

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Colombia (Chair), Sweden, Thailand and the United Kingdom)

Intersessional Meetings 18 – 20 June 2024

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY SERBIA

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

1. Serbia reported that in 2023 it addressed 1 mined area measuring 122,200 square metres through clearance resulting in the destruction of 1 item of explosive remnant of war.
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 a high degree of clarity¹ on its remaining challenge (Action #18) Serbia reported a remaining challenge of 1 suspected hazardous area (SHA) measuring 268,100 square metres in Ravno Bučje village of Bujanovac municipality (Action #22). Serbia also reported that in 2019, in the territory of Bujanovac municipality, locations suspected to be contaminated by groups of mines, and that these are locations where forest fires occurred in 2021. The Committee observed that Serbia in its extension updated submitted in 2024 indicated that the suspected hazardous areas measured an estimated 4,467,643 square metres.
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. 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. (Action #18)

¹ A 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.

6. Serbia reported on its efforts to ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action, including that during survey and community liaison activities, women, men and children are consulted. (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 2024 extension request submitted to the Fifth Review Conference, included a work plan for the period of 2024-2025 (Action #2, Action #19). The Committee observed that Serbia projected to address 268,100 square metres in 2024 and to carry out a one-year non-technical survey (NTS) of mined areas measuring an estimated 4,467,643 square metres and Bujanovac municipality . 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 observed that Serbia, in its 2024 extension request, indicated that there had been an intensification of the interaction of mine action and infrastructure development, including the need to create conditions for safe execution of infrastructure projects funded by relevant Serbian authorities, Ministry of Construction, Transport and Infrastructure, and the Building Directorate of Serbia, including safe execution of a gas pipeline route, the national stadium, a port, water supply and sewerage lines and roads, railways, and facilities for holding the EXPO Belgrade 2027 exhibition. (Action #1, Action #6)
10. Serbia reported on its efforts to Ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered and inform all areas of Convention implementation and mine action programmes, including equal access to employment for qualified women and men in survey and clearance and that during survey and community liaison activities, women, men and children are consulted. (Action #3)
11. Serbia reported on its efforts to develop a sustainable national capacity, including training of trainers for explosive ordnance disposal level 1 and level 2 as part of the project implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, as well as trainings in information management and programme management. (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, including the development of three national mine action standards (NMA), land release, glossary, and quality management and that further national standards are planned to be developed in the coming period. The Committee welcomed the updated information from Serbia and would welcome further information on the proposed timeline and process of approval of the NMA. (Action #5)
13. Serbia reported on its efforts to maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system including, implementation of IMSMA Core over a project period of 1 year, participation in training courses on IMSMA Core administration, with the aim to establish a centralised database aimed at improving data quality, accessibility, and sharing at SMAC and with external stakeholders. (Action #9)

14. Serbia reported on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance, including the use of integrated navigation system for inspection of minefields based on robotics, unmanned aerial vehicle, and an integrated sensor system which can contribute to the efficiency of operations while minimising risk to personnel. (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;
- 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.
- 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.

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

16. 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)

17. Serbia reported on its efforts to integrate MRE/R with wider humanitarian, development, protection and education efforts, as well as with ongoing survey and clearance activities, including

that SMAC coordinates activities with local authorities, school authorities, and other relevant State bodies, (Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Transport), local media in communities where demining operations are conducted. Serbia also reported that during demining operations evacuation of people from houses, shops, and other communal locations located within the zone of demining works is conducted. Serbia further reported that the Serbian Mine Action Centre developed its own program for recognising explosive remnants of war in accordance with IMAS and submitted it to the Ministry of Education for verification, which verified it in 2021. (Action #28)

18. Serbia reported on its efforts 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, including an initial survey which includes collection of data and analysis of available documentation on mine emplacement, as well as non-technical survey which follows after an analysis of previously collected data, conditions in the field, statements by local populations; hunters, foresters, people dealing with exploitation of wood, representatives of Civil Protection and Polices, amongst others, and data on accidents that have occurred, and that during community liaison activities, women, men and children are consulted. (Action #29)

19. 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 2023. (Action #30)

20. Serbia reported on its efforts to build national capacity to deliver mine risk education and reduction programmes with the ability to adapt to changing needs and contexts, including the delivery of such programmes to affected communities in the case that previously unknown mined areas are discovered, including trainings to build national capacities to educate trainees, (members of local self-government, civil protection, hunters and construction workers engagement in excavation works in the contaminated areas, and that training the trainer courses were conducted for thirteen attendees from different construction related public companies. (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, and contamination other than mines. (Action #8)

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						
	# 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						
#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						
#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						
#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						

