

MINE ACTION DONORS' CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at UNDP on 21 November 2006

Present:

Mr Klaus Rasmussen Co chair – Acting Head of OSCE Centre in Dushanbe
Ambassador W Paton Co chair – UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

Representatives from the following diplomatic missions and other organisations registered their attendance:

Embassy of France	FSD	OSCE	UK DFID
Embassy of Japan	Harmony of the World	RCSTj	UNICEF
Embassy of UK	ICBL	Swiss Development Council	UNTOP
Embassy of USA	ICRC	TMAC	

The meeting opened at 15:00pm.

Item 1: Opening Remarks – Joint Chair

1. William Paton welcomed participants and handed over to Mr Klaus Rasmussen to begin chairing.
2. Klaus Rasmussen made a short introduction to the meeting and said that he had recently returned from a meeting of OSCE participating States on the budget of the OSCE Centre in Dushanbe, which he thought gave reason to be optimistic. He further informed the meeting that, despite donor fatigue, OSCE intend to maintain mine action on their agenda.

Item 2: Programme nationalisation – J Rajabov

3. National Mine Action Director, Jonmahmad Rajabov welcomed Mr Rasmussen to Tajikistan and then went on to show a PowerPoint presentation during which he spoke about capacity building and nationalisation of Tajikistan's mine action programme. The Ottawa Treaty against anti-personnel landmines states: "*Where mine action is largely managed and conducted by foreign NGOs... National ownership and local capacity development should be accelerated.*" Mr Rajabov also noted that question Number Six on our annual reporting document to the Ottawa Committee asks: "*If mine action in your country is still conducted or partially managed by foreign or international, what are the steps that your state has taken to develop its national capacity?*" We are therefore required by international treaty to nationalise our activities as the programme develops. He said that, in outline, Tajikistan intends to continue our line of a careful and gradual approach to nationalisation, balancing training and capability against national responsibility and international assistance.
4. Although the way ahead for FSD's clearance project to be nationalised is still not fully clear, further consultation will continue between CIIHL MOD, MOES and Ministry of Finance and a practical plan will be issued in 2007. This is a long-term programme, but we

are committed to the aim of national responsibility by 2010 at the latest. The aims of nationalisation are National Ownership, National Management and National Contributions. This process has already started and the first review date is December 2007, after which, the national mine clearance project will be managed by a government, *civilian* agency, advised and supported by the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, (FSD).

5. **Strategy.** The national strategy for the next five years is written and has been approved by the national government: it has also been accepted by many donors already and is endorsed by UNDP Mine Action Service in New York. We know where we are going, we know what needs to be done and, Inshallah, with some help from our friends, it shall be done. International plaudits have been received for our Victims' Assistance strategy and UNDP have recommended it to the mine action community universally as a template for use in other countries. Our Mine Risk Education strategy has recently been completed in draft by our friends from UNICEF and this will be confirmed soon.
6. Mr Rajabov went on to talk about staff development and skills training. He said that development and training of staff within FSD, MOD and TMAC will continue, so that over the next three years, we can strengthen positions of national managers and supervisors, appoint a national programme manager to the national mine clearance project and gradually shift responsibility from expatriate managers to Tajikistan citizens.
7. He also remarked that Tajikistan is very appreciative of FSD's achievements in mine action so far and we do not want the organisation to leave - what we want is national responsibility; FSD have done a good job here and have created a successful structure which we hope will continue confidently into the future. Whatever happens next, it should be a team effort with a result that all concerned, Tajiks and expatriates, can be proud of. I for one certainly do not want the programme to fail, particularly not at this crucial time of considerable expansion of capability.
8. Mr Rajabov gave a comprehensive presentation and finished off by stating that we know it will not be an easy road, but we are determined to be responsible for our own affairs in all sectors; we know that Mine action is Tajikistan's problem and we are preparing to take responsibility for it. Within its capabilities, the national government of Tajikistan already provides support and coordination to all mine action activities and we hope that the international donor community will recognise this and continue to assist us until we are fully capable of maintaining our own programme without assistance.

Item 3: Review of 2006, and Portfolio of Projects 2007 – W Lawrence

9. William Lawrence gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained that the Tajikistan National Mine Action Programme received about 71% of requirement last year; our shortfall was \$939,332. – About a million dollars. Of a total requirement \$3,263,619 in 2006, total pledges were \$2,324,287. Mr Lawrence acknowledged the national government's gratitude for the generosity of our international donors.
10. As well as financial contributions, the government of France have provided three military officers as in-kind donations. This is further evidence of donor willingness; it demonstrates that there is moral support for the programme and that the international community want to support this very successful national program.
11. As well as FSD's thriving mine clearance project, Mr Lawrence explained that because the Tajikistan government have destroyed all antipersonnel landmine stockpiles and continues to provide an amenable environment in which to work, we have been able to create two

successful Mine Risk Education (MRE) projects as well as several small projects to assist victims of landmines. Advocacy and development of legislation is improving – we are internationally recognised as a good member of the Ottawa convention and our national mine action programme is seen as a model for the region.

