

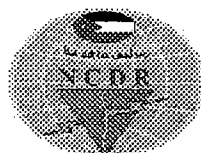
**Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
Geneva, 18 – 22 September 2006**

***The Road to Fulfilling Article 5 Obligations:
Jordan's Mine Clearance Efforts***

COMMENTS BY

***National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation
Jordan
(NCDR)***

September 2006



*Thank you Madam President
Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen....*

It gives me great pleasure to address the 7th Meeting of States Parties. I would like to take a few minutes of your time to describe how Jordan has attempted to fulfill its Article 5 obligations, and what it plans to do to become free of landmines by the year 2009.

For ease and clarity, I will respond specifically to the questions raised in the questionnaire distributed to the States Parties in the lead-up to this meeting.

In answer to Question One:

Jordan's plan to clear its minefields that constitutes the remaining area of 34.6

million m² is in three parts:

- **First**, by the spring of 2008, Jordan hopes to demine all the Israeli minefields on its territory found along its western border with Israel. This will total 12 million m².
- **Second**, by the end of 2007, we plan to have demined the remaining Jordanian minefields in the Jordan Valley. This will total 8 million m².

- And **finally**, the northern border mine-belt with Syria that has an area approximately 16 million m² will also be demined by the spring of 2009.

As for Question Two: Progress in the Implementation of the National Demining Plan:

Since we met last May, a number of major projects have commenced. They include:

Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) Project. This project which has initially been funded by the Government of Norway aims to demine the Israeli minefields (around 12 million m²) in the Wadi Araba region that runs from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea in Aqaba has begun. So far, vehicles, PPE and detection equipment have been purchased, deminers and paramedics have completed their training and the project was inaugurated by H.R.H Prince Mired Raad Zeid in June 2006.

Until the end of August 2006, clearance operations have demined around 38,000 m², removing 7,100 AP mines and 4,400 AT mines.

The **EC project** to clear a high impact area in the northern part of the Jordan Valley called 'Baqura / North Shuna has also begun'. The minefields in this area are a mixture of both Jordanian and Israeli minefields that comprise an area of approximately 1.5 million m². The Jordanian Armed Forces is carrying out the clearance.

Steps taken thus far toward the implementation of the project are as follows:

- International technical advisor for operation has been assigned for the project.
- Technical survey for all project's minefields has been completed.
- The project was officially inaugurated on 28th of August by His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Zeid and attended by representatives of donor countries.
- Manual mine clearance has started on 21 Aug 2006.
- So far, around 3600 m² have been cleared, removing 580 mines.
- QA & QC is being carried out by NCDR Quality Management Team
- Estimated time to release the land is 30 June 2007.

Additionally, the Royal Engineering Corps, working in 4 demining teams in the Jordan Valley has cleaned 9 minefields with the area of 372,000 m², removing 2500 mines

Also, to help better coordinate, plan, and prioritize the upcoming three years of activity Jordan has started a **Landmine Retrofit Survey** that is especially tailored to our needs. Norway and Canada have generously funded this project. _Progress achieved thus far in this project (until the end of August 2006) includes the establishment of the office, purchase of equipment and ordering of relevant software.

The System Consultant is currently in place, the GIS personnel, survey officer and survey assistants have been hired and are currently undergoing training. Available information on hazard tasks have been imported to Tech Base and at this point grid reference is available for 152 tasks. The affected regions and populated areas have also been identified.

In Response to Question Three:

Since May 2006, around 413,500 m² have been cleared, roughly 14,550 mines. In order for Jordan to be in compliance with its treaty obligations, it has to clear approximately 34.5 million m² of suspected hazardous area, roughly 185,500 mines by May 2009. Madam President, our Royal Engineering Corps and the NPA *are doing a great job*, but for the Kingdom to meet its Treaty obligations, we will need even greater mine clearance capacity so that we can accelerate towards 2009.

As for Question Four: Our Remaining Challenges

We hope we do not face any impediments that may hinder our efforts, such as funding gaps, difficulties in keeping the issue a priority when only a few mines remain, and the regional political upheaval surrounding the Kingdom which all could affect our plans.

Aside from these external risks, we have identified **3** major issues that we consider paramount to fulfilling our Article 5 obligations:

First, as I mentioned, we *believe we need to enhance our demining capacity*, in order to increase annual clearance rates. If operations in the area along the Syrian border could begin in 2007, we believe that our 2009 completion date would be even more secure.

Second, the Jordan Armed forces could benefit from further technical assistance and training so that the systems and techniques used by the Royal Engineering Corps become even more efficient and productive.

Third, the need to attract, train, and retain technical and managerial staff to the NCDR is critical to the overall success of Jordan's efforts to meet its Article 5 deadline. Focused capacity development support is still needed as the Government's ability to contribute more to mine action is stretched to the limit. Additionally, NCDR has employed 5 QM team members under the EC project and they are doing a great job. However, this small team will need three years to complete quality control tasks in all the minefields in Jordan. Therefore, we believe that the number of the QM Team members needs to be increased.

In answering Question Five

The Government of Jordan is highly committed to its mine action program and does its utmost to support it. For example, it contributes US\$ **3.5 million** annually to the Jordan Demining program and covers the running costs of NCDR.

On another level, the Jordan Armed Forces provides NCDR with a number of staff members on secondment basis, and its Royal Engineering Corps has appointed one of its senior staff as liaison officer to the NCDR to ensure full cooperation and coordination between the two bodies.

It is also worth mentioning that all relevant governmental institutions have appointed focal points of contact to coordinate and assist NCDR in its demining efforts.

Regarding Question Six

Madam President, as I am sure you are aware, mine action in Jordan is managed by the **National Committee for Demining & Rehabilitation** which works very closely with all national & international stakeholders and partners (civil society, the military, the UN, donor countries, NGOs). The NCDR is delighted that it has managed to garner the political will necessary within Jordan to give 'mine action' the attention it duly deserves. There is a renewed sense

of ownership and commitment to deal with the problem within the government and military which bodes well for the future.

The NCDR has greatly enhanced its own capacity as an effective organization and is currently in the process of implementing its first 'National Plan for Mine Action' and progress on all fronts has been substantial. One of the remaining challenges, however, is to maintain the momentum so that the NCDR remains capable and poised to lead and manage the national mine action program. In this context continued support for capacity building is an important area that must not be overlooked.

And lastly, in answer to Question Seven: Jordan's Priorities for External Assistance to Support its Fulfillment of Article 5 Obligations

Following on from my comments to Question #4, we have 3 major funding priorities, they are:

First, mobilizing support for the clearance of the Syrian border mine-belt. Madam President, let me point out that the minefields found along our northern border do not pose a great technical challenge as they are marked and fenced. What they do pose is an operational challenge, one that could be overcome if we could attract more resources for the REC, NPA, or a new operator to begin working in Jordan. We are open and willing to work in partnership to tackle this solvable problem.

Second, continued support for our Royal Engineers on the training and equipment front so they can continue their good work is essential.

Third, support for the NCDR in the form of training and institutional capacity development is also high on our agenda.

Madam President, I have tried to keep my comments brief and focused on what we in Jordan have accomplished since the intersessional meetings last May. I do hope they have helped shed some light on the situation in Jordan and would be happy to answer any follow-up questions that you might have.

Thank You Madam President.