

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Colombia, France (Chair), Iraq, and Sweden)

Intersessional Meetings 19 – 21 June 2023

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY SERBIA

I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #8, #22)

1. Serbia reported that in 2022 it addressed 2 mined areas measuring 171,500 square metres through clearance resulting in the destruction of 4 items of explosive ordnance.
2. The Committee observed that the information provided by Serbia on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2022 extension request. The Committee observed that progress in implementation was less than that projected in Serbia's 2022 extension request. The Committee welcomed Serbia reporting on progress in accordance with land release methodology employed, using the Guide to Reporting, in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), and disaggregated by type of contamination (Action #8, Action #22).

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, #22)

3. The Committee observed that Serbia provided some clarity¹ on its remaining challenge (Action #18) Serbia reported a remaining challenge of 1 suspected hazardous area (SHA) measuring 390,300 square metres in Ravno Bučje village of Bujanovac municipality, (Action #22).
4. The Committee observed Serbia reported remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by SHAs and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and their relative size, and type of contamination (Action #22).
5. Action #18 of the Oslo Action Plan (OAP) requests States that have not yet done so to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, and establish evidence based, accurate baselines of contamination based on information collected from all relevant sources. The Committee observed that, while Serbia reported having identified additional SHAs in Bujanovac municipality where forest fires had occurred, and that survey of these areas forms part of Serbia's efforts to identify the precise perimeter of mined areas, to the extent possible, in an effort to establish an evidence-based, accurate baseline of contamination. The Committee observed that Serbia was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas and would welcome updated information from Serbia on these efforts.
6. The Committee recalled that in its 2022 extension request submitted to the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties (20MSP) Serbia had indicated that in 2014, the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime

¹ "Some clarity" has been used when a State Party has provided a summary table listing some information related to the number of areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines in each region / province / district within the State.

Minister and Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure had formed a Coordination Body for Gender Equality as a national coordinating mechanism for gender equality in the Republic of Serbia and that the body recognizes the importance of improvement position of women, specially focusing on increasing the number of women entrepreneurs, as well as their equal participation in management bodies in education, science, culture, information, sports, agriculture and rural development. The Committee observed however that Serbia had not provided information in its Article 7 report on its efforts to establish their baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men and would welcome further information in this regard (Action #18).

III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #6, #19, #20, #26)

7. The Committee observed that Serbia, in its 2022 extension request submitted to the 20MSP, included a work plan for the period of 2022-2025 (Action #2, Action #19). The Committee observed that Serbia projected to address 390,300 metres in 2023 and to carry out a one-year non-technical survey (NTS) of Bujanovac municipality to acquire great clarity on the remaining challenge and submit a meaningful forward-looking request for extension by 31 March 2024, including a work plan with includes the number of mined areas, 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. The Committee would welcome further information on the results of NTS and how survey outcomes impact Serbia's understanding of its remaining challenge and annual milestones (Action #19, Action #20).
8. Serbia reported an annual national financial contribution towards implementation of 260,000 EUR and that these funds were matched with donor funds (Action #1).
9. The Committee recalled that Serbia, in its 2022 extension request, indicated that there had been an intensification of the interaction of mine action and infrastructure development. Serbia reported on its efforts to strengthen partnerships, including cooperation with the Emergency Management Staff of the Municipality of Bujanovac and had hosted an in-country national platform for dialogue with close cooperation with the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Defence, as well as Embassies of donor countries (Action #1, Action #6).
10. The Committee recalled that Serbia had reported that in 2014 following the initiative of the Prime Minister, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure formed a Coordination Body for Gender Equality as a national coordinating mechanism for gender equality and that this body recognizes the importance of improving the position of women, specially focusing on increasing the number of women entrepreneurs, as well as their equal participation in management bodies. The Committee observed that Serbia had not provided information in its Article 7 report on its efforts in implementation of Action #3 and would welcome further information in this regard (Action #3).
11. Serbia reported on its efforts to develop a sustainable national capacity, including training for staff, and that the Serbian Armed Forces maintain a capability to survey, search, detect, clear and destroy landmines (Action #26).

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)

12. Serbia reported on its efforts to keep national mine action standards up to date and that a new decree to be adopted by the Government will include the land release concept that was not defined in the former decree. The decree will also include the development of national standards, which have not been developed in Serbia so far. The Committee welcomes the update from Serbia

and would welcome further information on the timeline for the development and approval of the national standards (Action #5).

13. Serbia reported on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system including an agreement between the Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) to implement IMSMA Core (Action #9).
14. Serbia reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including delivery of trainings for SMAC and other aligned Ministry staff, the development of a technical test centre including an initial test of drones for use in survey activities, and the dissemination of jointly developed papers that were presented to conferences attended by SMAC (Action #27).

V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them

15. In considering Serbia's 2022 extension request, the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties (20MSP) requested Serbia to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Serbia on:

- 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);
- 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;
- The remaining challenge reported in a manner consistent with IMAS and disaggregated by suspected hazardous areas and confirmed hazardous areas and their respective sizes;
- Adjusted milestones, including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed manually and how priorities have been established, and;
- Resource mobilization efforts, external financing received and resource made available by the Government of Serbia to support implementation efforts.

16. The Committee would welcome updated information from Serbia on the following decisions of the 20MSP;

- 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;
- 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; and
- 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.

VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)

17. Action #32 of the OAP requests States to report on mine risk education and other risk reduction programmes in Article 7 reports, including the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age. The Committee observed that while Serbia had reported on methodologies used, the challenges faced and results achieved, Serbia had not reported on the results achieved disaggregated by gender and age and would welcome further information in this regard (Action #32).
18. Action #28 of the OAP requests States to integrate MRE/R with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts, as well as with ongoing survey and clearance activities. The Committee observed that Serbia reported that SMAC has developed its own program for recognising explosive remnants of war in accordance with IMAS and was verified by the Ministry of Education in June 2021, and that MRE is carried out with affected communities in coordination with local authorities, school authorities and other relevant state bodies (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport), as well as with local media in communities where demining operations are conducted, in order to ensure that affected communities are informed and are evacuated during demining operations. The Committee would welcome further information on Serbia's efforts to integrate MRE/R with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts (Action #28).
19. Action #29 of the OAP requests States to provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes, (MRE/R) for all affected populations and groups at risk and to ensure that such programmes are developed on the basis of a needs assessment, are tailored to the threat encountered by the population, are sensitive to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account. The Committee observed that Serbia reported on its efforts to ensure that local at-risk populations are informed about demining activities through a number of means in accordance with IMAS, and that women, men and children are consulted with equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance. The Committee further observed that Serbia had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to ensure if such programmes were developed on the basis of a needs and would welcome further information in this regard (Action #29).
20. Serbia reported on its efforts to provide MRE/R programmes and messages based on an understanding of the affected population's behaviour, risk pattern and coping mechanisms, and, wherever possible, anticipated population movements, Serbia also reported that no mine accidents occurred in 2022 (Action #30).
21. Serbia reported that the purpose of the SMAC is to build national capacities, to educate trainees, (members of local governments, civil protection, hunters, and construction workers engaged in excavation works in contaminated areas) and to enable them to improve knowledge. Serbia also reported on its efforts to build capacity within the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of Transport (Action #31).

VII. Challenges in implementation (OAP Action #8)

22. The Committee observed that Serbia provided quality information on challenges in implementation, including unregistered mine contaminated areas, newly discovered mine suspected areas, climatic conditions, contamination other than mines and the COVID-19 crisis.

The Oslo Action Plan country reporting tracker
Article 5 Implementation
Serbia
CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS

Actions	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July)
#1	# States Parties that report, having included Convention implementation activities in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans and national strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, where appropriate						
	% mine-affected States Parties that report making national financial commitments to the implementation of their obligations under the Convention						
#2	% mine-affected States Parties that report having evidence-based, costed and time-bound national strategies and work plans in place						
#3	% affected States Parties whose national work plans and strategies integrate gender and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account						The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to integrate gender and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account.
	# women in States Parties' delegations attending Convention meetings						
#5	% States Parties that have updated their national standards to address new challenges and ensure the employment of best practices, taking into consideration the latest IMAS						
#6	# States Parties that report having included mine action related activities within their humanitarian response plans, peacebuilding, development or human rights plans, where relevant						
#8	# States Parties that prepare their Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting						
	# States Parties that report on progress and challenges during formal and informal meetings						
#9	% States Parties that report having a sustainable national information management system in place						

SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OF MINED AREAS							
Actions	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July)
#18	% affected States Parties that have established an accurate and evidence-based contamination baseline no later than the Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2021 (and by each year thereafter if not all affected States Parties have done so by 19MSP)						The Committee observed that Serbia was still in the process of identifying the precise perimeter of mined areas and would welcome updated information from Serbia on these efforts.
	% affected States Parties who report having established their baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men						The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to report having established their baseline through inclusive consultations with women, girls, boys and men.
#19	% affected States Parties presenting work plans for the implementation of Article 5 by the Eighteenth Meeting of the States Parties (and MSPs thereafter and by each year thereafter if not all affected States Parties have done so by 18MSP)						
#20	# affected States Parties that have reported annual updates and adjusted milestones to their national work plans in their 30 April transparency reports						
	# States Parties that have fulfilled their obligations under Article 5						
#21	# States Parties that apply the provisions of the Convention to anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature (for the purpose of this indicator: survey, clear and report)						
#22	% of affected States Parties reporting on the remaining challenge and progress made in accordance with IMAS						
	% of affected States Parties providing survey and clearance data in Article 5 extension requests and Article 7 reports that disaggregates by type of contamination						
#23	% extension requests that include detailed, costed and multi-year work plans for the extension period						
	% extension requests that are submitted in accordance with the process established by the States Parties						
#24	% extension requests that include appropriate plans for risk education and reduction activities						
#25	% States Parties that have completed their Article 5 obligations and that submit voluntary declarations of completion						

#26	% affected States Parties that include provisions for addressing previously unknown mined areas in their national strategies and/or completion plans						
	% affected States Parties that report having put in place sustainable national capacities to address the discovery of previously unknown mined areas						
	% States Parties that discover previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas, that apply the decision of the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties						
#27	# States Parties that report promoting research, application and sharing of innovative technological means						
MINE RISK EDUCATION AND REDUCTION							
Actions	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 28 July)
#28	% affected States Parties that report having included mine risk education and reduction programmes in their humanitarian response and protection plans and/or development plans, as well as in their mine action plans, where relevant						The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to report having included mine risk education and reduction programmes in their humanitarian response and protection plans and/or development plans, as well as in their mine action plans, where relevant.
#29	% affected States Parties that report having mine risk education and reduction programmes for all affected populations in place						The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to report having included mine risk education and reduction programmes in their humanitarian response and protection plans and/or development plans, as well as in their mine action plans, where relevant.
	% States Parties that report carrying out mine risk education and reduction activities that collect, analyse and report data disaggregated by gender, age, disability and other diverse needs						The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to report having included mine risk education and reduction programmes in their humanitarian response and protection plans and/or development plans, as well as in their mine action plans, where relevant.
#30	# States Parties that report having established an evidence-based priority-setting mechanism for mine risk education and reduction programmes						

#31	# States Parties that provide risk education and reduction programmes to affected communities in the case that previously unknown mined areas are discovered						
#32	# States Parties reporting on their mine risk education and other risk reduction programmes and results						

