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

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Item 12 of the provisional agenda**Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5****Analysis of the request submitted by Serbia for an extended
deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel
mines in accordance with article 5 of the Convention****Submitted by the President of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties
on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for
extensions***

1. Serbia acceded to the Convention on 18 September 2003. The Convention entered into force for Serbia on 1 March 2004. In its initial transparency report submitted on 1 September 2004, Serbia reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Serbia is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2014. Serbia, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date, submitted on 27 March 2013 to the President of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties, a request for an extension of its deadline. On 14 May 2013, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education, and Mine Action Technologies wrote to Serbia to request additional information. Serbia provided a response on 27 May 2013. Serbia's request is for 5 years (until 1 March 2019).

2. The request indicates that an initial survey was carried out in 2002 and 2003 of an area measuring 10,000,000 square metres which was suspected to be contaminated by landmines on the border with Croatia in the Municipality of Sid. The request further indicates that this survey identified 44 areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel and anti-tank mines totalling 5,906,761 square metres. The request also indicates that, in 2009, Serbia obtained knowledge of 24 areas contaminated with "groups of mines" totalling approximately 3.5 million square metres and that surveys subsequently confirmed 12 "risk areas" totalling 1,385,215 square metres and 12 "suspected areas" totalling 2,080,000 square metres in the municipalities of Bjuanovac and Preševo in southern Serbia.¹ The

* Document submitted after the established deadline to allow the States parties to provide comprehensive information on their activities.

¹ In its request, Serbia defines "risk area" as "an area which is confirmed to be mine contaminated and for which a demining project is made and the works can start upon provision of funds for its

request also indicates that Serbia has reported and has had to contend with areas containing cluster munition remnants. The Co-Chairs asked Serbia to provide clarity concerning how it defines the term “groups of mines.” Serbia responded by indicating that “groups of mines” are located in a smaller compact area in comparison to minefields and are mostly emplaced on roads, paths, brook crossings, around certain objects, etc. Serbia also indicated that “groups of mines” are not laid in accordance with military procedures and that records of their emplacement do not exist.

3. The request indicates that during the period of 2003-2012 a total of 46 areas have been addressed totalling 6,070,810 square meters and resulting in the destruction of 4,007 anti-personnel mines, 840 anti-tank mines and 296 pieces of unexploded ordnance (UXO). The request further indicates that the clearance of 44 areas measuring 5,906,791 square metres on the border with Croatia was completed on 10 November 2009 resulting in 4,003 anti-personnel mines being destroyed, 840 anti-tank mines and 296 UXO. The request also indicates that two mined areas totalling 164,019 square metres have been cleared in the Municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo with a total of 4 anti-personnel mines having been destroyed. As well, the request indicates that, during the period between March 2003 and March 2013, 42 cluster contaminated areas have been cleared totalling 7,982,312 square metres with a total of 2,235 pieces of cluster munitions and other UXO having been destroyed.

4. The request indicates that, to release areas recorded as known or suspected to contain mines, cancellation through survey and clearance (manual, mechanical, and mine detection dogs) has been employed in conformance with United Nations’ International Mine Action Standards (IMAS).

5. The Co-Chairs asked Serbia if, further to the Cartagena Action Plan commitments to provide “information on the areas already released, disaggregated by release through clearance, technical survey and non-technical survey”, it could provide this information in such a disaggregated manner. Serbia responded by indicating that the original suspected contamination in Sid Municipality on the border of Croatia was 10,000,000 square metres and that a total of 4,100,000 square meters were cancelled through general survey (non-technical survey) and 5,906,791 square metres were subjected to clearance. Serbia also indicated that in the Municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo the original suspected contamination was 3,500,000 square metres and that it expects that, of the 2,000,000 square metres which remain to be surveyed, 1,000,000 square metres will be cancelled. Serbia further indicated that the basis for the estimation is the experience gained from previous general survey operations (non-technical surveys).

6. The request indicates that as of March 2013, a total of ten “risk areas” measuring 1,221,196 square metres remain to be cleared and a total of 12 “suspected areas” measuring 2,080,000 square meters remain to be surveyed in the municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo. The request also indicates as concerns cluster munition remnants that there are 13 “risk areas” totalling 2,357,502 square metres and 13 “suspected areas” totalling 6,648,00 square metres in 11 municipalities. The request further indicates that Serbia also faces contamination by other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

7. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances: (a) the discovery of additional mined areas; (b) a lack of funds to address the problem with funding severely diminishing through the years; (c) unregistered mine contaminated areas (groups of mines);

implementation” and “suspected area” as “an area which is planned to be additionally surveyed in order to be confirmed as mine contaminated, or cancelled if confirmed as (not) mine contaminated.”

(d) climactic conditions, which makes some areas inaccessible during periods of the year, and; (e) contamination other than mines.