12. However, our projects are not sufficient to meet our obligations under international law (i.e. the Ottawa Convention). While Tajikistan is obligated to remove all antipersonnel mines (Article 6) By April 30 2010. States parties to Ottawa are at the same time required to support and assist contaminated countries to clear their mines (Article 7).
13. **Mine Action targets 2007.** The overarching objective continues to be to ensure that the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme is able to meet its strategic commitments to international treaties. During 2007 we intend to aim for full compliance with the Ottawa anti-personnel mine-ban treaty. Our primary aims for next year include rapid clearance of areas with significant economic or agricultural potential, a reduction to virtually zero in the number of mine and ERW casualties and improved access to treatment for accident survivors. Mr Lawrence informed the meeting that all projects are included in the tenth edition of the International Portfolio of Mine Action Projects and everyone at the meeting had a copy of Tajikistan's submission to this portfolio within the folders provided to each delegate. No projects have been funded so far for 2007.
14. A confirmed pledge or donor is needed soon, to support our national mechanical clearance project. This will eventually cost between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000. There are nations who are renowned manufacturers of such machines, but so far no interest has been displayed by any potential donor.
15. Mr Lawrence finished his presentation by inviting all delegates for the short and dramatic film premiere screening of "*Mine Action in Tajikistan*", a movie by Gulchera Mansurova, followed by a buffet reception at Vahdat Conference Hall on Tuesday 28 November 2006 from 6:00 to 8:30 pm.

Item 4: FSD activities update – Mike Storey

16. FSD's recently-arrived Project Manager, Mr Mike Storey made a PowerPoint presentation in which he outlined FSD's capacity building activities and remarked that, so far, FSD has provided or arranged twenty-six training courses for Medics, Surveyors, Deminers, Team Leaders, EOD operators, Database operators and for staff members learning English Language.
17. Mr Storey then went on to inform the meeting that in 2006 FSD have made some significant achievements in clearing landmines and unexploded ordnance from the territory of Tajikistan. He said that since 2003, 1076 villages have been assessed, 124km of road, and 450,598 square metres of land have been cleared. 2264 antipersonnel mines have been destroyed by FSD as well as three antitank mines, 753 other items of unexploded ordnance and 4,096 rounds of small-arms ammunition. FSD have assisted in the investigation of five accidents involving landmines or UXO and have emplaced 650 large warning signboards, close to hazardous areas. FSD are currently deployed in the ongoing clearance of four mined areas and three further tasks have been suspended due to winter weather conditions in those areas.
18. Although FSD's teams have been reduced since last year's four teams to three teams in 2006, 100% increase in productivity has still been achieved this year, due to improved procedures and an aggressive policy on productivity and cost-efficiency.

19. In 2006 FSD's budgetary appeal to the international donor community was for a total \$2,326,060. They received \$1,861,774, leaving a shortfall of \$464,286. Manual Clearance Teams were funded 100% by OSCE and Germany - \$783,710. EOD and Survey teams were funded 16% by UK and UNDP - \$554,286. Capacity building activities were funded 100% by Sweden, Switzerland, UK, UNDP and Canada - \$398,710. The mine detecting dogs project was funded 100% by Canada, OSCE, UNDP - \$589,354.
20. Mr. Storey concluded his brief by stating that, with Tajikistan's obligations to the Ottawa Treaty in mind, FSD will continue to aim for the integration of various demining methods to ensure effective utilization of assets and continuing increased productivity. Manual deminers are fully nationalised, mine detecting dogs are now making a significant contribution to the clearance effort and we must now try hard to have possession of at least one mechanical mine clearance machine. While this will mean a relatively large initial capital expense investment, it will most certainly prove economical in the medium to long term.

Item 5: International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Aziza KHAKIMOVA

21. Ms Aziza Khakimova, from local *NGO Harmony in The World*, was at the meeting to represent the *International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)* and to launch that organisation's 2006 *Landmine Monitor* report, in which Tajikistan's mine action programme features. This is an initiative by the ICBL to monitor implementation of and compliance with the 1997 Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty. The ICBL received the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize for its efforts to eradicate antipersonnel mines.
22. Ms Khakimova told the meeting that 71 *Landmine Monitor* researchers from 62 countries have worked on this report, in coordination with an 18-person Editorial Team and that *Landmine Monitor Report 2006* contains information on 126 countries and areas with respect to landmine ban policy, use, production, transfer, stockpiling, mine action funding, mine clearance, mine risk education, landmine casualties, and survivor assistance.
23. After a short PowerPoint presentation on the subject, during which she informed the meeting that 78 states and 8 other areas are affected by landmines and that in 2005, more than 740 square km was cleared, Ms Khakimova reminded the assembly that copies of *Landmine Monitor* were available for attendees to the meeting.

Item 6: Any Other Business

24. William Paton asked for contributions from the floor.
25. French Defence Attache, Lt Col Joel Malavaux asked about training of operators for any mine clearance machine which might eventually be purchased for Tajikistan. William Lawrence replied to this inquiry by stating that, *if* a machine is purchased and depending on budgets at that time, training would probably be carried out under the auspices of the machine's manufacturer.
26. There were no further questions or comments about the meeting or any aspect of mine action in Tajikistan.

Item 7: Closing Remarks – Ambassador W Paton

27. Mr Paton talked about optimism and pessimism. He also made clear UNDP and Tajikistan's gratitude for the service of our French Military advisers and commented about the sacrifice of the life of Warrant Officer Gilles Sarrazin in April 2000, whilst carrying out mine action duties near to the town of Pyanj, on the Afghan border. He also commented on deminer Mr Mehrali Mulomorodov, who lost both his eyes as the result of an unplanned detonation of an antipersonnel mine in August this year during clearance operations near Garm.
28. He then went on to talk about funding for mine action in 2007 and said that, although Tajikistan's government is the most committed in the region against landmines, no pledges have been made by any international donor so far. Mr Paton then went on to say that, despite this alarming news we are encouraged by the arrival in-country of new people, like Mr Klaus Rasmussen and Mr Mike Storey. In order to finish the meeting on a happy note, he repeated that this year, all targets have been reached and more than twice as much ground has been cleared than last year.
29. It was announced that the next meeting will be held probably towards the end of March 2007.
30. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1600hrs.

W E Lawrence

Secretary