

## **PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY SERBIA**

### **COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Thailand (Chair), United Kingdom, Algeria, Norway )**

#### **Intersessional Meetings 17 – 20 June 2025**

#### **I. Progress in implementation (Action 8, 20, 22)**

1. Serbia reported that in 2024 it developed and submitted a non-technical survey project for operations in Bujanovac Municipality to ITF Enhancing Human Security. Serbia also reported that it transferred funds from the National Budget of 2023/2024 in order for ITF to match these funds with available donor funds.
2. Serbia further reported that a mixed non-technical survey team has been recruited, (including Serbian and Albanian surveyors) which will be trained and equipped to conduct required tasks. Serbia further reported that an international instructor in the field of non-technical survey is conducting training for representatives of the Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) and the survey team.
3. The Committee observed that the information provided by Serbia on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2024 extension request. The Committee observed that progress in implementation was less than that projected in Serbia's 2024 extension request. The Committee encouraged Serbia to report information on progress in accordance with land release methodology employed in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and disaggregated by type of contamination. The Committee welcomed Serbia employing the Guide to Reporting in the drafting of its annual Article 7 report.

#### **II. Remaining challenge (Action 17, 20, 22)**

5. The Committee observed that Serbia provided a high degree of clarity<sup>1</sup> concerning its remaining challenge. Serbia reported 1 suspected hazardous area (SHA) located in Ravno Bučje village, Bujanovac municipality remaining to be addressed measuring 268,100. Serbia further reported newly discovered mine suspected areas in Bujanovac Municipality of unknown size.
6. The Committee encourages Serbia to provide updated information and clarity concerning the remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS and disaggregated by SHAs and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) in line with Action 22.
7. Action 17 of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan (SRAAP) requests States that have not yet done so, to identify SHAs and CHAs to the extent possible and establish as soon as possible, accurate baselines of contamination using data and evidence-based information collected in an inclusive manner including in areas affected by improvised anti-personnel mines in line with IMAS. 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.

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<sup>1</sup> "High degree of clarity" has been used when a State Party has provided a list of all remaining areas (known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines), the estimated size of each area, the status of each area (i.e., "known" or "suspected"), information on the geographic location of each area.

8. Serbia reported on its efforts to identify accurate baselines of contamination using data-and evidence-based information collected in an inclusive manner, including consultations with women, men and children during mine action activities, the inclusion of gender balanced survey teams comprised of Serbian and Albanians surveyors, as well as data collection with local populations, hunters, and foresters.

### **III. National plans for clearance and survey (Action 1-3, 18-21)**

9. The Committee recalled that Serbia's 2024 extension request contained information on its efforts to develop evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national strategies and work plans to implement Convention obligations as soon as possible and no later than the Twenty-Second Meeting of the States Parties and ensure that they are periodically reviewed and updated based on new evidence. The Committee also recalled that Serbia's 2024 extension request projected that Serbia would clear 1 remaining SHA measuring 268,100 square metres and will require 18 months to complete non-technical survey of Bujanovac municipality to gather the necessary information to develop a subsequent request for extension, including a work plan for completion of Article 5, to be submitted by 31 March 2026. The Committee welcomes updated information on Serbia's efforts to develop an evidence-based, costed, context-specific and time-bound national strategy and work plans to implement its Convention obligations.
10. The Committee recalled that Serbia's 2024 extension request contained a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey for the period (2024-2025). The request indicates that Serbia projected to: a) address 268,100 square metres (2024); b) Finalise procedures and procure equipment for non-technical survey (April 2024); c) Recruitment, training, and deployment of survey teams (April – September 2024); d) Survey of SHAs (September 2024 - January 2025); e) Survey of additional areas discovered during NTS (February – March 2025); f) Analysis of survey results – August 2024 (June 2025); and, g) Development of technical survey and clearance work plan (October 2025). The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts in this regard.
11. The Committee recalled that Serbia's 2024 extension request included information on its efforts to ensure that survey and clearance are prioritised based on clear nationally-driven humanitarian and sustainable development criteria with consideration for gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities including mine survivors, and the environment, including by applying appropriate methods in consultations with men and women in culturally sensitive environments, as well as with different age groups.
12. The Committee recalled that Serbia's 2024 extension request included information on its efforts to demonstrate high levels of national ownership, partnership and coordination, by integrating Convention implementation activities into national development plans, strategies and budgets, as appropriate, including the central role of the Government of Serbia in mine action, through the Serbian Mine Action Centre, the Ministry of Interior, and the Ministry of labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs, Civil Protection and Police, among others. Serbia also reported that it cooperates with Bujanovac local authorities and other local stakeholders.
13. Serbia reported on its efforts to establish sustainable national capacities able to coordinate, regulate, and manage the national mine action programme, including staff attendance at regional and international courses, and that the purpose of SMAC training is to build national capacities to educate trainees (members of local self-governments, civil protection, hunters and construction workers) engaged in excavation works in areas contaminated with explosive remnants of war

(ERW). Serbia also reported communications with other relevant State bodies, (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport), and local media in areas where demining operations are conducted.