8. The request indicates that mines and cluster munitions have a socio-economic impact on affected communities and that apart from being a constant threat to the safety of the people, these mines block agricultural land, exploitation of forests, development of cattle breeding and picking of mushrooms, use of local roads, hospitals, schools, industrial infrastructure, several airports, hotels and other tourist areas and infrastructure such as ski lifts and paths. The request also indicates that mines have blocked access to low voltage electricity transmission networks, drainage canals, has hindered the construction of solar plants, primary tobacco processing facilities and has substantially increased the risk of fire. The States Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the “analysing group”) noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period has the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in Serbia.

9. The request further indicates that Serbia keeps track of civilian casualties of war on the basis of the degree of disability and that according to the latest data there are a total of 2,198 persons that have been disabled due to the war. The request also indicates that there is no specific data related to the age or gender of victims. The Co-Chairs, highlighting the fact that Serbia indicated that there is no data related to the age or gender of victims, asked Serbia if, given the Cartagena Action Plan commitment to “collect all necessary data, disaggregated by sex and age, in order to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate adequate national policies, plans and legal frameworks,” what Serbia’s plan is in the future to solve this issue and improve its information. Serbia responded by indicating that according to data of the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Affairs, the number of civilians disabled by war is 1,316 of which 921 are men and 395 are women. Serbia also indicated that it plans to compile all existing regulations concerning all categories of persons with disabilities and families of war victims in one law which would regulate rights, conditions and scope of protection for this category of the population. The analysing group noted the importance of Serbia collecting and providing data on victims “disaggregated by sex and age” in keeping with commitments made in the Cartagena Action Plan.

10. As noted, Serbia’s request is for five years (until 1 March 2019). The request indicates that the amount of time requested is based on demining / clearance operations in Serbia historically having been funded mostly from international partners, a downward trend in terms of international support to demining in South Eastern Europe, and Serbia’s experience that some donors are exclusively interested in funding cluster munitions clearance. Serbia also indicated that if funds are made available Serbia would be able to complete implementation in a shorter period than requested. The analysing group noted that Serbia may find itself in a situation wherein it could proceed with implementation faster than that suggested by the amount of time requested and that doing so could benefit both the Convention and Serbia itself given the indication by Serbia of the socio-economic benefits that will flow from demining.

11. The request contains “survey milestones” for the period 2013-2015, specifying how much area on annual basis will be surveyed and which communities in which municipalities will benefit. The Co-Chairs asked Serbia to indicate the methodology it will use to carry out survey activities. Serbia responded by indicating that Serbia will use Norwegian People’s Aid (NPA) Standard Operating Procedures for General Survey and the IMAS. The request also contains projections of the amount of “risk area” to be cleared annually during the period 2013-2019 (See table). The analysing group noted the relatively small amount of

area that is to be addressed each year. The analysing group further noted that, if funding could be found, implementation could proceed much more rapidly than projected.

Table: Area to be addressed during the period covered by the extension

| <i>Year</i> | <i>Estimated area subject to survey (square metres)</i> | <i>Estimated area to be cleared (square metres)</i> |
|-------------|---|---|
| 2013 | 832,000 | 489,276 |
| 2014 | 606,000 | 572,116 |
| 2015 | 642,000 | 414,668 |
| 2016 | | 256,185 |
| 2017 | | 247,000 |
| 2018 | | 160,000 |
| 2019 | | 138,000 |
| Totals | 2,080,000 | 2,277,2452 |

12. The request indicates that, while Serbia's "national budget" will be the source of funding for all survey activities, Serbia will rely on "donations" to fund the entirety of demining costs. The request further indicates that approximately € 2,500,000 will be required for demining between 2013 and 2019, based on the price of demining one square kilometre ranging from €0.8 to €1.3 per square metre depending on land characteristics and terrain configuration. The analysing group noted that, given the importance of external support to ensure timely implementation, Serbia could benefit from developing as soon as possible a resource mobilisation strategy. The analysing group further noted that Serbia may find itself in a position to fund part of its demining costs and that demonstrating national ownership in this manner could help facilitate cooperation and assistance efforts.

13. The analysing group further noted that, while the plan presented is workable, the plan lacks ambition and that implementation could proceed much faster if Serbia was able to cover part of demining costs and thereby become more attractive for external funding.

14. The analysing group noted that the annual benchmarks for progress contained in the request would greatly assist Serbia and all States Parties in assessing progress in implementation during the extension period. In this regard, the analysing group noted that both could benefit if Serbia provided updates relative to these timelines at meetings of the Standing Committees, Meetings of the States Parties, and Review Conferences. The analysing group further noted the importance of Serbia keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of Serbia's national financial contribution to implementation, efforts to mobilise external resources, and the results of these efforts.

² The estimated area to be cleared includes 1,221,196 square metres which are known to remain to be cleared (as indicated in paragraph 6 above) plus 1,056,049 square metres of area subject to survey which Serbia projects will require clearance.

15. In noting that all survey activities were scheduled to be complete by the end of 2015 which should result in a more accurate understanding of the remaining implementation challenge, the analysing group noted that the Convention would benefit from Serbia submitting to the States Parties, by 1 March 2016, an updated detailed work plan for the remaining period covered by the extension. The analysing group noted that this work plan should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, annual projections of which areas and what quantity of area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organization, and a detailed budget.
