



***Intersessional Meetings of the Standing Committees  
Geneva, 2-6 June 2008***

***Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine  
Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies***

***Agenda Item: Clearing Mined Areas***

**COMMENTS BY**

***Jordan Delegation***

Distinguished Co-Chairs,  
Your Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen...

I would like to take only a few minutes of your time to describe how Jordan has attempted to fulfill its Article 5 obligations. For ease and clarity, I will respond, in order, to the questions for consideration made available to the States Parties in the lead up to the Intersessionals.

My comments will cover the past 6 month period only, as I updated the Co-Chairs on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education, and Mine Action Technologies this past November during the 8MSP.

**In response to Question one; Progress in the implementation of the National Demining Plan:**

It gives me great pleasure to announce that since we last met in November two major projects have concluded their clearance operations.

1. The Wadi Araba/Aqaba Mine Clearance Project, in the southern third of Jordan, executed by NPA, concluded its mine clearance activities at the end of April 2008. Using innovative clearance techniques (which includes using rakes), 52,000 landmines and 172,174 m<sup>2</sup> of land were cleared. Sampling and verification are presently on-going and it is expected that the process will be completed by July.

2. The North Shuna Mine Clearance Project was concluded at the end of 2007. The Jordan Armed Forces' Royal Engineering Corps cleared 33 minefields in total, covering 2.5 million m<sup>2</sup> of land. I would like to mention here that as the original 12 minefields under this project was cleared ahead of schedule and under budget, we were able to clear a further 18 AP minefields using the remaining funds.

**As for Question two: What work remains?**

a. The Northern Border Mine Clearance Project is the last major demining-task remaining in Jordan and full clearance operations commenced on 1 April 2008. It covers an area of approximately 10 million m<sup>2</sup> and contains an estimated 136,570 mines, both APMs and AVMs. The SHA stretches for 104 km along the Jordan's north border.

This Project represents the final phase of the NCDR's long-term strategy to demine Jordan. When completed, the risk of mine accidents for a local population of 50,000 will be removed, and Jordan will have fulfilled its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.

b. The NCDR and REC are presently also undertaking sampling and verification work in the Jordan Valley. Although many of the minefields in the Jordan Valley were cleared prior to the establishment of the National Technical Standards and Guidelines (NTS&Gs) the NCDR's independent QA/QC team, Jordan wants to ensure that all land handed over to local communities has been cleared to national and international standards.

However, Jordan now has different and higher standards for mine clearance and verification since signing the APMBC and has a greater amount of expertise to draw upon. Therefore the NCDR believes it has an ethical obligation to ensure minefields that may not meet present-day international standards undergo re-verification in order for them to meet the highest safety standards. Through a process of cancellation and verification in accordance with the NTS&Gs this task is expected to be completed within the timeframe requested under Jordan's extension request.

**In reply to Questions three and four: Barricades to implementation within ten years and time requested for the extension:**

Jordan will be unable to fulfill its Article 5 obligations by its deadline, 1 May 2009, for several reasons:

- a. Firstly, mine action was orchestrated solely by the Military during the early years. During the period 1993 – 2004 the JAF managed mine action in Jordan but the capacity to achieve great strides in demining was absent. Moreover, the military was unable to finance clearance at the expected pace and breadth due to the high cost of mine clearance.
- b. Secondly, during the first five year period post Jordan's accession to the MBC, no 'effective' mine action authority existed. However, 2004 marked a turning point in the life of NCDR, as a new chairman, a new board of directors, a new director and a UNDP Chief Technical Advisor were appointed to the organization.
- c. Thirdly, prior to 2004 there was limited contact with the international mine action community in the area of partnerships

as well as donor networks, which reduced the potential outputs that could have been produced by the REC.

- d. Finally, technical reasons such as the extreme flooding and erosion in the Jordan Valley slowed the demining process tremendously.

Jordan submitted its Article 5 extension request on March 31st. The timeframe requested is 3 years, with an end-date of 1 May 2012. This amount of time we believe will be sufficient to ensure the fulfillment of Jordan's Article 5 mine clearance obligations. We do not foresee any major problems in implementing this final stage of the demining process in the country.

**As for Question five: What are our plans for ridding Jordan of landmines?**

I believe we have reported our plans to ensure compliance on many other occasions, and will therefore not take up valuable meeting time repeating them here today. Suffice to say we are working hard to finish the job using the many strong relationships we have with the Government, Army, and international community: I will provide more details on what exactly we are doing later in my comments.

**In response to Question 6: New methodologies:**

Jordan tries to use the latest methods and standards in its mine clearance operations. As mentioned in 2006 Jordan established the NTS&Gs, which are based on IMAS and govern all standard operating procedures in the Kingdom. In addition, Jordan has established a method used for cancelling, with confidence,

suspected hazardous areas and releasing land without incurring the heavy costs of full clearance.

**In reply to Question seven: Contributions of the Government of Jordan:**

NCDR will manage the North Border Project and provide Quality Management over the demining process which will be implemented by NPA. Meanwhile, the REC will lend EOD support to the project in addition to continuing its current clearance operations. The Northern Border Clearance Project's planned budget of \$13 million has already been mobilized through contributions from the international donor community (Australia, Canada, EC, Germany, Japan, and Norway).

The Government of Jordan continues to take its Article 5 obligations seriously, and contributes on average \$3.5 million annually through the military for mine clearance and support for the general running of the NCDR. We also maintain a good operational relationship with the military, Civil Defense, Royal Geographic Centre, and the Royal Medical Services who all have seconded staff to the NCDR to help on inter-governmental coordination issues.

**As for Question nine: Developing National Capacity:**

In 2006 NCDR realized that the pace of its humanitarian demining operations would not be sufficient to meet its Article 5 obligations to the APMBC, and as a result solicited the assistance of the Norwegian People's Aid to carry out demining operations in the south of Jordan,

while the Royal Engineering Corps continued its operations in the Jordan Valley.

NCDR established a Quality Management Team to carry out and oversee quality control and quality assurance of all demining activities being carried out by the REC and the NPA in Jordan. The QMT undergoes regular training in capacity development, and has increased to 18 members in order to meet the needs of the increased demining activities.

**And finally, in response to Question ten: Jordan's priorities for external assistance:**

Funds for Jordan's last major demining project have been mobilized; however Jordan would appreciate the international donor community's continued financial support if needed.

Furthermore, we would greatly benefit from training on and adoption of new demining technologies as well as increased capacity development in order to ensure we meet our Article 5 obligations.

Co-Chairs, I have tried to keep my comments brief and focused on what we have accomplished since the 8MSP held in Jordan last November.

I do hope it has helped shed some light on the situation in Jordan and I would be happy to answer any follow up questions that you might have.

**Thank you.**