

## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

### COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Belgium, Norway, Sri Lanka and Zambia)

Intersessional Meetings 22 – 24 June 2021

#### PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY TAJIKISTAN

##### I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #8, #22)

1. Tajikistan reported that in 2020 it addressed 34 mined areas measuring 1,722,688 square metres, including 422,258 square metres cancelled, 651,894 square metres reduced and 648,536 square metres cleared resulting in the destruction of 5,103 anti-personnel mines and 267 items of explosive ordnance. Tajikistan also reported that that as a result of non-technical and technical surveys an additional 714,699 square metres of hazardous area was identified.
2. The Committee observed that information provided by Tajikistan on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2019 extension request. The Committee welcomed Tajikistan providing disaggregated information in accordance with land release methodology employed, using the Guide to reporting and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) (Action #8, Action #22).

##### II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, 22)

3. The Committee observed that Tajikistan had provided a high degree of clarity<sup>1</sup> on its remaining challenge (Action #18). Tajikistan reported a total of 229 mined areas measuring 11,799,955 square metres remaining to be addressed, including 145 confirmed hazardous areas (CHA) measuring 7,021,103 square metres and 84 suspected hazardous areas (SHA) measuring 4,778,852 square metres, including 54 SHA located on the Tajik-Uzbek border measuring 3,250,000 square metres, and 30 SHA located on the Tajik-Afghan border measuring an estimated total of 1,528,852 square metres (Action #22).
4. The Committee welcomed Tajikistan reporting its remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, and type of contamination (Action #22).
5. Action #18 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States that have not yet done so will identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish evidence based, accurate baselines of contamination based on information collected from all relevant sources, no later than by the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2021. **The Committee observed that Tajikistan was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas** (Action #18).
6. Action #18 of the Oslo Plan requests States to report on having established their baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men. **The Committee observed that Tajikistan had not provided updated information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to establish Tajikistan's**

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<sup>1</sup> "High degree of clarity" has been used when a State Party has provided a list of, all remaining areas (known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines), the estimated size of each area, the status of each area (i.e., "known" or "suspected"), information on the geographic location of each area.

**baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men. The Committee would welcome additional information on Tajikistan's efforts in this regard.**

### **III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #6, #19, #20, #26)**

7. The Committee observed that Tajikistan has in place an evidence-based, costed, and time-bound national strategy for the period 2021-2030, including a detailed and costed work plan for the period 2021-2022 (Action #2, #19). Tajikistan reported that it would address 49 mined areas measuring 1,506,709 square metres in 2021 and 28 mined areas measuring 1,496,814 square metres in 2022. The Committee noted a minor discrepancy between the projected number of areas and amount of area to be addressed during 2021 in Form D, Section 14 of Tajikistan's Article 7 report and the projected number of areas and amount of area to be addressed during 2021 contained in Table II and Table III of Tajikistan's updated work plan.
8. Tajikistan reported that priority setting tools identified livelihood areas located close to villages to be prioritized for land release. Tajikistan also reported that mined areas with economic and infrastructure impact were identified to be prioritised in collaboration with the Government of Tajikistan, Border Forces and the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC). The Committee observed that Tajikistan had provided a national work plan including updated adjusted milestones based on new evidence, including information on the number of areas and the amount of mined area to be addressed annually (Action #20).
9. Tajikistan reported that Convention implementation activities were included in the national development Strategy and support Sustainable development goals (Action #1, Action #6).
10. Tajikistan reported that the budget for operation in 2019 totalled US \$2,682,610 which included a US \$48,600 contribution from the Government of Tajikistan (Action #1).
11. Tajikistan reported that the promotion of gender in mine action is based on relevant international and national guidelines and resolutions, that promote gender as part of the development of the National Mine Action Strategy 2021-2030 (Action #3).
12. Tajikistan reported that currently four non-technical survey (NTS)/technical survey (TS) teams of the Union of Sappers of Tajikistan (UST) perform operations under the coordination of the TNMAC and that it is planned to enhance their operations with the manual demining with maximum coverage of all contaminated areas of the country (Action #26).

