

The Vietnam delegation had a number of side meetings in Beirut:

1. Meeting with Pamela Chemali, Program Officer of UN Mine Action Coordination Centre in Lebanon , an UNMAS programme executed with UNOPS

Sr. Col. Tuan proposed the meeting in order to learn about the demining activities of the peace keeping forces in Lebanon. The reason is because Vietnam is planning to join the UN peace keeping in near future. It is planned that a delegation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFa) and Ministry of Defense (MoD) will pay a visit to UN KPO in New York to discuss the issue. In the meantime, Engineering Command is tasked by MoD to review the requirements and conditions for sending a demining team to a foreign country to join peace keeping force.

In the meeting with Ms. Chemali, Sr. Col. Tuan raised questions regarding the demining team working and staying in Lebanon handled issues like the chain of reporting, accommodations, medical services, daily supplies and security.

After the meeting, Ms. Chemali had a follow up email through VVAF to refer Sr. Col. Tuan to her boss, the Program Manager, for further information and assistance.

2. Discussion International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) regarding ITF sponsoring 50% of the cost for 20 divers from EC to the Montenegro Regional Underwater Demining and Divers Training

Sr. Col. Tuan had a quick follow up discussion with Mr. Iztok Hocevar, Advisor for International Relations of the ITF, regarding ITF support for 50% of the cost to send 20 divers from Engineering Command to the Regional Underwater Demining and Divers training at Montenegro.

Mr. Hocevar said that ITF needs an official request from Engineering Command to ask for ITF sponsorship. Sr. Col. Tuan promised to do this as soon as he goes back to Vietnam.

3. Meeting with Guy Rhodes, Operational Manager and Erik Tolsek, Technical Manager, Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

Sr. Col. Tuan discussed 3 issues with GICHD. First, he discussed Vietnam's plan to implement a pilot project on land release nationwide in Vietnam with the technical support of GICHD. It was agreed that Vietnam will review the land release project implemented in Laos and Cambodia, two countries that have similar contamination, before completing the first draft of the project concept paper. After the first draft is completed, GICHD will review and provide comments before it is implemented in the field. The next issue was getting BOMICEN/Engineering Command, GICHD and VVAF to organize a Workshop on Land Release Technologies, planned to take place in Da Nang on November 24 and 25, prior to the 11th meeting of States Parties to the Landmine Ban Treaty in Cambodia. Both sides agreed on the objectives of the workshop to introduce and demonstrate the latest detector technology. GICHD/VVAF will invite the manufacturers and international organizations, while

BOMICEN will invite the Vietnamese authorities and companies and the regional mine action centers. The third point of discussion was the available technology to deal with dangerous and unknown UXOs from the former stockpiles left by in Vietnam. Sr. Col. Tuan would send to Erik photos of a number of UXO items that have been found in Da Nang recently so that Erik could help by sending advice regarding a disposal solution.

4. Sharing Information between Indochina Countries affected by mines/ERW

In this side meeting, representatives from Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and Malaysia shared information regarding the mine/UXO contamination problems in their respective countries, along with the mine action efforts made by their governments and an update on international cooperation and assistance. Except Laos, who is a member of the Convention, other countries are reviewing the process to adhere to the Convention. Recognizing the nature of contamination in Asian countries is different from the other parts of the world, Sr. Col. Tuan proposed that Asian countries should jointly make a regional proposal to the UN to consider the challenges of the countries in the region in fulfilling the obligations of the Convention.