

## **Decision on the request submitted by Serbia for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention**

1. The meeting assessed the request submitted by Serbia for an extension of its deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas in accordance with Article 5.1, agreeing unanimously to grant the request for an extension until 31 December 2024.
2. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that, while Serbia had not been able to complete the implementation of the principal commitment it had made, as recorded in the decisions of the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties, to complete implementation by its 1 March 2023 deadline, Serbia has made commendable progress. The Meeting further noted Serbia's continued commitment to the implementation of Article 5.
3. In granting the request, the Meeting noted that Serbia was projecting that it would need approximately twenty-one months to complete non-technical survey and gather the necessary information to develop a meaningful forward-looking request for extension by 31 March 2024, including a work plan to project with greater certainty the amount of area, the size of each area, matched with a detailed budget and the amount of time necessary for Serbia to complete its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention.
4. In granting the request, the Meeting noted the importance of Serbia ensuring that the most relevant land-release standards, policies, and methodologies, in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), are in place and applied for the full and expedient implementation of this aspect of the Convention. The Meeting further encouraged Serbia to continue seeking improved land release and certification techniques which could lead to Serbia fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame. The Meeting noted that doing so could benefit Serbia in ensuring that the humanitarian, social and economic impacts outlined by Serbia in its request are addressed as quickly as possible.
5. In granting the request, the Meeting noted the importance of Serbia reporting on its remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination and reporting on progress in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance).
6. In granting the request, the Meeting noted the importance of Serbia carrying out context specific mine risk education and reduction efforts that are tailored to the threat encountered by the population and are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account.

7. In granting the request the Meeting noted that the plan presented by Serbia is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Meeting further noted that the plan is based on allocations from State budgets and contingent upon increased international funding. In this regard, the Meeting noted that the Convention would benefit from Serbia reporting annually to the States Parties on the following:
  - a. Progress made relative to the commitments contained in Serbia's work plan and the results of survey and clearance efforts in a manner consistent with IMAS in accordance with the land release methodology employed, (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, and cleared through clearance);
  - b. The impact of survey and clearance outcomes and updates on how additional clarity obtained may change Serbia's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation;
  - c. The remaining challenge reported in a manner consistent with IMAS and disaggregated by suspected hazardous areas and confirmed hazardous areas and their respective sizes;
  - d. Adjusted milestones, including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed manually and how priorities have been established;
  - e. Progress in developing relevant land release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with IMAS, for the full and expedient implementation of the Convention during the extension request period;
  - f. Updates regarding the implementation of mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;
  - g. Resource mobilization efforts, external financing received and resource made available by the Government of Serbia to support implementation efforts; and
  - h. Information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boy and men and the needs and experiences of people in affected communities.
8. In addition, the Committee noted the importance of Serbia reporting as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding the implementation of Article 5 and other commitments made in the request at Intersessional Meetings, Meetings of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.