Dushanbe - Tajikistan's government needs 13m dollars for clearing its territory of mines within five years, Deputy Prime Minister Saidamir Zuhurov said.

(15.04.2004)

He said at an international conference on anti-personnel mines on Thursday [15 April] that donor countries had issued about 1m dollars for this programme so far.

Representatives of Central Asian republics, leaders the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the UN, the International Committee of the Red Cross and Russia's Ambassador to Tajikistan Maksim Peshkov are attending the conference called "Progress in Implementing the Ottawa Convention in Central Asia".

Zuhurov stressed that Tajikistan joined the Ottawa Convention on Anti-Personnel Mines in 1999 and, in compliance with it, destroyed all mines that were stored at facilities of the Defence Ministry.

Tajikistan has the problem of clearing of mines huge areas in different parts of the country and near borders with Afghanistan and Central Asian republics.

According to experts 16,000 anti-personnel mines could remain in the soil of Tajikistan after the 1993-97 civil war.

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