



Press Release

Tajikistan takes steps to finalize mine clearance operations

Dushanbe and Geneva 17 September 2013 – Tajik government officials, United Nations' and other international experts are meeting at a European Union sponsored workshop to set priorities for Tajikistan to comply with its mine clearance obligation acquired under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, or Ottawa Convention. When joining the Convention in 1999, Tajikistan promised to remove all anti-personnel mines from its territory by 2010. However, due to massive landmine contamination, Tajikistan requested an additional ten years to demine, receiving an extension until 1 April 2020.

“Tajikistan’s remaining landmine contamination includes 187 mined areas in the Tajik-Afghan border and Central Region covering 13.5 km² which need to be addressed,” said Muzaffar Ashurov, the Head of the Department of Constitutional Guarantees of Citizens Rights in the Executive Office of the President. “We are grateful for the support provided by the European Union to this meeting. It is important for Tajikistan to determine the next steps that need to be taken to tackle the remaining contamination and amend our national demining plan.”

“The two-day workshop seeks to assist Tajikistan in taking stock of what has been done to address mine contamination, what remains to be done and to develop a comprehensive plan to meet its treaty obligation by its deadline. If all partners come together for one final push, the task could possibly be accomplished sooner than the 1 April 2020 deadline,” said Juan Carlos Ruan, Mine Action Specialist with the Convention's Implementation Support Unit.

The workshop is jointly organized with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which is assisting Tajikistan in eliminating the social and economic problems posed by landmines and other explosive remnants of war. “Clearing contaminated areas increases access to valuable arable land and reduces poverty among rural communities,” said UNDP Chief in Tajikistan, Alexander Zuev. “To this end, the UNDP will support accelerating efforts to nationalise the Tajik Mine Action Centre (TMAC) and demining activities in the country.” Alexander Zuev emphasized this action is in agreement reached with Tajikistan’s President in February. “The UNDP, together with its key UN and other donor partners, will continue their technical, legal and financial support of future operations of a nationalized Tajikistan Mine Action Centre.”

Funding for the workshop is part of a two-year European Union Council Decision to support the Convention and its humanitarian goal of ending the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

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