### **IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)**

13. Tajikistan reported that in 2020 it updated its national mine action standards (NMAS) (Action #5).
14. Tajikistan reported that since 2019 it uses IMSMA Core as its national information management system that includes online data collection forms, data operations analysis and data quality checks (Action #9).
15. Tajikistan reported in detail on its efforts to improve operations and technical efficiencies in 2020, including a field test and evaluation of mechanical equipment for humanitarian demining resulting in the development of a technical manual in line with NMAS on the annual accreditation of mechanical assets. Tajikistan also reported the development of standard operating procedures for, 'reporting process and methodology for non-technical and Technical survey activities' (Action #27).

## **V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them**

16. The Committee recalled that in granting Tajikistan's request, the Fourth Review Conference requested Tajikistan to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Tajikistan on;

- Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Tajikistan's annual survey and clearance plan during the extension period disaggregated by area cancelled, reduced and cleared and their impact on annual targets as given in Tajikistan's work plan;
- Updates regarding resource mobilisation efforts, including resources made available from Tajikistan's state budget and external financing received to support implementation efforts;
- Updated information on its full range of practical methods used to release land; efforts to mitigate the impact of anti-personnel mines through mine risk education and reduction efforts; and,
- Updates regarding the structure of Tajikistan's mine action program.

17. The Committee would welcome further information from Tajikistan regarding;

- Progress on the agreement between the Governments of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan regarding survey and clearance of areas on their common border, including information on the national institutions involved in the effort;
- Updates regarding the identification, recruitment, training and deployment of an additional 90 deminers and support personnel, including information on the gender and diversity of newly recruited personnel in line with Tajikistan's "Gender and Diversity Mine Action Strategy";

17. The Committee observed that Tajikistan had acted on the decisions of the Fourth Review Conference by submitting an updated work plan.

## **VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)**

18. Tajikistan reported on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. Tajikistan reported that warning signs in the language of the local population are installed in confirmed mine fields. The Committee observed that Tajikistan reported on the results achieved in delivering mine risk education and other risk educational programmes (MRE/R) including the methodologies used, the challenges faced, with information disaggregated by gender and age (Action #32).

19. Tajikistan reported that while MRE/R is not included in the national education system, MRE activities are constantly being carried out in all schools and other educational institutions located in the contaminated areas, including training of trainers with schoolteachers. Tajikistan also reported that its MRE/R programme is implemented in cooperation with local authorities, volunteers of the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, and TNMAC. Tajikistan reported that it is undertaking actions to integrate MRE/R activities into ongoing survey, clearance, and victim assistance activities as part of the National Mine Action Strategy and as part of annual work plan activities. The Committee noted that these activities form part of Tajikistan's efforts to integrate MRE/R into wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts and encourages Tajikistan to provide further information in this regard (Action #28).

20. Action #29 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes, (MRE/R) for all affected populations and groups at risk. To ensure if such programmes were developed on the basis of a needs assessment that they are tailored to the threat encountered by the population, and are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account. The Committee observed that Tajikistan reported that MRE is conducted on the basis of needs assessment. Tajikistan also reported that gender balance is maintained in MRE/R teams and is planning to increase the number of women recruited into the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme. Tajikistan also reported that MRE activities are developed taking into account different at-risk population groups, and conducted with schoolchildren, teachers, community members, and other at-risk groups, including shepherds, grass and wood collectors. **The Committee observed that Tajikistan had not provided updated information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to provide context-specific MRE/R programmes that are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account, and welcomes Tajikistan providing further information in this regard (Action #29).**

21. Action #30 of the Oslo Action Plan requests States to Prioritise people most at risk by linking mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages directly to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data, an understanding of the affected population's behaviour, risk pattern and coping mechanisms, and, wherever possible, anticipated population movement. The Committee observed that while Tajikistan reported that MRE/R are prioritised on the location of settlements and important infrastructure to hazard areas based on information provided by people in communities. **The Committee observed that Tajikistan had not provided updated information in its Article 7 Report on Tajikistan's efforts to prioritise people most at-risk and welcomes further information on Tajikistan's efforts to link MRE/R programmes to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data, and welcomes Tajikistan providing further information in this regard (Action #30).**

22. Tajikistan reported training of education inspectors, school principals, teachers, local government officials and education leaders to provide MRE/R to various groups of the population. Tajikistan also reported that MRE sessions are conducted in communities that have registered mine accidents (Action #31).

## **VII. Challenges in implementation (OAP Action #8)**

23. The Committee observed that Tajikistan provided quality information on challenges in implementation, including impact of insecurity, hard to reach mountainous areas, and the need for additional funding and equipment.