REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINE ACTION CENTRE

ANTI - PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION
INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS OF THE STATES PARTIES
UPDATE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION

17-20 June 2025

Distinguished President, distinguished delegates,

The delegation of the Republic of Serbia would like to express our pleasure at participating in the work of the Intersessional Meetings of the States Parties and is grateful for the opportunity to provide an update on Article 5 implementation.

Serbia is strongly committed to the full implementation of its obligations from the AP Mine Ban Convention.

At the Fifth Review Conference (5RC) of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which took place in Siem Reap, Cambodia, from 25 to 29 November 2024, Serbia was granted the extension of the deadline for fulfilling of its mine clearance obligations under the Convention for a period of 2-years untill 31 December 2026.

There are a number of circumstances that have impeded Serbia from complying with

its Article 5 obligations. The remaining mine-contaminated areas in Serbia lack official documentation, as no formal records or predetermined planting patterns exist, complicating demining efforts. This complicates demining efforts, as survey results remain subject to alterations based on newly gathered information. In Bujanovac, additional mine-suspected areas were discovered in October 2019 and August 2021, further highlighting the ongoing challenges in identifying hazardous zones.

Moreover, climatic conditions impose constraints on demining operations, as certain contaminated areas become inaccessible during specific periods of the year, leading to inevitable delays. Beyond landmines, clearance operations also extend to unexploded ordnance, including cluster munitions, air-dropped bombs, rockets, and other hazardous remnants of conflict. Additionally, infrastructure development projects have triggered further clearance efforts to address residual contamination.

To enhance the effectiveness of demining activities, Serbia previously requested an extension for the implementation of the Non-Technical Survey Project in Bujanovac

Municipality. The additional time was necessary to gather essential information that would enable the design of a comprehensive work plan, ensuring greater accuracy in assessing the number and size of affected areas. This extension also aimed to better estimate the required timeframe and develop a detailed budget for the successful completion of Serbia's Article 5 obligations.

The Serbian Government has allocated around 221.000 EUR for demining operations in 2025. These funds have been transferred to the ITF Enhancing Human Security to match the funds with donor funds (the US and the Republic of Korea donations). The SMAC developed projects for the remaining known contamination totalling 268,100 sqm, which will be implemented in forthcoming period – tender procedures for the selection of contractors are in progress.
Regarding previously unknown contamination, Non-Technical Survey Project covering this area is in progress as of February 2025.
For the NTS Project, the mixed survey team that includes 5 surveyors (Serbian and Albanian, female and male) is in the process of being fully trained and equipped to conduct required tasks. The activities are supervised and monitored by the SMAC and international instructor. The Mine Action Centre works in collaboration with local authorities on the project, who provide essential support to ensure its successful implementation. Current focus is on desk assessment and incorporation of IMSMA Core into the required NTS forms, which the SMAC does in cooperation with GICHD IM Advisor.

Upon completion of the NTS Project, Serbia will get a clear picture of the remaining mine contamination and development of a detailed plan containing SHA and CHA will be enabled.

Simultaneously with survey activities, EORE activities will be conducted in all 59 villages of the Municipality of Bujanovac.
EORE activities will be conducted in Bujanovac schools in cooperation with the Ministry of Education. The target group is the most vulnerable population - children, girls and boys, but also women and men.

The EORE will be carried out by the SMAC and NTS team. Financial resources will be covered by the NTS Project developed by the SMAC.

Mine suspected area has been marked in order to clearly and visually warn of mine danger, as well as to ban the entry of population into mine suspected area. Mine warning signs have been posted in the areas of possible access to mined areas (roads, paths and other areas where movement of people is expected).
Given that the population is multi-ethnic, the wording on the signs has been written in Serbian and Albanian.

On another note, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the following achievements:

In the SMAC Innovation and Educational Park, located on the outskirts of Belgrade, the SMAC in collaboration with the UK based DRAKON Group have been providing IMAS EOD and IEDD training courses. So far, 9 EOD courses and 1 IEDD course have been delivered, with trainees both national (Serbian mine action authorities) and

international (UK, Ireland, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Somalia, France, Netherlands, Cambodia, Mali, Zimbabwe, Canada, Uganda, etc.)

In the period 12-13 February 2025, the SMAC representatives participated at the Innovation Session on Mine Action that was held in Ukraine, organized by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in cooperation with the Ministry of Economy of Ukraine, with the support of the European Commission and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).

The SMAC continues to actively participate in international efforts to advance innovative solutions in all mine action processes as a co-chair member of the Innovation Technical Group (ITG) of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

In May 2025, in the SMAC Innovation and Educational Park, innovations by high school students from a Belgrade-based Electrical Engineering School and Niš-based Electrical Engineering School, were presented at the event that was jointly organized by the SMAC and the Academy of Technical and Educational Vocational Studies from Niš, as part of the “Galaxy Cup”, with the aim of encouraging the involvement of young generations in the development of modern technological solutions for the detection of mines and explosive remnants of war. Four innovations were presented on the topic of using artificial intelligence in humanitarian demining, detection of ERW, and integrated search systems for contaminated terrain.

Significant results have been achieved in the field of humanitarian demining in Serbia thanks to donor assistance and engagement of state authorities in Serbia.

We would also like to use this opportunity to express our gratitude to all those who have helped us in the previous period: US, Republic of Korea, Japan, Germany, Norway, Canada, Czech Republic, Spain, Switzerland, EU, France and ITF Enhancing Human Security.

The SMAC, as a national mine action coordinating authority, has requested from the Serbian Government to continue to allocate funds in the years to follow. However, international support is needed and Serbia, in its final phase, appeals to donors to be part of the completion process.

We remain committed to our joint efforts until Serbia is fully demined, with the ultimate aspiration of achieving a world free of mines and victims.

Thank you for your attention.