

PRESS RELEASE From the HALO Trust

Demining agency The HALO Trust is set to deploy two additional armoured New Holland tractors donated by the Nagano Olympic Committee Peace Appeal to clear mines in Siem Reap and Banteay Meanchay provinces.

The tractors, costing \$100,000 each, have been equipped with six metre cutting arms to reduce vegetation in areas of dense undergrowth in the north and northwest of Cambodia. The vehicles are armoured with strengthened steel plating to protect the operator from any mine blast.

Tractors increase mine clearance rates by between fifty and one hundred fifty percent in areas where manual demining is severely hampered by, dense vegetation low bushes and fallen trees, said Paul Heslop, programme manager for the HALO Trust in Cambodia. "In the wet season we use bridging ramps to get these tractors in and out of areas," said Heslop. "We also have a mechanical workshop that goes around fixing tractors in the field. It's an all-encompassing package which allows the principle thing - getting mines out of the ground, now."

The Nagano Olympic Committee Peace Appeal was established as part of the Nagano winter games in Japan last year. The HALO Trust in Cambodia has already received \$100,000 for manual mine clearance and \$100,000 for a Muirhill armoured bulldozer from the appeal. Since demining operations began in 1992, the HALO Trust has cleared over six million square metres of land in Cambodia, removing 19,000 mines and 11,000 unexploded ordnance.

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