



News Release



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Queen Noor calls for a Central Asia free of landmines

Dushanbe—**Queen Noor of Jordan** has voiced her support for efforts to free Central Asia of the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines. Speaking at the 15-16 April 2004 *Dushanbe Conference: Progress towards the Ottawa Convention's aims in Central Asia*, Queen Noor stated that unless the Ottawa Convention is universally adopted, landmines will continue to be manufactured and used and this scourge will continue to hold hostage our hopes for real security and peace.

“Queen Noor’s support comes at an important time in our work to implement the Ottawa Convention on the prohibition of anti-personnel mines,” said **Salohiddin Nasriddinov, Tajikistan’s Deputy Foreign Minister**. “Tajikistan has made significant progress, having destroyed, on 31 March 2004, its entire stockpile of antipersonnel mines. However, much more must be done in Tajikistan and elsewhere in Central Asia to mark and clear mined areas and to provide support to victims of landmines.”

Tajikistan, which is affected by landmines on its borders and as a result of the country’s internal conflict, was joined at the Dushanbe conference by Afghanistan, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkmenistan, as well as by other neighboring countries, donor states, the United Nations and other organizations. The conference, which concluded today with a spirited address delivered by Queen Noor, featured a rich dialogue on means to address the threats to peace and security in Central Asia posed by antipersonnel mines.

In noting that in Central Asia only Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan are members of the Ottawa Convention, **United Nations Assistant Secretary General Julia Taft**, from its development programme (UNDP), called upon other countries to join the landmark treaty in advance of the 29 November – 3 December 2004 *Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World*. “At the Nairobi Summit, the world will expect progress in ending the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines,” said Ms. Taft. “I encourage all states in Central Asia to accede to the Convention in time for the Nairobi Summit. In addition, I call upon the Convention’s 141 current members to continue to act with urgency to assist landmine survivors and to clear mined areas, thereby contributing to social and economic development.

At the Nairobi Summit, world leaders at the highest possible level will gather in the Kenyan capital to renew commitments to successfully implement the Ottawa Convention and to establish a concrete action plan to advance the Convention’s aims for the period 2005 to 2009. The Dushanbe conference is one of a series of regional events being held in 2004 to assist states in preparing for the Nairobi Summit.

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