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REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

STATEMENT

The Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) was founded in 2002 as a state body for coordination of works related to humanitarian demining and management of projects in the field of such demining in Serbia. Funds necessary for its work are allocated from the State Budget.

SMAC has qualified personnel and is technically equipped for implementation of works from its domain.

The Government of the Republic of Serbia adopts Demining Program for each year.

In accordance with the current regulations, SMAC is not directly engaged in demining, therefore SMAC does not have pyrotechnicians employed for demining. However, SMAC executes quality control of demining with 5 specially trained experts employed in SMAC for humanitarian demining operations and quality control, which is according to so far dynamics of demining in Serbia sufficient.

Demining operations in Serbia, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards, conduct, after being selected by public tenders, commercial companies and NGOs, technically equipped and trained for humanitarian demining operations.

The Serbian Mine Action Centre achieves international cooperation in the field of mine action with numerous subjects.

Cooperation with the International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance, as well as regional cooperation through various forms of the work of the Southeastern Europe Mine Action Coordination Council and the use of the lessons learnt give excellent results.

Good results have been achieved through bilateral cooperation with the Croatian Mine Action Centre and the Mine Action Centre in Bosnia and Herzegovina through exchange of experience related to demining, quality control of demining, making and implementation of projects on the joint border, as well as in other fields.

Problems connected with demining in Serbia are numerous and are mostly conditioned by the specificity of the mine situation and lack of funds for conducting demining.

Specificity of the mine problem in Serbia is reflected in the fact that in our territory apart from the minefields with antipersonnel and antitank mines, it is suspected that, since 1999 bombing, there are unexploded cluster bombs in the area of 23.000.000 sqm, also that 60 air bombs and other large mass projectiles are in 43 locations, including the Danube River and Sava River.

It is assumed that after the fire and explosion at the military depot in Paraćin, various types of unexploded ordnance or their parts are located outside of military objects.

In the Đerdap Gorge, on the Danube River, in the vicinity of Prahovo, in 1944, German war vessels containing large quantity of anti-ship mines and other unexploded ordnance were sunken. Last year General Survey was conducted in this location and the position of the sunken vessels and unexploded ordnance was determined.

Minefields with AP and AT mines emplaced in 1991 in so-called mixed minefields are still located in the area of about 2.500.000 sqm in the border area with the Republic of Croatia.

It is assumed that in this area there are about 3.500 mines of various types.

Survey and marking of the areas contaminated with mines have been conducted and demining projects for every micro location in which demining is conducted depending on funds provided.

We estimate that for demining of the above area 2.700.000 EUR are needed.

Demining along the border with Croatia is particularly important to us, since it, apart from safety, ecological and economic aspects contributes to further strengthening of confidence among people and promotion of relations between Serbia and Croatia.

So far the area of about 4.000.000 sqm has been cleared where about 5.500 AP and AT mines of various types have been found and destroyed.

Clearance of minefields in the border area with Croatia in the area of 300.000 sqm is in progress. The funds for that purpose have been provided, through ITF, from the donations of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of Norway.

Serbia undertook the obligation under the Ottawa Convention to clear all minefields and destroy stockpiles of antipersonnel mines by 2014.

However, we are planning to remove all minefields from the territory of Serbia long before that deadline, namely by 2009.

Antipersonnel mines are no longer produced in Serbia. In May this year stockpiles of antipersonnel mines were destroyed, except for 5.565 pieces, which are in accordance with the Ottawa Convention detained for training.

Demining of minefields, clearance of cluster bombs, and disposal of air bombs and other unexploded ordnance, apart from safety of people and protection of environment will provide conditions for an intensive agricultural production, exploitation of forests, maintenance of drainage canals, reconstruction and building of tourist and industrial facilities, which will contribute to implementation of development projects in the above fields.

Problems related to demining in Serbia are numerous and Serbia alone can hardly solve the problems without the help of the international community and donors. Therefore, we expect more help in the period to come, since we estimate that for demining of minefields, clearance of cluster bombs and disposal of air bombs and other UXO about 35.000.000 EUR are needed.

Thank you for your attention.