

GICHD remarks on APBMC Article 5 extension request submitted by Serbia

Intersessional meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention June 2022

The GICHD congratulates Serbia on progress so far towards art. 5 implementation and on presenting an extension request that is overall clear and lays out a fairly detailed implementation plan and timeline.

Serbia expects to complete clearance of the remaining known contaminated areas by the end of 2022. In the light of historic output rates, this objective seems ambitious within the end of this year, but achievable within the 2023 deadline of the current extension. In addition, results from 2019-2021 – in which no areas have been reduced through technical survey – seem to suggest that the land release process is not being used to its full potential, and further efforts would be recommended in this regard.

At this stage, the biggest uncertainty in terms of planning relates to the lack of details on the newly discovered contaminated areas in the Bujanovac municipality, whose actual extent might entail significant adjustments to operational and resource mobilization plans. In this regard, we welcome Serbia's intention to provide APBMC States Parties with an update once clearer information is obtained.

We also noted that the presence of contamination by other explosive ordnance may cause resources to be redirected away from landmine clearance and encourage Serbia to keep these elements into account when projecting required time and resources.

The request provides clear estimated costs for future operations and would benefit from more information on the resource mobilisation plan, given the central role of international assistance in ensuring implementation of the foreseen activities. At the same time, we commend Serbia's continued commitment to dedicating national resources to mine action activities.

We welcome information provided on Risk Education efforts in the previous extension and commend Serbia's plan to conduct risk education interventions in the newly discovered mine contaminated areas.

In line with OAP #24, we encourage Serbia to present a more detailed, costed and multi-year plan for EORE efforts in affected communities. It would be important to specify the at-risk groups by gender, age and disability, as well as disaggregate beneficiary and victim data by sex and age and, where possible, by disability, in line with OAP #3, #32 and #35 and IMAS 13.10.

Further information would also be welcome on how SMAC's annual work plans and medium-term plans will integrate gender and diversity considerations.

Finally, more details would be useful on national systems or plans to ensure that information is managed efficiently, particularly when it comes to surveying new areas. In this regard, we encourage following a standardized approach that is in line with IMAS 5.10 (“Information Management for Mine Action”), especially given the introduction of the land release concept in the new Decree on Protection against ERW that is awaiting Government adoption.