

**Speech on Tajikistan progress
in the implementation
of Article 5**

S1. Dear Ladies and Gentlemen, first of all, using the opportunity, I would like to thank the Committee of Convention and the ISU for organizing this Meeting of the States Parties and providing the opportunity for Tajikistan to present the achievements and challenges of the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme within the country's second extension request under Article 5 of the Convention. This year we had a visit from the ISU – Mr. Gregory Cathcart visited Tajikistan Mine Action Programme to see what is done so far and assist in the updating of the Work Plan. This photo was taken during his visit to the minefield where a lot of AP mines of PFM-1 type have been found, And after thirty years after their placement these mines look like new.

S2. The progress made since the start of the programme in 2004 up to end of September 2023 is that more than 33,2 million m² of contaminated land is released through survey and mine clearance. These activities resulted in 83,961 AP and AT mines, as well as 36,380 ERW found and destroyed. In total, 405 hazardous areas were released, from which 338 areas were handed over to the local authorities for safe use. As of the end of September 2023, 12.5 million m² of hazard areas (CHA and SHA) are remaining for clearance. On the map you can see the hazardous areas symbols, the green color shows cleared areas, the grey color shows the unsurveyed areas, and the red color - the remaining areas that require clearance. (From 25 contaminated districts 7 considered as mine-free districts by now (you can see green areas in map).

Also, here, I would like to bring to your attention the updates on the progress made by Tajikistan during 2019-end of September 2023 in accordance with the Extension Request.

In 2019, on the date of submission of our second extension request, the Remaining challenge was 8,848,210 m².

In accordance with the Extension request, the planned target for the period 2019-2023 was 6,539,291 m².

But the result of land release for the period 2019- End of September 2023 was 6,224,099 m² under the current Extension Request. Thus, as you can see – about 2.3 million m² are left for clearance in the framework of the current Extension Request, that is by the end of 2025.

S3. However! The reality shows a different situation. Despite the significant progress made by the country there is still much to be done ahead – unknown minefields which had no minefield records and other information were found during the survey operations within the Extension period. The total number of the found unknown minefields is 51, with the total area of about 9 million m² – Here you can see red areas where these minefields were found. And from this number – 3 areas covering 772 thousand m² were registered as safe area; and 24 areas covering 3.6 million m² were cleared.

S4. On this slide you can see the Survey activities carried out during the period of 2019 – end of September 2023. Brown color demonstrates the size of confirmed areas with minefield records, and the red color – the confirmed new hazard areas which have no minefield records – divided by years. In other words – this shows more details for the previous slide.

S5. Also, I would like to highlight that the increase of the minefield areas is that during the survey operations on some battle areas the evidence of Antipersonnel mines (PMN-2 and POMZ-2 types) were found. Based on the IMAS and Tajikistan NMAS, these areas were re-classified from battle areas to minefields. Here you can see the confirmation of my words.

S6. The remaining challenge by end September 2023 - 162 hazard areas measuring 12,506,085 m². From this amount - 153 CHAs measuring 11,558,085 m²; and 9 SHAs measuring around 948,000 m².

Here you can see the table demonstrating more detailed projections of the size of contaminated areas to be addressed annually to achieve completion. And here it is shown in two colours: orange - with current available resources, and blue - with required additional funding. From this assessment is seen that with current available resources Tajikistan can complete its land release operations only by the end of 2030.

S7. As a continuation of the previous slide, you can see the map of the location of the remaining 153 CHAs – red triangles.

S8. And this is the map of the location of the remaining 9 SHAs – yellow triangles.

S9. Now I would like to highlight the main challenges faced in the course of implementation of Tajikistan's obligations under the Ottawa Convention. They are:

Insufficient funding – Currently, the US Department of State is the biggest foreign donor of our programme. Also, OSCE and Norway make a great contribution to support the land release operations in the country. Nevertheless, there is still a significant shortage in funding of Tajikistan mine action programme.

Other constraints refer to: difficult mountainous terrain; weather conditions, posing restrictions to the operational time; natural disasters (rockfalls, avalanches, landslides, etc. cause movement of mines and expand the hazard area).

More problems are caused by the unavailability of minefield records - a number of minefields are identified without minefield records during the Non-technical surveys.

Another serious challenge is caused by previously unknown new mined areas that have been found during survey.

Security issues also hamper demining operations due to the military-political situation on the state border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan.

S10. The priorities and needs for external assistance include additional funding; Equipment including Metal detectors, deminer's and EOD toolkits, PPEs, cross-country vehicles, spare parts for mechanical demining machine, medical supplies, etc.; Increase the number of demining teams and survey teams; Capacity development through provision of trainings in survey, information management, quality management, priority setting, risk assessment, post-clearance assessment; Involvement of qualified specialist mechanical demining machine technical maintenance.

S11. Tajikistan is on track to fulfil its mine clearance obligations under Article 5. But our country is in high need of additional funding support to ensure that the obligations are met. And taking into account the information which I shared with you above, Tajikistan intends to prepare and submit its extension for five years more.

Finally, on behalf of the Republic of Tajikistan, I would like to thank our current donors, US Department of State, OSCE, Norway and our partners FSD, NPA, GICHD, ISU, ICRC for their valuable contribution to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme. And I would like to urge the international donor community to grant its support to Tajikistan Mine Action Programme to make our country mine-free and by doing this to improve the lives of our people and help the economy of Tajikistan grow.

Thank you for your attention!