



**STATEMENT OF THE DELEGATION
OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

„THE SIXTEENTH MEETING OF STATE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION”

20 YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

WIENNA, 18-21.12.2017

I thank you, Mister/Madam Chairman, and Coordinator

Ladies and gentlemen,

Bosna and Herzegovina signed the Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines, and on their destruction on December 3, 1997. Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Convention on 8 September 1998, and the Convention entered into force for Bosnia and Herzegovina on 1 March 1999.

For the past twenty years, Bosnia and Herzegovina is continuously making all the effort available in order to implement all the articles to the Convention.

Contributing to the stated above is the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina has fulfilled all its obligations as per the Article 4 of the Convention, within the domain of the stockpile destruction of anti-personnel mines. A total of 460.727 anti-personnel mines were destroyed and detail annual reports were submitted as per Article 7 of the Convention.

As for current moment and in accordance with the Article 3 of the Convention, 982 anti-personnel mines were retained in Bosnia and Herzegovina, without fuse, for the exclusive use in training.

As for the Article 5 of the Convention, we have to admit that its implementation was and unfortunately still is the greatest challenge for Bosnia and Herzegovina, although maximum efforts were invested in previous two decades. The initial estimations for Bosnia and Herzegovina implied the suspect hazardous area of 4.200 km² or 8% out of total area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, along with approximately 1.000.000 remained mines/ERW. Twenty years later, Bosnia and Herzegovina is still the most mine affected country in Europe. Current suspect hazardous area is 1.080 km² or 2,2% of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is estimated that there are approximately 80.000 mines/ERW left. Mine and ERW contamination directly influences the safety of approximately 545.000 residents or 15% out of total number of residents in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through nontechnical and technical methods, the suspect area has been reduced for 3.120 km² or 75% in comparison to the initial area. Through clearance operations, there have been 63.501 anti-personnel mines found and destroyed along with 8.453 anti-tank mines and 56.218 pieces of ERW.

Previously listed parameters indicate that Bosnia and Herzegovina will not be able to fulfill its obligation as per Article 5 within the given deadline, by 01.03.2019. The reason for not meeting the obligations relates to long standing issues of rather systemic nature and to limited financial resources. where the consequence is the average employment of resources accredited for humanitarian demining operations less than 40%.

In order to speed up the process and fulfilment of obligations under the Article 5 of the Convention, Mine Action Centre in BiH developed a technical legislation for the inclusion of "Land Release" concept, in accordance with IMAS. Results so far provide for optimism that the application of this concept through the future period will speed up and cheapen the process of suspect area cancellation. A new survey assessing the remaining challenge will be conducted in 2018 "providing thus the basis for the draft Exit Strategy in Mine Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2025. The Exit strategy is being prepared by Mine Action Centre BiH in collaboration with Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Previously stated activities presented preparatory actions for the preparation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina request for extension of the deadline as per Article 5 of the Convention. Preparatory activities on the preparation of the request have been commenced by Demining Commission in BiH, Mine Action Centre in BiH and Implementation Support Unit (ISU), and it will be officially submitted on 31.03.2018.

Since 1992, there were 8.387 mine/ERW casualties in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the period of war (1992-1995) there were 6.354 casualties. That number in the post war period was 1.757, out of which 615 fatalities. There were 121 deminers casualties in humanitarian demining operations, out of which 51 fatalities.

All mine victims in Bosnia and Herzegovina exercise their rights in accordance with the legislation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, equal to all other persons with disabilities.

In the domain of Article 6 that regards international cooperation and assistance, we are proud to point out that Bosnia and Herzegovina has developed a significant cooperation with numerous international factors involved in mine action both directly and indirectly. We intend to retain such an open approach in times ahead. Naturally, we express our most special gratitude to all the donors who supported Bosnia and Herzegovina in her process of fulfilling obligations under the Convention.

Regarding the implementation measures in accordance to Article 9 of the Convention, Bosnia and Herzegovina regulated that domain through the chapters XVI and XVII of the Criminal Code of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We also want to use this opportunity to express the maximum dedication of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the process of implementing obligations of the Convention, primarily Article 5, by 2025.

Thank you.