

## **SPEECH OF JONATHON GUTHRIE – COUNTRY DIRECTOR OF NPA**

Vice Chairman Chin, Director of PACCOM Mr Phong, DoFA representatives, Project RENEW Staff, and invited guests. It is with great pleasure and an honour for me to have the opportunity to speak today, on this very special occasion in celebrating the 10yr Anniversary of Project RENEW.

Norwegian People's Aid, one of the world's largest Mine Action Organizations in the world, identified the need for further assistance from an international organisation to Vietnam in 2006. NPA is an organization who prides itself in supporting local organisations and projects with the objective of building local capacity to provide a solution to the problem, long term. This is reflected in our Portfolio and National and Global Strategies and as such NPA's first point of contact in Vietnam was Project RENEW.

NPA initially started supporting Project RENEW with the signing of the first MOU in November 2007. This initial commitment saw NPA provide technical and financial support in the establishment of one (1) EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) Team. Since then, we have seen a growth in the partnership, both in the level of support and the understanding of each organisations own objectives.

During the past four (4) years, NPA has provided numerous International technical advisors (or TA's) with vast amounts of experience to support Project RENEW. We have grown from 2007 where by the TA was to be present during, and in many cases, conducting all operations, to the point where NPA has built the capacity and provided internationally recognised qualifications (IMAS level 1 and 2). Teams are no longer supervised by the TA on a daily basis and NPA now focuses our advice at an operational management level, something that no other civil organisation in Vietnam has achieved. In support of the capacity built I would like to quote not one (1), but a number of the NPA TA's by saying (and the Project RENEW have heard me state this many times) that "the operational staff in Project RENEW are among the best that we (NPA) have ever worked with". Given that this statement has been made from a number of NPA's TA's (not one (1)), with experiences from other countries not only in South East Asia, but throughout the Middle East and central Asia, and numerous countries in Africa, it is a true reflection of the motivation, capability and sense of ownership of not only Project RENEW staff, but all of the Vietnamese people in general. For this, it is truly a privilege to be a part of this great project.

In 2011, we now see NPA as the largest supporter of Project RENEW, providing approximately 50% of the Projects funding to maintain three (3) multi-purpose teams, a Community Support Team (CST), the operational management and support (including technical advice), and an Information Management section developing and maintaining the only database and GIS system of its kind in the province.

Although NPA is now implementing its own project in Thien Thua Hue Province, has just completed supporting the authorities at the national level, and is now in the process of piloting and permanently implementing its Development Programme, NPA maintains committed to supporting Project RENEW as it major project in Vietnam, long term.

2012 will see NPA and Project RENEW extending their relationship. Effective 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2012, NPA has committed to supporting RENEW as its Primary Partner, a commitment

that will be in place until the end of 2014 with the likelihood of extending to the end of 2017 under the NPA's framework agreement with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA).

During this period, NPA supports Project RENEW's goals and ambitions to expand their areas of operation into other districts within Quang Tri Province, expand their mushroom project thus providing income, employment, and support to victims of UXO (Unexploded Ordnance), and to better support the Provincial People's Committee in coordinating Mine Action in Quang Tri Province.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Project RENEW on their progress and evolution from a small project working on MRE back in 2001 to the internationally recognised organisation covering all pillars of mine action that it is today.