#### **IV. Efficient implementation, innovative approaches, methods, and technological means (Action 4, 9, 25)**

14. Serbia reported on its efforts to keep National Mine Action Standards up to date in accordance with IMAS to ensure efficient, effective, and safe operations, including that a new decree on the protection against ERW developed by SMAC and the Ministry of Interior is to be adopted by the Government, and that this decree will introduce the land release concept, that had not been defined in the previous decree, and the need to develop national standards. The Committee would welcome updated information on a timeline and the approval process of the decree and the development of Serbia's national mine action standards.

15. Serbia reported on its efforts to establish and maintain a national, centrally managed information management system containing accurate and up-to-date data on the status of implementation, including an agreement between Serbia and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, and continuing to work on IMSMA Core. Serbia also reported that this agreement aims to improved database quality, accessibility and data sharing between SMAC and external stakeholders, as well as improving informed decision making (e.g. prioritisation and planning of activities). The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts in this regard.

16. Serbia reported on efforts to improve the effectiveness of survey and clearance, including through the drafting of new laws, and the establishment of the Serbian Mine Action Centre Innovation and Educational Park. The Committee would welcome updated information from Serbia on its efforts in this regard.

#### **v. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them (Action 23)**

17. In considering Serbia's request, the Fifth Review of the States Parties (5RC) had requested Serbia to submit updated information on an annual basis on several matters. The Committee welcomed the information provided in follow-up to the decision of the 5RC.

18. The Committee would welcome updated information from Serbia on the following decisions of the 5RC:

- Changes in the security situation and the potential positive or negative impact on survey and clearance activities;

#### **VI. Mine risk education and reduction (Action 18,23, 26-29)**

19. The Committee recalled that Serbia in its 2024 extension request indicated its efforts to develop evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national work plans for mine risk education as soon as possible and in an inclusive manner, including a work plan for mine risk education activities to be conducted in 59 villages and primary and high schools of Bujanovac municipality during the extension period, applying appropriate methods while working with men and women in culturally sensitive environments, as well as with different age groups.

20. The Committee recalled that Serbia in its 2024 extension request indicated its efforts on the implementation of mine risk education programmes, including information on how priorities were established, methodologies used, including the most vulnerable populations of all ethnicities - Serbian, Albanian, and Roma – including children, (girls and boys), women and men. Serbia's

extension request also indicated that SMAC is planning to conduct MRE project for the newly discovered mine contaminated areas in Bujanovac, which will be a huge employment opportunity for both women and men. The Committee also recalled that Serbia's 2024 extension request indicated that the first school to be prioritised will be "Branko Radičević" - as primary school with the most pupils, and that by taking into account that surveyors will be working with girls and boys in an environment that is culturally sensitive, a more detailed plan for risk education activities by schools and age groups will be developed. Serbia further reported that Bujanovac has 30 local communities and that first local communities for risk education activities will be Đorđevac, Končulj and Dobrosin, as they are communities with the largest starting areas for non-technical survey, thus the communities which are potentially the most vulnerable to mines and other UXO.

21. The Committee encourages Serbia to continue to report implementation of mine risk education programmes, including updated information on results achieved and include information disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other diverse needs and experiences of affected communities.
22. Serbia reported on its efforts to integrate mine risk education and risk reduction programmes within wider plans for humanitarian response and protection, including Ministry of Interior, schools and the Municipality of Bujanovac. The Committee would welcome updated information from Serbia on its efforts in this regard.
23. The Committee recalled that Serbia in its 2024 extension request indicated its efforts to provide context-specific mine risk education and reduction programmes that are tailored to the threat encountered by the population and prioritise people most at risk by ensuring that these programmes are developed on an analysis of available casualty and contamination data, climate and environmental risk, an understanding of the affected population's behaviour, risk pattern and coping mechanisms, and, wherever possible, anticipated population movements, including members of local self-governments, civil protection, hunters and construction workers engaged in excavation works in the ERW contaminated areas. The Committee would welcome updated information from Serbia on its efforts in this regard.
24. Serbia reported on its efforts to establish national capacities to deliver mine risk education, including the role of SMAC in building national capacities to educate trainees (members of local self-governments, civil protection, hunters and construction workers engaged in excavation works in the ERW contaminated areas) in the field of mine action and to enable them to improve knowledge and ability to recognize ERW in the Republic of Serbia. In addition to SMAC staff, who will be engaged as trainers, experts from the Ministry of Interior will also be engaged, so that different aspects and training modules, among others, the basics of ERW recognition, international mine action standards, medical aspect, etc. will be covered. In relation to that, the SMAC coordinates activities with local authorities, school authorities and other relevant state bodies (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport), local media means in communities where demining operations are conducted.

