





Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

(Seventh Meeting of the States Parties, 18 September - 22 September 2006, Geneva)

Distinguished Co-chairmen, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the First Review Conference in Nairobi, Tajikistan was considered as one of the 24 countries, which has a considerable number of landmine and UXO victims with «great responsibility on action, as well great requirements and expectations to assist mine victims», to provide adequate assistance and rehabilitation to the victims and their reintegration into society.

I avail myself of this opportunity to state the updated statistics on Tajikistan's landmine and UXO victims. Currently, there is a list of 561 names of landmine and UXO victims during 1992-2006 in the data base of Tajikistan Mine Action Programme, which consists of:

- killed - 273, out of them - 82 children and 35 -women;
- injured 288, out of them - 93 children and 42 -women.

Unfortunately, the rate of mine incidents is going down only very slowly. Since the beginning of 2006 to date there have been 16 landmine and UXO victims: killed – 5, injured -11.

Three of this years victims are deminers. On 19 April 2006 an expatriate supervisor from the French Army, Warrant Officer Gilles Sarrazin, was killed and Mr Azam Asrorov was injured. TMAC staff and the people of Tajikistan mourn this tragic death. Gilles was posthumously awarded with a medal for Bravery (“Jasorat”) by Decree of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan dated 28 August 2006 for his courage and the fulfilment of his international task.

On 21 August 2006 a Tajik demining operator, Mr. Mehrali Mulomurodov was seriously injured when he lost his eyesight to a PMN antipersonnel mine. He is still in hospital.

The 2005-09 Plan of Action on Victim Assistance (VA) Objectives for the Republic of Tajikistan was approved on 27 July 2006 by our Commission on Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIIHL).

The objectives and tasks in this plan are have been developed using the SMART system and development of the plan was the result of close cooperation between representatives of different governmental and international organizations and NGOs. In April 2006 an inter – agency Coordination Group was established which included Ministries of Health, Labour

& Social Protection (MLSP), the National Research Institute for Rehabilitation of Disabled People (NRIRD), National Ortho Centre, Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST) and other NGOs related with disability, international organizations – ICRC, UNDP, UNICEF, WHO and National Association of disabled people, as well as landmine and UXO victims. The plan was discussed several times by the Group before it was submitted to CIIHL.

The objectives and plans assist landmine and UXO victims, are described in the Governmental Poverty Reduction Strategy and in the programmes of Ministry of Health and MLSP.

A questionnaire to evaluate landmine and UXO victims' needs and their quality of life has been developed and we recently received some initial results from affected communities. These data will be analyzed, the priorities will be identified and decisions on satisfying the economic needs, organization treatment, establishing possibilities for landmine and UXO victims to become active members of society, rendering assistance in restoration of relations with families and society. Improving the quality of victims' lives within short- and long-term periods will be adopted accordingly.

Existing medical services in rural areas where accidents occur are very poor due to old equipment and absence of qualified medical personnel in some districts. The Ministry of Health drafted a programme of first aid training during mine accidents for medical personnel from rural areas. A Project on funding to conduct such training and establish a fund for rendering urgent medical aid to landmine and UXO victims has been proposed as part of our 2007 Mine Action Portfolio of projects.

Victims suffering from trauma associated with mine explosions are treated in the NRIRD, where surgery, including corrective assistance, rehabilitation and physiotherapy are offered. If the the medical expertise commission considered a person to be disabled as a result of a mine explosion, then he is assigned a pension on disability and gains all the privileges described in legislative acts of the RT.

Since 2005 there has been a project to assist the Ortho Centre, thanks to which conditions for the social reintegration of landmine and UXO victims through physical rehabilitation are established. ICRC, in conjunction with MLSP and RCST, provide amputees with transportation expenses, meals and accommodation during their time spent in treatment in the Ortho Centre in Dushanbe, which is the only centre to provide physical rehabilitation and prostheses in Tajikistan. During six months of 2006 the Centre produced 173 prostheses (including 20 landmine and UXO victims), 116 orthoses and 97 pairs of crutches. In 2006 the Centre has begun to produce prostheses for upper limbs. People who need prostheses and other ortho assistance get the necessary physical rehabilitation without the need to queue. Unfortunately, a proposed project for improvement of the activities of regional branches of the Ortho Centre did not get financial support this year by donors. In general, none of Tajikistan's 6 mine victim assistance projects were financially supported in 2006, though we hope for a better result in 2007.

Tajikistan acknowledges the necessity of developing psychological support projects for mine action victims. However, at this time there are no medical psychologists in our hospitals and clinics, who are able to offer qualified psychological support to mine victims or other disabled people. We realise that is important to take psychological aspects into consideration during planning and offering services to landmine and UXO victims and other disabled people suffering from traumas. We realize also that orientation to only physical rehabilitation is a wrong approach and in many ways can hamper development of a complete set of services, necessary to return victims to normal life. A psychological approach allows the opportunity to take into consideration all the complexity and individuality of any person, with all its associated economic, cultural and political features

and the necessity of the application of such an approach during their treatment is undoubted. With this in mind, RCST has drafted a project as part of our 2007 Mine Action Portfolio, for the establishment of psycho-social support Centres for victims. Taking into consideration the positive practice of conducting summer camp for landmine and UXO victims last year, this year a similar camp is being conducted in the pension of MLSP for 22 landmine and UXO victims, with involvement of psychologists, teachers and social workers. Summer camp improves the status of health through the healing processes of nature, climate and massage and assists in psychological rehabilitation through art and crafts, as well as the social reintegration of young people suffering from traumas associated with mine explosions.

A special school in Dushanbe provides professional rehabilitation for children with disabilities, including landmine and UXO victims. We continue to inform landmine victims about opportunities to gain an education, but at the same time it is necessary to state that recruitment of landmine and UXO victims is perhaps made more difficult due to the high level of general unemployment in our country.

Specialists on rehabilitation and other experts consider that the issue of socio-economic reintegration is a priority. It has been stated before, that the right to employment within an income generating activity is an important human right and a key to full reintegration within mainstream society. The second phase of our Income generation Project, which commenced in January 2005, is underway. However, due to the lack of funding we are not able to implement all aspects of this project.

We continue to look for methods of participation for landmine and UXO victims within different projects on micro credit, taking their interests into consideration. The priority is to provide *women* with disabilities with equal rights and opportunities.

Unfortunately, although Tajikistan has a considerable number of landmine victims, it is difficult to meet their needs due to our budget deficit and being unable to fund the requirements of people with disabilities. But assistance to victims should not be limited by time; it should be offered until such time as there are no more landmine or UXO victims.

In order to achieve the aims assigned in our national plan, some stable and reliable sources of funding are needed. The expenses for implementation of the strategy related to mine victim assistance will be described in the 2007 mine action Portfolio of projects.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to all the governments and international organizations that offer their assistance to landmine and UXO victims, feel pity for them and support them.

Thank you very much for your attention.