

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meetings | 22 June – 24 June 2021

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen,

Since the Convention came into force, Bosnia and Herzegovina have come a long way in its efforts to become a mine-free country.

Despite remarkable advances made since the Convention has first been adopted, challenges still remain, and many local communities still face contamination.

Since the beginning of technical survey and mine clearance operations in BiH, the mine suspected area has been reduced for 3,244 km², surface where 68,269 of AP mines, 8,554 of AT mines, and 61,456 EWRC have been found and destroyed.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is committed as ever to ending our country suffering caused by AP mines, emphasizing once again the importance of continued cooperation in striving towards a mine-free world.

An assessed impact of mines in BiH was updated under the project titled "General assessment of mine suspected areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2019". This Project is funded by the European Union, and implemented by the Mine Action Center in BiH, in cooperation with the Armed Forces of BiH and the NGO Norwegian People's Aid, and under the supervision of EUFOR.

Data for 143 municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina were processed / mine danger was confirmed in 118 municipalities, / a total of 478 mine suspected areas were formed.

132,803 inhabitants are directly endangered.

During the 18 months of the project implementation, the mine suspected area was reduced by 103 km², and the number of mines in existence was estimated at 180,000.

A register of evidence was formed with 13,116 formed folders of evidence, divided into three categories.

A total of 189 MSAs with a high level of risk were identified, along with 274 with a medium risk level and 15 with a low level of risk.

Data obtained as a result of the project served as a basis for submitting a new request for extension

of the deadline under the Ottawa Convention for the period 2021-2027.

Indicators for the implementation of the new Mine Action Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina have been defined, and a medium-term action plan for land release has been developed.

The current size of the suspected mine danger area in BiH is 956.36 km², which accounts for 1.96% of the total area of BiH.

Due to the public health measures undertaken in 2020 in view of the current COVID-19 pandemic, the financial support for demining declined and transferred to other channels. As a result, the intensity of demining operations was significantly reduced.

Consequently, the activities were focused on intensified emergency marking operations as an integral part of humanitarian demining and mine warning operations.

Through these activities, 9,662 emergency marking signs were placed at 530 different locations last year.

The ultimate goal of these activities is to reduce risks in suspected areas, due to the increased outdoor activities and movement near mine suspected areas.

These activities of continuous mine warning led to the zero number of demining accidents in BiH in the last year.

However, we cannot forget that there were 1,766 casualties of mine explosive devices in BiH so far, 617 of which with fatal outcome.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic made our collective efforts last year more challenging, with a temporary stand-down of clearance operations, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as other mine affected countries continued its cooperation with other affected States and civil society partners through the use of digital technologies and online platforms.

Also, since last year, a mobile application for mine suspected areas has been made available in BiH, greatly contributing to mine risk education activities, bearing in mind that from now on, all data on mine suspected locations is available to all people through the application that can be downloaded from the Internet.

This application was developed with the EU funds, with the cooperation and support of UNDP in

BiH.

The development of the application was preceded by the modernization of the existing information system, and updating of the complete database of the Mine Action Center in BiH, so that the web-oriented information system platform of the Mine Action Center in BiH is already available online.

Newly developed methodology, fully trained and equipped staff, and accurate data are a key factor for better understanding and presenting the whole mine problem.

It is also a crucial factor in speeding up and improving the process of returning the remaining mine suspected areas with an improved, high level of efficiency and reasonable spending.

Further development of procedures, harmonization with international standards and good information management with improved IT solutions (IMSMA Core within the project implemented with the assistance of UNDP BiH), enabled the collection, storage, analysis and updating of data for precise planning, prioritization and implementation of overall mine action tasks and transparent reporting.

We are grateful for your attention, support that you extended us and partnership that we built in order to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina become a mine-free country.

We will strive to increase our interaction and engagement with the donor community to ensure that partners are kept informed of the progress made in implementing the plans laid out in our request for the extension.

Thank you.