

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION

SERBIA

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION – VICTIM ASSISTANCE

COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE

(Burkina Faso, the Netherlands, Slovenia (Chair) and Zambia)

Intersessional Meetings

18-20 June 2024

1. The Committee welcomes the submission by Serbia of updated information on its victim assistance activities.
2. Based on the information provided in Serbia's Article 7 report as well as additional information provided in 2023 in response to Committee's observations, the Committee presents the following preliminary observations.

Mine casualties

3. Serbia reported no new mine casualties in 2022. Serbia has a total of 630 mine and explosive remnants of war survivors registered, including 214 affected family members.
4. Serbia reported no new mine casualty in 2023. Serbia has a total of 630 mine and explosive remnants of war survivors registered, including 214 affected family members. Serbia reported that additional information about the sex, age and disability of the victims will be provided later.

Strengthen partnerships and integrate victim assistance into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks and designation of a government entity to oversee the integration (Actions #1, #6 and #33)

5. The Committee recalls that in 2023 Serbia reported that the department for protection of persons with disabilities and the department for veterans-disabled protection under the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs (MOLEVS) oversee the integration of victim assistance into broader national frameworks.

Develop and implement measurable, realistic and time-bound national action plan (Actions #2 and #33)

6. The Committee recalls that in 2023 Serbia reported on implementation of a Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disability 2020-2024, in line with the national Law on the rights of veterans, disabled veterans and civilians with disabilities.
7. Serbia reported that an Action Plan for the period of 2021-2022 was developed to enforce the Strategy and relevant stakeholders took part in its implementation and reported to the Council for Persons with Disabilities through the MOLEVS. Serbia reported that in December 2022 and January 2023, MOLEVS conducted consultations to develop an Action Plan for 2023-2024, to ensure the implementation of the Strategy.

8. The Committee would welcome an update on implementation of the 2023-2024 Action Plan. The Committee would also welcome an electronic copy of the Plan, that can be published on the Convention's website.

Removing barriers including physical, social, cultural, political, attitudinal and communication barriers to access such services (Action #33)

9. Serbia reported that the accessibility of public transports such as trains and railway stations is regulated by the Law on Railways and the Law on the Contracts for Transport in Railway Traffic and the MOLEVS has carried out several activities and follow ups to enforce legal measures with regards to accessibility.

10. The Committee recalls that in 2023 Serbia reported that it strives to achieve goals through the implementation of national policies, plans and legal frameworks that will tangibly contribute to the full, equal and effective participation of EO victims in society. Serbia had reported that the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities is based on principles of human rights, dignity of persons with disabilities, inclusion and equal opportunities in all spheres of life.

Applying multi-sectoral efforts to ensure that the needs and rights of mine victims are effectively addressed in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Action #34)

11. The Committee recalls that in 2023, Serbia reported strengthening intersectoral coordination, including to facilitate efforts between representative associations of explosive ordnance (EO) victims and the government agencies.

Establish or strengthen of a centralised database / national information management system (Actions #9 and #35)

12. Serbia reported that the MOLEVS has a database where information on beneficiaries, including those of mine victims, has been registered. Serbia also reported that the database would need to be updated, for which financial resources are required.

13. Serbia reported disaggregated information by sex, gender and age of mine victims will be provided later.

Access to first aid and ongoing emergency medical care (Action #36)

14. The Committee recalls that in 2023, Serbia reported in accordance with the Law, war victims civilians are entitled to a series of benefits including orthopaedic allowance, medical care and financial compensation related to medical care, spa centre recovery, professional rehabilitation and financial assistance during professional rehabilitation, and that the government seeks to improve the provision and delivery of these and other services.

Developing national referral mechanism (Action #37)

15. Serbia reported on the existence of a referral mechanism between rehabilitation services and the MOLEVS.

16. The Committee would welcome information on availability of director of services to facilitate mine victims' access to services they need.

Access to rehabilitation services including physiotherapy, assistive devices and occupational therapy (Action #38)

17. Serbia reported that MOLEVS based on the Law on the Rights of Veterans, Military Invalids, Civilians Disabled in War and Their Family Members, Rulebook on Spa and Climate Recovery for the provision of physiotherapy services, aids and occupational therapy for mine victims in affected communities, including rural areas, every year publishes a Public Call for submission of requests for referral to spa-climatic recovery. Serbia reported that financial resources for spa-climate recovery in 2022 amounted to 32,500,000.00 Serbian dinars (without VAT), and 401 beneficiaries from the field of veterans disability protection were sent to spa-climate recovery.
18. Serbia reported that in 2022 MOLEVS began a project in cooperation with the Serbian Mine Action Centre to transfer mine survivors in need of physical rehabilitation and assistive devices to Slovenia for advanced assistive devices, with financial assistance provided by the Government of Korea through the ITF. Serbia reported that the project will continue to benefit mine survivors.
19. The Committee would welcome further information on availability and provision of rehabilitation services, such as physiotherapy, assistive devices and occupational therapy to mine victims in affected communities, including in rural areas, as well as information on progresses made in this regard in 2023.

Access to psychological and psychosocial services including peer-to-peer support (Action #38)

20. Serbia reported that MOLEVS provided financial assistance to local non-governmental organisations who provided psychological rehabilitation, among other services to persons with disabilities and others in need.
21. The Committee would welcome information on progress made in the provision of psychosocial support to mine victims in 2023.
22. The Committee would also welcome information on availability of peer-to-peer support and efforts undertaken in this regard in 2023.

