by the Consultant, technical assistance was already provided to the Research Institute of Rehabilitation of PWDs through training of three doctors and four nurses on rehabilitation in the Senior Training Institute of Public Health in Almaty, Kazakhstan in November 2012. This is greatly contributing to improve the capacities of the rehabilitation unit.

TMAC continues to maintain a database on landmine/ERW casualties in Tajikistan. In 2012 we registered 10 casualties (all male, except for one girl and one woman), 3 were deminers: 8 of the

casualties were injured & 2 killed. All newly injured survivors received emergency medical care in the Medical facilities run by the MoH.

In terms of the physical rehabilitation services provided to the landmine survivors and other amputees: 20 survivors received rehabilitation and 11 landmine survivors received prostheses in the National Orthopedic Centre (NOC). I would like to stress that the NOC is the only orthopaedic centre in Tajikistan, which manufactures approximately 25 to 50 prostheses every month. From 2009 the Ministry of Labour and Social protection of population of RT (MLSPP) is covering all the running costs, but NOC is in need of renovation and new equipment. The building has not been renovated since 1963 and is now under threat of collapse. Therefore, any financial assistance to the NOC would be welcomed!

Association for Aid and Relief (Japan) made a reconstruction of the Wheelchair-manufacturing Workshop in Vaksh district, the project provided 100 PWDs with individually adjusted wheelchairs.

Rehabilitation camps for mine/ERW survivors went into the 8th year: 50 landmine survivors, including seven survivors from Afghanistan received necessary treatment, psychological rehabilitation and adaptive sport during two weeks in October 2012 in the first Inter-country Rehabilitation Camp, organized by TMAC in cooperation with TCBL&CM. During the Rehabilitation Camp two trainers from Afghanistan Landmine Survivors Organization (ALSO) organized the first pilot Peer support training for the group of Tajik survivors.

In the area of economic empowerment:

- 1) 35 landmine survivors and families of victims from different mine affected districts were involved in income generation scheme through the Small grants project implemented by the Society of PWDs "Imkoniyat":
- 2) ICRC continued its needs assessment survey of landmine survivors in mine affected districts of Tajikistan aimed to include them to the socio-economic support project. As a result of survey, 107 families were visited and their needs were revealed. So far, 44 families received different micro-economic grants from ICRC to start their income generation activities;
- 3) 149 victims benefited from different activities of UNDP Communities Programme.
- 4) One young UXO survivor injured in 2012 received a computer and started his computer training from September 2012 with individual donor's generous donation.

The MLSPP jointly with TMAC organized two advocacy round tables in favour to accept UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) with mass media involvement. The

aim of events: increasing awareness of governmental, non-governmental and public organizations on disability and UNCRPD.

In order to enhance disability awareness and to adopt an inclusive development approach TMAC has published following books and brochures for future distribution:

1. A Handbook for Parliamentarians titled “Disability”;
2. Guideline for the Medical Social State Service;
3. Guideline on Peer to peer support
4. The translated book “Assisting Landmine and other ERW Survivors in the Context of Disarmament, Disability and Development”.

The Inter-agency Technical Working Group (TWG) on VA is in place; in 2012 we organized four coordination meetings to discuss the coordination, planning and transition of Tajikistan Mine Action Programme (TMAP) to the national ownership. Members of TWG recommended that TMAC’s VA programme broaden its focus in the period 2013-2015 to be more inclusive of all PwDs. To reflect this change, the VA programme will be “rebranded” to the Disability Support Unit (DSU) to reinforce the understanding that efforts to assist the victims should be part of broader disability and development frameworks. TWG members also recommended starting with the development of a National Disability Strategy for RT.

A new focus of the VA Pillar within the TMAP is the improvement of accessibility of public buildings. Supported by the US Department of State, the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action (FSD) and Clear Path International (CPI) started implementing the one-year VA project from September 2012. This project is composed from two parts: organizing training for doctors and social workers on psycho-social support in affected areas and improvement of the physical accessibility to public buildings.

In line with the physical accessibility project the Agency of Architecture and Construction under the Government of RT is developing new national standards, which will be completed by a guideline soon.

We established a good cooperation with Afghanistan Disability Programme and these days we have exchange visit of team of 16 experts from the Ministry of Public Health of Afghanistan and NGOs in RT with the aim to exchange experience with Tajik colleagues, Tajik experts participated in the meetings of Inter-country TWG on psycho-social rehabilitation of PWDs in Kabul (Afghanistan) and developed Joint Plan of Action for two years, which is now under Ministerial consideration.

Dear Excellencies, colleagues and friends! Despite the progress and the achievements to date, Tajikistan still faces funding challenges in addressing the needs and rights of the landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Let me take this opportunity to call upon development partners to join our efforts so we can further improve the lives of persons with disabilities. FYI: TMAP has included four VA projects in the Portfolio 2013 projects for Mine Action.

Last, I would like to express my gratitude to ISU for constant support and assistance, to all our development partners – UNDP, DFAIT Canada, BCPR, Government of Australia, US Department of State, ICRC and its SFD, HI, AAR and Government of Japan - for their generous support which contributes to make difference in people's lives.

Thank you very much for your attention!