



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Production and Transfer of Anti-Personal
Mines and on Their Destruction



Progress toward the Ottawa Convention's Aims in Central Asia

The Dushanbe Landmine Conference 15-16 April, 2004

Co-Chairs' Summary

Convened by His Excellency, Mr. Talbak Nazarov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan, the conference *Progress towards the Ottawa Convention's aims in Central Asia* was held 15-16 April 2004 in Dushanbe. The *Dushanbe Conference* was organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

The *Dushanbe Conference* was held in a manner consistent with realization of the President's Action Programme of the Convention's September 2003 Fifth Meeting of the States Parties (5MSP). In this document, the 5MSP's President, His Excellency Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand, stated that in the pursuit of the implementation of the Convention, each region has unique challenges and capacities and therefore regional initiatives and activities should be undertaken to raise awareness of the issue of anti-personnel mines as a continuous process leading towards the Convention's First Review Conference.

Opening remarks were delivered by His Excellency Mr. Saidamer Zuhurov, Tajikistan's Deputy Prime Minister for Security, His Excellency Mr. Sorayoutht Prompog, representing the 5MSP President, Her Excellency Ms. Heidemaria Guerer, Austria's Ambassador to Tajikistan, His Excellency Mr. Christian Faessler, member of the Council of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), His Excellency Mr. Yves Bargain, Head of the Centre of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Professor Daniel Thurer, member of the Committee of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and Mr. William Paton, United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator. These speakers underscored the importance of the Dushanbe Conference in promoting dialogue amongst all States in Central Asia in addressing the problems caused by anti-personnel mines in the region.

Following an overview of the Convention provided by the GICHD's Kerry Brinkert, Manager of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit, the conference received detailed presentations on the Republic of Tajikistan's efforts to destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines, to clear mined areas and to take legislative and other measures to prevent and suppress prohibited acts. It was highlighted in particular that on 31 March 2004 Tajikistan had completed its stockpile destruction programme and that significant progress had been made in preparing to clear mined areas. The Co-Chairs noted with satisfaction the efforts of the Republic of Tajikistan in fulfilling its Convention obligations.



Conference Secretariat
Ismatullo Nasreddinov – Email: ismat@midrt.tajik.net
Jonmahmad Rajabov - Email: markaz@tmac.tojikiston.com
Peter Isaacs - Email: peter.isaacs@undp.org



The ICRC provided an overview of the human impact of anti-personnel mines, after which Dr. Mohammad Haider Reza, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, updated the conference on steps it is taking to implement the Convention. In addition, news was shared of Turkmenistan's implementation measures. The Co-Chairs commended Afghanistan – one of the world's most mine-affected countries – for its vigour in implementing the Convention and noted the decision by Turkmenistan to significantly reduce the quantity of anti-personnel mines which it had previously indicated it would retain for training and development purposes in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention.

Representatives of the OCSE, UNDP, GICHD, NATO, ICRC and the Swiss Foundation for Mine Action made presentations on the assistance provided by or available from their organizations to assist Central Asian States in addressing the problems caused by anti-personnel mines. The Co-Chairs noted that the efforts of such organizations and the contributions made by the donor community are concrete manifestations of the international community's will to work in partnership to fulfil the humanitarian aims of the Convention.

In noting that over 140 States have joined the Convention, including several militarily significant States and several others that find themselves in complex security environments, Lieutenant-Colonel (retired) John MacBride of Canada emphasized that States can indeed fulfil national security responsibilities without anti-personnel mines. Following his presentation, several States not parties to the Convention shared views regarding the Convention.

The importance of the *Dushanbe Conference* in serving as an informal means for Central Asian States to prepare for the Convention's First Review Conference – *the Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World* – was underscored by Austrian Ambassador Heidemaria Guerer on behalf of Nairobi Summit President-Designate Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch. It was noted that the States Parties have placed an emphasis on being forward-looking and action-oriented at the *Nairobi Summit*. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) also shared its expectations for the *Nairobi Summit*, expressing the hope that by the time of the *Nairobi Summit* 150 States will have joined the Convention, that armed non-state actors will have accepted the Convention's standards, that understandings will have been reached on the interpretation of various articles of the Convention, and that significant progress will have made in stockpile destruction, victim assistance and mine clearance.

In summarizing the *Dushanbe Conference*, the Co-Chairs expressed the belief that the conference was an important step contributing to mutual confidence among countries in the region, noted the commitment of States Parties to the Convention in Central Asia to implement the Convention, welcomed the will of States not parties in the region to engage in a dialogue on addressing the threats posed by anti-personnel mines to peace and security, invited these States to take necessary steps towards acceptance of the Convention, and reiterated the call for all States and relevant organizations to participate at the highest possible level in the *Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World*.

The close of the *Dushanbe Conference* featured a powerful address by Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan.

Mr. Salohiddin Nasriddinov
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mr. William Paton
United Nations Resident Coordinator