## **VII. Best Practices in implementation (Action 5, 6, 18)**

25. The Committee recalled that Serbia in additional information provided to its 2024 extension request indicated its efforts to ensure that gender, age, disability considerations, and the diverse needs and experiences of women, girls, boys and men in mine-affected communities including mine survivors, are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation, including consultations with women, men and children during mine action activities, the inclusion of gender balanced survey teams comprised of Serbian and Albanians surveyors, as well as data collection

with local populations, hunters, and foresters. The Committee would welcome updated information from Serbia on its efforts in this regard.

26. Serbia reported on its efforts to develop evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national work plans for survey, clearance, and mine risk education as soon as possible and in an inclusive manner, including a culturally sensitive survey teams and working in collaboration with Municipalities and aligned Government ministries.
27. The Committee recalled that Serbia in its 2024 extension request indicated its efforts to ensure that climate and environmental considerations inform all relevant areas of Convention implementation, including that non-technical survey determines the borders of suspected areas, the types of mines or other UXO and the impact on the environment.

#### **VIII. International Cooperation and Assistance (Action 40-42, 45)**

28. Serbia reported on its efforts to do their utmost to commit the resources needed to meet their Convention obligations as soon as possible and explore all possible funding sources including conventional and alternative/innovative sources and mechanisms of funding such as front-loading models, including that SMAC as the nation mine action coordinating authority has requested from the Serbian Government a continuance of its funding allocation. Serbia reported that the Serbian State budget supports the on-going work of SMAC, including staff salaries and insurance, office running and material costs, maintenance of vehicles, and survey activities. Serbia further reported that the Serbian Government has allocated €221,000 for demining operations in 2025, which have been transferred for ITF Enhancing Human Security to identify matched funding allocations from donors. Serbia reported that SMAC has developed projects for addressing the remaining contamination of 268,100 square metres for implementation in 2025, in addition to non-technical survey project planned to be implemented in 2025. The Committee would welcome Serbia providing updated information on its resource mobilisation strategy.
29. Serbia reported on its efforts to disseminate information on challenges and requirements for assistance including through annual Article 7 reports, including the need for additional funding to be matched to Serbia State funding allocations through ITF Enhancing Human Security.
30. Serbia reported on its efforts to strengthen national level coordination including close cooperation with Bujanovac local authorities, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Ministry of Defence, as well as Embassies of donor countries.
31. Serbia reported on its efforts to explore opportunities for international, regional, and bilateral cooperation including between affected States Parties or triangular cooperation for the voluntary sharing of national experiences and good practices, including attendance at regional and international fora, establishment of Innovation and Educational Park for EOD trainings, and donor agreements for information management.

#### **IX. Challenges in implementation (Action 29, 41)**

32. Serbia reported on its efforts to report on challenges and requirements for assistance, including the need for the recruitment, training and deployment of mixed survey teams for non-technical survey in Bujanovac municipality, and the need to secure funding for each subsequent technical survey and clearance project.

The Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan country reporting tracker							
Article 5 Implementation							
Serbia							
CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS							
Actions	Indicators	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Additional information requested from the Committee
#1	Percentage of affected States Parties that report integrating Convention implementation activities into: national development plans and budgets, strategies and budgets including on poverty reduction, humanitarian response, on health and mental health, gender equality inclusion of persons with disabilities, peacebuilding, Human Rights, climate change adaptation plans, environmental protection and improvement, and/or disaster risk reduction.						
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having strengthened partnerships and coordinated Convention implementation activities with relevant humanitarian, peacebuilding, climate, environmental, development, health, disability, and human rights sectors.						
#2	Percentage of affected States Parties reporting having sustainable national capacities in place able to coordinate, regulate, and manage the national mine action programme including survey, clearance, mine risk education, and victim assistance and undertake post completion activities, including management of residual risk.						
#3	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national strategies and work plans in place.						The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts on having an evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national strategy in place.
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having reviewed and updated their national strategies and work plan based on new evidence.						
#4	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having up-to-date National Mine Action Standards in place in accordance with International Mine Action Standards.						
#5	Percentage of affected States Parties that report national work plans and strategies integrating gender, age, disability considerations, and the diverse needs and experiences of people in mine-affected communities including mine survivors.						
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report national work plans and strategies developed through inclusive consultation with stakeholders including survivors and representatives of mine-affected communities,						
#6	Percentage of affected States Parties that report integrating climate and environmental considerations into Convention implementation activities, including in their national strategies and work plans.						
#8	Percentage of States Parties that submit Article 7 reports by 30 April of each year.						
	Percentage of States Parties that prepare their Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting.						

