

***Seventh Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction***

***Geneve, 18.-22. 09. 2006.***



***BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA***

***STATEMENT***

***Agenda Item 11. (a) Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention - Clearing mined areas***

***19. 09. 2006.***

*Mr. Chairman/Madam Chair,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentleman,*

In the past two years Bosnia and Herzegovina successfully implemented its annual mine clearance aims, declared in BiH National mine action strategy paper. Only during the 2005, total mine suspected area in Bosnia and Herzegovina was reduced for further 158 km square with mine clearance conducted on 11 million m sq of minefields.

As it was reported on the last Meeting of the Standing Committees, our 2006 annual mine action plan anticipates that during this year 16.7 m2 should be cleaned or technically surveyed, what means that this ambitious plan foresees an increase of 50% compared to our achievements in 2005.

During the first six months of 2006, total suspected area has been further reduced for additional 131 km square, with mine clearance conducted on more than 3 million square meters. In this area, 2313 mines and 808 UXOs were found and destroyed, what presents in average more than 11 mines per hectare (10000 sq m).

In this moment, 161 clearance and technical survey operations are ongoing in our country on the total area of 5 million sq m.

So far this year 23 projects of permanent marking were implemented on more than 2.5 million sq m of suspected area.

Furthermore, BH Mine Action Center this year prepared 18 new all-inclusive communities based Integrated Mine Action Projects that include implementation of all aspects of mine action in the chosen high-risk community - mine clearance and technical survey, mine risk education and mine victim assistance. Several of these projects are in progress

This concept introduced in our national strategy document gives the results, in not only square meters or number of mines destroyed but in visible and measurable overall impact reduction in all communities where these projects were implemented.

During this year, the MRE has become even more effective than before, mainly because of implementation of new operational plan and endorsement of Standard Operational Procedures for MRE.

Unfortunately during reported period 12 new mine accidents happened, with 10 fatal casualties.

*Mr. Chairman/Madam Chair,*

Although numerous mine clearance activities are in progress, latest reviews made by BHMACH, show that Bosnia and Herzegovina probably will not be able to realize our plans and achieve 50% of increase in mine clearance by the end of this year. There are two main reasons that will prevent us to carry out our plan for 2006:

- the first reason is a significant decrease in available global funds for mine action, what caused the reduction of number of mine clearance projects in our country. Bosnia and Herzegovina is still very dependant on donor funds, which present some 60% off total annual financial input in our mine action.

- the second reason is the impact of implementation of new BH Law on taxation, that introduced Value Added Tax procedures, which started in January 2006. This introduction of new mechanism of taxation in Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in some delays concerning the use of donor funds.

*Mr. Chairman/Madam Chair,*

Bosnia and Herzegovina reaffirms once more its full commitment to the aims of the Ottawa Convention.

We understand that the next two and half years, leading up to the first deadlines for clearance of mined areas, are the critical phase in the life of the Convention. Although, the Ottawa Convention has achieved a remarkable success in the field of international disarmament, the overall success of the Convention is likely to be judged primarily based on the results achieved on Article 5 implementation.

Nevertheless, it is clear that fulfillment of these commitments in Bosnia and Herzegovina would require the mobilization of much more human, technical and particularly financial resources in the coming period, than it is now available. Otherwise, according to present estimates Bosnia and Herzegovina may not be able to fulfill its Article 5 obligation in given timeframe.

Therefore, heaving this in mind, Bosnia and Herzegovina express its full support to the work of the Presidency and the states chairing and co-chairing respective committees of the Convention in the preparation of this Seventh meeting of the state parties and during this week of the meeting, especially underlining necessity for mutual consensus and agreement of all the state parties on pragmatic, clear, transparent and realistic mechanism which will enable us to fully accomplish obligations given under article 5. in the spirit of the Convention and as result of the best cooperative effort.

*Thank you Mr. Chairman/Madam Chair*