

**Mine Action Programme of Serbia:
Status and Challenges in Implementation
Thursday, 7 June 2018**

Introduction and participants

On 7 June 2018, Serbia and the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention with the support of the Implementation Support Unit invited state and civil society representatives to engage on Serbia's needs and challenges in mine action and in particular its efforts to complete its mine clearance commitments by 2020. Following a presentation by Serbia, participants engaged in an informal discussion about possible avenues of cooperation and assistance in support of Serbia's efforts. Participants received a package including an invitation, agenda and Serbia's Presentation, (delivered version attached). Where not publicly available, these can be obtained through the ISU (isu@apminebanconvention.org) by those in a position to provide assistance.

Participants

States: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Japan, Netherlands, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand.

Convention representatives: Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit, Representative of the Committee on Victim assistance (Belgium), Representatives of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance (Sweden and Canada).

Organizations: Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre, European Union, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), ITF Enhancing Human Security, Serbia Mine Action Centre, United Nations Development Program (UNDP), United States (Department of State).

Presentation

Serbia (SMAC) presented on its current Article 5 Challenge, noting a remaining challenge of anti-personnel mine contamination of 2,240,940 square metres, cluster munitions 2,500,000 square metres and UXO 18,500,000 square metres, including underwater UXO contamination.

Serbia presented overall clearance results of its mine action program of 7,909,826 square metres of mines, 11,258,195 square metres of cluster munitions, and 5,380,060 square metres of UXO. Serbia presented that it had declared Preševo municipality mine free.

Serbia presented its remaining challenge in located in 11 locations, of 6 villages, Bujanovac municipality of 2,240,940 square metres. The area is characterised by hilly and mountainous terrain, used by local population groups for cattle breeding, tobacco production, mushroom picking and exploitation of woods.

Challenges for addressing the mine areas in the municipality include climatic conditions: Contaminated areas are inaccessible during different seasonal periods of the year, unregistered nature of laid mines: minefield lack registries and have not been planted in specific patterns, lack of donor funds: Funding from donors has severely diminished through the years in addition certain donors insisting on funding solely cluster munitions clearance and UXO clearance and contamination other than mines.

Serbia presented that in 2015 it allocated (€100,000) funds for demining operations for the first time. Allocations of funding from State Budget has been matched with funding from the United States of America through the ITF. Serbia presented that during 2018 Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America were funding Serbia's mine action program and that Serbia had doubled its national budget allocation (€200,000), for mine action.

Serbia presented that projects for clearance and technical survey have been developed and implementation is pending, based on funding. Serbia presented that €2,500,000 is required to address its remaining APM contamination during the period of its new Article 5 extension deadline. This includes an allocation of €600,000 from the State budget, (€200,000 per year) and a request for international donors to provide funding of €1,900,000 over the same period.

In order to address the need for international funding, Serbia has submitted projects to the International Trust Fund for Enhancing Human Security (ITF) to approach donors and conduct tender procedures for selection of a contractor.

Additional information by International Trust Fund for Enhancing Human Security (ITF)

The International Trust Fund for Enhancing Human Security was invited by Serbia to make a presentation on its experience in supporting mine action in the country. ITF provided an overview of its background, funding trends, its donation/project cycle and contracting process.

Based on these two presentations, the following questions were taken from the floor.

Sweden: There exist many aid and development priorities for donors, what arguments can Serbia give for funding its mine action program. ITF responded that there was an initial high level donor response to Serbia that has achieved much. However, this has reduced to focus on more 'crisis countries' with a resulting reduction to Serbia. Serbia has achieved much; but there is still a mine issue. Serbia has a deadline, and a completion initiative; it has a plan with milestones to achieve its obligations. Serbia is in its final phase and donors have the opportunity to be part of completion.

UNDP: How are you engaging with the private sector on this in order to reach out to possible sources of funding apart from donor states? SMAC informed that they organised events in connection with the start up and finish of clearance projects in order to get presence in the media and increase knowledge among people. The private sector has also been part and finished certain clearance projects, but on UXO and cluster munitions, for instance in connection with the clearance of facilities for private industry.

ICRC: Is the contaminated area affected with mixed types of remnants of war or mines only. Serbia responded that there are no mixed contaminated areas left, the area we spoke about (Bujanovac municipality), is contaminated with mines only.

GICHD: The area mentioned is relatively small, and so will be the clearance costs. Is there any idea of the density of the mines in this area, and what are the conditions of the mines? Serbia responded that contamination consists of groups of mines, we do not know what we will find and how many mines there are, as for the conditions of the mines, unfortunately some of these mines are recent and are in very good conditions.

Switzerland: Is there a coordination mechanism in Serbia regarding mine action bringing together different stakeholders? And if not, would such a mechanism be helpful? Serbia responded that they rely on close cooperation with the ITF, and ITF works in close collaboration with the MFA and the

Mine Action Centre. They also cooperate with their colleagues in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia on these matters, in order to increase efficiency.

Follow up

During the wrapping up comments, it was suggested that the meeting might result in a coordination platform.

Questions about the Mine Action Program in Serbia should be directed to:

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