#9	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having a national, centrally-managed information management system in place containing up-to-date information on implementation at the national level.						The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts to report having a national, centrally-managed information management system in place containing up-to-date information on implementation at the national level.
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SURVEY AND CLEARANCE OF MINED AREAS							
Actions	Indicators	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Additional information requested from the Committee
#17	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having established an accurate and evidence-based contamination baseline, including in areas affected by improvised anti-personnel mines in line with IMAS.						The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts to report having established an accurate and evidence-based contamination baseline, including in areas affected by improvised anti-personnel mines in line with IMAS.
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having established a baseline through inclusive consultations.						
#18	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having in place evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national work plans for survey and clearance.						
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report in their Article 7 reports updates to their national work plans, including adjusted milestones based on new evidence, including budgets for implementation, and requirements for assistance						
#19	Number of affected States Parties that report on the inclusion of humanitarian and sustainable development criteria in survey, clearance, planning, and prioritisation.						
	Number of affected States Parties that report on the consideration of inclusion of gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities including mine survivors, climate, and environment in survey and clearance planning and prioritisation.						
#20	Number of affected States Parties that apply the provisions of the Convention to anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature including in survey and clearance operations under Article 5.						
	Number of affected States Parties that apply the provisions of the Convention to anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature to reporting obligations under Article 7.						
#21	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having a national capacity in place to implement the Convention and address any previously unknown mined areas or newly mined areas discovered following completion.						
	Number of States Parties that following completion, report the discovery of previously unknown mined areas or newly mined areas.						
#22	Percentage of affected States Parties that report on their remaining challenge in a manner disaggregated by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size.						The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts to report on their remaining challenge in a manner disaggregated by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size.

	Percentage of affected States Parties that report on progress made to address mined areas in accordance with the land release methodology employed (i.e. cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey, or cleared through clearance).					
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report in a disaggregated manner by type of contamination.					
#23	Percentage of extension requests submitted that include detailed, evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and multi-year plans for survey and clearance.					
	Percentage of extension requests submitted that ensure consideration for gender, age, disability, the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities including mine survivors, as well as climate, and the environment.					
#24	Number of affected States Parties that declare completion of their Article 5 obligations.					
	Percentage of these States Parties that submit voluntary Declarations of Completion.					
#25	Percentage of affected States Parties that report on efforts to improve effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance.					
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report on research, analysis, and the adoption of innovative approaches, methods, and technological means to improve effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance.					The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts to report on research, analysis, and the adoption of innovative approaches, methods, and technological means to improve effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance.

MINE RISK EDUCATION AND REDUCTION							
Action s	Indicators	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Additional information requested from the Committee
#18	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having in place evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and time-bound national work plans for mine risk education;						
#23	Percentage of extension requests submitted that include detailed, evidence-based, costed, context-specific, and multi-year plans for risk education activities.						
#26	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having integrated mine risk education and reduction programmes within wider plans for humanitarian response and protection, development, health, mental health, climate, the environment, education, and/or disaster risk reduction or other relevant plans; as well as within survey, clearance and victim assistance activities.						
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report on efforts to reduce the affected population's risk-taking behaviour and to increase knowledge and awareness.						
#27	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having established an evidence-based priority-setting mechanism for mine risk education and reduction programmes tailored to the threat encountered by the population and which prioritises people most at risk.						
#28	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having sustainable national capacities in place to deliver mine risk education and reduction programmes in case previously unknown mined areas or newly mined areas are discovered and/or in emergency settings.						



#29	Percentage of affected States Parties that report carrying out mine risk education and reduction programmes including information on how priorities are established, methodologies used (e.g. interpersonal, mass, or digital media), challenges faced, and results achieved and included information disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other relevant factors.					
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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE							
Actions	Indicators	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Additional information requested from the Committee
#40	Percentage of affected States Parties that report making national financial commitments to the implementation of survey and clearance;						
	Percentage of States Parties that report on exploring all possible sources of funding, including conventional and alternative/innovative sources and mechanisms of funding or that report having innovative financial projects in place.						
#41	Percentage of affected States Parties that report on progress, challenges in implementation, and requirements for assistance.						
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having a resource mobilisation plan in place.						The Committee would welcome updated information on Serbia's efforts on having a resource mobilisation plan in place.
	Percentage of affected States Parties that have taken advantage of the Individualised Approach.						
#42	Percentage of affected States Parties that report efforts to strengthen national coordination with national and international stakeholders and States Parties in a position to provide assistance.						
	Percentage of affected States Parties that report having established a National Mine Action Platform.						
#45	Number of States Parties that report sharing national experiences, best practices, and lessons learnt through international, regional, and bilateral cooperation.						
	Number of States Parties that report sharing scientific, methodological, and technological expertise to strengthen the Convention's implementation.						

