

## **PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION BY SERBIA**

### **COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Austria, Canada, Norway, Zambia)**

**Intersessional Meetings 30 June -2 July 2020**

#### **I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #22, #8)**

1. Serbia reported that in 2019, it addressed anti-personnel mine contamination in two villages of Bujanovac municipality clearing a total of 606,210 square metres and destroying 22 anti-personnel mines and 15 other items of explosive ordnance.
2. The Committee observed that progress reported by Serbia is below the estimated amount of area projected by Serbia to be addressed in its 2018 extension request. The Committee would welcome information from Serbia on the challenges in meeting its projected milestones.
3. The Committee observed that information provided by Serbia on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2018 extension request. The Committee noted that Serbia has improved the quality of information by reporting in accordance with IMAS and by using the Guide to reporting (Action #22, #8).

#### **II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, 22)**

4. The Committee welcomes that Serbia had provided a high degree of clarity on its remaining challenge (Action #18). Serbia reported a total of 6 suspected hazardous areas in 3 villages of Bujanovac municipality measuring 1,125,310 square metres, remain to be addressed (Action #22).
5. Serbia reported that 6 suspected mined areas were identified during the reporting period which they plan to assess in 2020-2021. The Committee observed that, with survey activities ongoing, the remaining challenge in Serbia will be further clarified following the baseline survey at which time Serbia will be able to present more precise information on the remaining challenge. The Committee welcomes updated information on the result of these efforts.

#### **III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #19, #20, #26)**

6. The Committee observed that Serbia had a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey in place (Action #2, #19). Serbia reported that it would address 2 mined areas in 2020 measuring 298,700 square metres, 1 mined area in 2021 measuring 269,280 square metres, 1 mined area in 2022 measuring 390,300 square meters, and 2 mined areas in 2023 measuring 167,030 square metres. The Committee noted that Serbia reported its plan to undertake survey of 6 newly identified areas. In this regard, the Committee welcomes Serbia reporting on adjusted including information on the number of areas and amount of area to be addressed including how priorities have been established (Action #20).
7. The Committee encourages Serbia to provide information on its efforts to integrate Convention implementation activities into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans. The Committee noted with satisfaction that in its 2020 work plan, Serbia indicated that the Government of Serbia increased the allocation of State resources towards demining operations of €350,000. Serbia further reported that these funds were matched through the ITF Enhancing Human Security donor funding stream. The Committee noted that Serbia had

reported an expected decrease in the State allocation for 2020 due to the financial impact of the coronavirus. In this regard, the Committee encourages Serbia to continue to provide updates on the allocation of state resources and international support of its work plan (Action #1).

8. The Committee noted that Serbia in its 2020 updated work plan indicated that, “Serbia ensures women and children are consulted during survey and community liaison activities and there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance operations”. The Committee welcomes the effort of Serbia in this regard and would welcome information on how Serbia ensures consideration for gender and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities in the development of its work plans as well as in ongoing work to achieve completion of its obligations under Article 5 (Action #3).
9. The Committee would welcome further information on Serbia’s efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas that may be discovered following Serbia declaring completion of its Article 5 obligations (Action #26).

#### **IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)**

10. Serbia reported that land release activities are carried out in accordance with IMAS. The Committee would welcome additional information on the status of its National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and if NMAS are up to date with IMAS to ensure the efficient and expedient implementation of its mine action programme (Action #5).
11. The Committee would welcome further information from Serbia on its efforts to establish and maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system (Action #9). The Committee would welcome information from Serbia on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance operations (Action #27).

#### **V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them**

12. The Committee recalled that in granting Serbia’s request, the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP) requested Serbia to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Serbia regarding progress in land release activities relative to the commitments made in Serbia’s annual workplan, disaggregated in a manner consistent with the IMAS, including the identification of new mined areas and their impact on annual targets as given in Serbia’s work plan; progress in developing relevant land release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with the IMAS, for the full and expedient implementation of the Convention during the extension request period and their impact on annual targets as given in Serbia’s work plan; updates regarding resource mobilisation efforts, including in approaching potential donors and in raising awareness of the lack of funding with state authorities, public enterprises and local authorities to fund clearance operations, and the result of these efforts.
13. The Committee observed that Serbia had acted on the decisions of the 17MSP by submitting an updated work plan to the 18 MSP.

#### **VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)**

14. Serbia reported the Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) coordinates activities with local authorities, school authorities and other relevant state bodies, (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport), as well as with local media means in communities where demining operations are conducted to ensure that affected communities are informed and are evacuated during demining operations (Action #32).

15. The Committee would welcome further information on Serbia's efforts to integrate mine risk education activities with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts (Action #28). The Committee would also welcome further information on Serbia's efforts to provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes, (MRE/R) on the basis of a needs assessment to ensure these programmes are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account, (Action #29). The Committee would welcome further information on Serbia's efforts to link mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data and its efforts to develop a national capacity to deliver these programmes (Action #30, #31).