

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Belgium (Chair), France, Iraq, and Sri Lanka)

Intersessional Meetings 20 – 22 June 2022

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY SERBIA

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

1. Serbia reported that in 2021 it addressed 1 hazardous area measuring 294,230 square metres through clearance resulting in the destruction of 9 anti-personnel mines and 4 other items of explosive ordnance. Serbia further reported the identification of newly identified suspected mined areas in Bujanovac municipality.
2. The Committee observed that the information provided by Serbia on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided in its 2020 updated work plan. The Committee observed Serbia reported disaggregated information on progress in accordance with land release methodology employed, using the Guide to Reporting and in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) (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) reporting a remaining challenge, as of 1 April 2022, of 3 suspected hazardous areas (SHA) measuring 561,000 square metres in 3 villages of Bujanovac municipality, 1 SHA in Ravno Bučje village measuring 390,300 square metres, 1 SHA in Končulj village measuring 143,500 square metres and 1 SHA in Dobrosin village measuring 28,000 square metres (Action #22).
4. The Committee observed Serbia reported remaining challenges in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' 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 will 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 suspected hazardous areas 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

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.

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 observed that Serbia in its 2022 extension request submitted to the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties, (20MSP) had indicated that in 2014, following the initiative of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Construction, Transportation and Infrastructure has 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, rural development (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, 2022-2025 (Action #2, Action #19). The Committee observed Serbia projects to address 561,800 metres in 2022 and to carry out a one-year non-technical survey (NTS) of Bujanovac municipality. The Committee welcomes the updated information from Serbia and would welcome further information on the results of NTS and how survey outcomes could impact Serbia's understanding of its remaining challenge and annual milestones (Action #19, Action #20).
8. Serbia reported an annual national financial commitment of 260,000 EUR towards implementation (Action #1).
9. Serbia reported the intensification of the interaction of mine action and infrastructure development, for projects funded by Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, including gas pipelines, factories, ports and water supplies, as well as projects to enable exploitation of forest, and the development of wood industries. (Action #1).
10. Serbia, in its 2022 extension request, had reported that on 15 February 2015 the Government adopted the decision on establishment of a work group on the application of the Ottawa Convention with the working group to intensify the interaction of mine action and development projects with aligned Government ministries. The Committee observed that Serbia had not provided information on its efforts to strengthen partnerships and integrate responses between mine action related activities and (Action #6).
11. The Committee observed that Serbia 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 further observed that Serbia reported that there is equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance (Action #3).
12. Action #26 of the OAP requests States to ensure that national strategies and work plans for completion make provisions for a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion. The Committee observed that, while Serbia had reported on its efforts to build national capacity, including training for staff, Serbia had not reported on efforts to ensure the establishment of a sustainable national capacity.

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

13. The Committee observed that Serbia reported that a new Decree on the protection against explosive remnants of war (ERW) is to be adopted by the Government that will introduce the land release concept and require the development of national standards in this regard. The Committee noted the importance of Serbia keeping national mine action standards up to date in accordance with the latest International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), adapt them to new challenges and employ best practices to ensure efficient and effective implementation and would welcome updated information on the timeline for approving the national standards (Action #5).
14. The Committee observed that Serbia reported on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system including an assessment for the installation of the Information Management System for Mine Action provided by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (Action #9).
15. Serbia reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including the proclamation of a new decree for mine action, the development of updated national standards on land release, and comprehensive efforts in training of staff (Action #27).

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

16. In considering Serbia's 2018 extension request, the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties requested Serbia to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Serbia on;
 - Progress in land release activities relative to the commitments made in Serbia's annual work plan, disaggregated in a manner consistent with the IMAS, including the identification of new mined areas and their impact on annual targets as given in Serbia's work plan;
 - Progress in developing relevant land release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with the IMAS, for the full and expedient implementation of the Convention during the extension request period and their impact on annual targets as given in Serbia's work plan; and
 - Updates regarding resource mobilisation efforts, including in approaching potential donors and in raising awareness of the lack of funding with state authorities, public enterprises and local authorities to fund clearance operations, and the result of these efforts.

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 reported on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, including training of Government staff, and conducting mine risk education and reduction programmes (MRE/R), Serbia had not provided information in its Article 7 Report on the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age, and would welcome further information in this regard.
18. Serbia reported that risk education 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 to ensure that affected communities are informed and are evacuated during demining operations. The Committee observed that these activities formed part of Serbia's efforts to integrate MRE/R with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts (Action #28).

19. Serbia reported in its 2022 extension request that local at-risk populations are being informed through mine risk education conducted in schools and local communities, and during demining operations, and includes consultations with women, men, and children. Serbia also reported that mine signs are used in Serbian and Albanian languages (Action #29).
20. Action #30 of the OAP requests States to prioritise people most at risk by linking mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages directly to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data, an understanding of the affected population's behaviour, risk pattern and coping mechanisms, and, wherever possible, anticipated population movements. The Committee observed that Serbia had not provide information in its Article 7 Report on its efforts to link mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data and would welcome further information in this regard (Action #30).
21. Serbia reported it carried out training with local self-government, civil protection, hunters and construction workers, and that MRE/R programmes are coordinated with local authorities, school authorities and other relevant State bodies, including the in coordination with 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 of its Article 5 obligations, including unregistered mine contaminated areas, newly discovered suspect mined areas, climatic conditions, contamination other than mines and the unpredictable nature of the COVID-19 epidemiological situation.

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 9 August)
#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						
	# 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						

Actions	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Additional information requested from the Committee (deadline 9 August)
#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)						
	% affected States Parties who 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						The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to ensure that national strategies and work plans for completion make provisions for a sustainable national capacity to address previously

							unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion.
	% 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 9 August)
#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						
#29	% affected States Parties that report having mine risk education and reduction programmes for all affected populations in place						
	% 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						
#30	# States Parties that report having established an evidence-based priority-setting mechanism for mine risk education and reduction programmes						The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to prioritise people most at risk by linking mine risk education and reduction programmes and messages directly to an analysis of available casualty and contamination data, an understanding of the affected population's behaviour, risk pattern and coping mechanisms, and, wherever possible, anticipated population movements.

#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					The Committee would welcome information on Serbia's efforts to report on the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age.