Access to social and economic inclusion services, including in rural and remote areas (Action #39)

23. The Committee recalls that in 2023, Serbia reported that MOLEVS cooperated with 216 local non-governmental organisations who provided socio-economic rehabilitation services, among other services, to persons with disabilities and others in need.
24. The Committee would welcome an update on progress achieved in 2023 to address the social and economic needs of mine victims.

Taking measure for safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risks and emergencies (Action #40)

25. Serbia reported that the MOLEVS implemented several programmes to raise awareness and to inform persons with disabilities about the epidemiological situation, health protection and the vaccination process, including the following efforts:
 - Within the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities in Serbia for the period from 2020 to 2024, the importance of ensuring the safety and protection of persons with

disabilities is recognized. In the section on information accessibility, a segment of emergency situations is included in accordance with the needs of persons with disabilities.

- The Department for Emergency Situations within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in cooperation with the OSCE Mission in Belgrade, prepared the Family Manual for Behavior in Emergency Situations, which was developed in cooperation with national organizations of persons with disabilities in adapted formats for persons with disabilities (in audio form, Braille and online on the web presentation of the Sector and national organizations of persons with disabilities). Posters for dealing with emergency situations for primary schools adapted for persons with disabilities were created.
- The manual is available on the website of the Department of Emergency Situations. The Law on Disaster Risk Reduction and Emergency Management was adopted in cooperation with representatives of national organizations of persons with disabilities and in accordance with the recommendations of the SENDAI Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, which emphasizes that persons with disabilities are a vulnerable group and a category of persons who are a priority for evacuation, as well as that the necessary information and notices must be given in formats that include sign language and Braille. This represents a positive move, but it is necessary to create and implement systemic measures and ensure that the services of emergency interventions and assistance in emergency situations are accessible and available to all persons with disabilities, applying all standards of accessibility and principles of universal design.
- Six workshops and round tables were organized, where conclusions were adopted aimed at: recognition of persons with disabilities in assessments and risk reduction plans and protection and rescue plans, regulations and strategic documents; on improving cooperation with the headquarters for emergency situations in local administrations through the appointment of civil protection commissioners in all persons with disabilities' organizations and others.

Strengthening inclusion and participation of mine victims and their representative organisations in all matters that affect them (Actions #4 and #41)

26. Serbia reported persons with disabilities and their representative organisations are included in relevant policy and programmes of the MOLVES and that the Ministry of Culture and Information and Ministry of Sports carry out targeted activities to enhance participation and inclusion of persons with disabilities in the country.

Demonstrate high levels of national ownership, including [...] by making financial and other commitments to implementation (Action #1)

27. The Committee recalls that in 2023 Serbia reported undertaking activities in respective policy, coordination and programmes to improve assistance to mine victims and other persons with disabilities. Serbia also reported allocating national fundings to programmes that benefit mine victims.

Ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered (Action #3)

28. Serbia reported that women with disabilities have been included in programmes and policies carried out by the MOLEVS, and that in 2022 a special programme was implemented to increase insurance for women with disabilities.

29. The Committee would welcome further information on progress made and measures in place to consider different needs and perspectives of mine victims including women, girls, boys and men in Serbia.

Challenges in implementation of Victim Assistance Commitments (Action #8)

30. Serbia reported facing financial constraints to address the needs of mine victims including in areas of rehabilitation, psychological and peer to peer support, capacity building and improving database.

31. The Committee would welcome information on steps taken to address the challenges reported in 2023, and further information on how the international community including the Committee can assist Serbia to fulfil its victim assistance commitments under the Convention and the OAP.

The Oslo Action Plan country reporting tracker
Victim Assistance
Serbia

Actions	Indicators	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Additional information request by the Committee
#33	# States Parties that have designated a government entity to coordinate victim assistance activities						The Committee would welcome an update on implementation of the 2023-2024 Action Plan. The Committee would also welcome an electronic copy of the Plan, that can be published on the Convention's website.
	# States Parties that have national action plans in place containing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound objectives and related indicators						
#34	# States Parties that report that they include mine victims in relevant national policy and support frameworks						
#35	# States Parties that include victims of anti-personnel mines in disability data systems						
	# States Parties that disaggregate victim data by gender, age and disability						
#36	# States Parties reporting on efforts to ensure an efficient and effective emergency response to mine accidents						
#37	# States Parties that report having a national referral mechanism						The Committee would welcome information on availability of director of services to facilitate mine victims' access to services they need.
	# States Parties that report having a directory of services in place						
#38	# States Parties reporting on efforts to increase the availability and accessibility of comprehensive rehabilitation services						The Committee would welcome further information on availability and provision of rehabilitation services, such as physiotherapy, assistive devices and occupational therapy to mine victims in affected communities, including in rural areas, as well as information on progresses made in this regard in 2023. The Committee would also welcome information on availability of peer-to-peer support and efforts undertaken in this regard in 2023.
	# States Parties reporting on efforts to increase the availability of psychological and psychosocial support services						
	# States Parties that have established peer-to-peer services within their national healthcare system						
#39	# States Parties reporting on efforts to remove barriers to the social and economic inclusion of mine victims						

#40	# States Parties that report integrating protection of mine survivors in their humanitarian response and preparedness plans						
#41	# States Parties that report that they include victim representatives or their organizations in victim assistance planning at the national and local level						
CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS							
#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						
#3	# mine-affected States Parties that report having evidence-based, costed and time-bound national strategies and work plans in place						The Committee would welcome further information on progress made and measures in place to consider different needs and perspectives of mine victims including women, girls, boys and men in Serbia.
	# women in States Parties' delegations attending Convention meetings						
#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						The Committee would welcome information on progress to address the challenges reported in 2023, and further information on how the international community including the Committee can assist Serbia to fulfil its victim assistance commitments under the Convention and the OAP.