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Decisions 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

27 November 2024

1. The Conference of the States Parties, 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 2026.
2. In granting the request, the Conference noted that while Serbia had not been able to complete the implementation of the principal commitments made in its previous request to complete implementation of non-technical survey in Bujanovac municipality by its 31 December 2024 deadline, Serbia had made considerable progress and noted Serbia's continued commitment to the implementation of Article 5.
3. In granting the request, the Conference noted that Serbia is applying best practices and, in particular, the identified "value of States Parties requesting only the period of time necessary to gather and assess data on landmine contamination and other relevant information with a view to developing a meaningful forward-looking plan based on this information, and then submitting a second request containing plans based on a clearer understanding of the extent of the challenge and which project with greater certainty the amount of time that will be required to complete Article 5 implementation" with a view of submitting a subsequent extension request by 31 March 2026.
4. In granting the request, the Conference noted the importance of Serbia continuing to develop relevant land release standards, policies, and methodologies in line with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) for the full and expedient implementation of the Convention during the extension period. The Conference also noted that should Serbia continue to seek improved land release techniques, Serbia may find itself able to complete implementation in a shorter timeframe than requested.
5. In granting the request, the Conference noted that the request indicates that survey of suspected hazardous areas were delayed due to security concerns. In granting the request, the Conference noted the importance of Serbia keeping the States Parties apprised of changes in the security situation and the potential positive or negative impact on survey and clearance activities.
6. In granting the request, the Conference noted the importance of Serbia continuing to report on progress in implementation in a manner consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) to ensure a clear understanding of the progress made by Serbia in the implementation of its obligations under Article 5 (i.e., cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance and disaggregated by the type of explosive ordnance identified and destroyed (e.g., anti-personnel mines, anti-tank mines)).

7. In granting the request, the Conference noted the importance of Serbia continuing to report on updates regarding the implementation of mine risk education and reduction efforts in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, priorities for implementation, the challenges faced, and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age.
8. In granting the request, the Conference noted that Serbia would be in a position to complete implementation as soon as possible with increased national and international cooperation and Assistance. In this regard, the Conference noted the importance of Serbia developing a resource mobilization plan.
9. In noting that the plan presented by Serbia is based on allocations from the State budget and contingent upon international funding. The Conference 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 with progress in survey and clearance presented in a manner consistent with IMAS and progress in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e., cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance);
 - b) The impact of survey and clearance outcomes and how additional clarity obtained may change Serbia's assessment of the remaining implementation challenge and timeframe for implementation, including adjusted annual milestones with information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;
 - c) The remaining challenge in a manner consistent with IMAS, by disaggregating by 'suspect hazardous areas', and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size including by disaggregating between the type of contamination to ensure increased clarity on the remaining challenges;
 - d) 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;
 - e) Efforts to ensure consideration for the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities as well as climate and environmental considerations in the implementation of the Convention;
 - f) Changes in the security situation and the potential positive or negative impact on survey and clearance activities;
 - g) Efforts to make provisions for a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following the completion of Serbia's Article 5 obligations.
 - h) Progress in implementation of mine risk education and reduction activities in affected communities, including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced, and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;

- i) The humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of contamination including information on victims disaggregated by gender and age; and
- j) Resource mobilisation efforts, external financing received, and resource made available by the Government of Serbia to support implementation efforts.

10. In granting the request, the Conference 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 Conferences, Conferences of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.