

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

I. Progress in implementation

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that in 2017 a total of 29.91 square kilometres of land was released, including 8.27 square kilometres reduced through technical survey and 0.82 square kilometres released through clearance with a total of 1,749 anti-personnel mines, 20 anti-tank mines and 797 explosive remnants of war having been located and destroyed. Bosnia and Herzegovina also reported 20.75 square kilometres having been declared as, “*area without defined risk*”.
2. The Committee observed a minor discrepancy in the area addressed by technical survey and clearance during 2017 with 9.16 square kilometres reported in Form C and 7,369,292 square metres reported in Form F.2.
3. The Committee observed that the information provided by Bosnia and Herzegovina on progress in implementation did not allow for comparability with that previously provided. The Committee noted the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina using terminology and providing information in a manner consistent with IMAS, disaggregating areas cancelled by non-technical survey, reduced by technical survey and areas cleared.
4. The Committee recalled in conclusions presented by the Committee to the Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties in 2017 that Bosnia and Herzegovina could provide considerably more clarity regarding its progress in implementation by employing the Guide to Reporting adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties.

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge

5. The Committee noted that Bosnia and Herzegovina had provided some clarity regarding its remaining challenge. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that 16,699 “minefield records” remain to be addressed located within three administrative areas containing an estimated 82,000 anti-personnel mines and items of unexploded ordnance. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported an estimated area known to contain anti-personnel mines of 95 square kilometres and an estimated area suspected of containing anti-personnel mines of 1,061 square kilometres.
6. The Committee observed that, with survey activities ongoing, the remaining challenge in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be further clarified by presenting more precise information, including the use of table as set out in the Guide to Reporting, on the number of areas and size of these areas required to be addressed.

III. National plans for clearance and survey

7. The Committee noted that Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted a request for extension in 2018 for consideration by the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties. The request provided an updated summary of milestones to be achieved in the period of 2019-2020 including an estimated 164,000,000 square metres to be cancelled through non-technical survey, 26,000,000 square metres reduced through technical survey and 2,000,000 square metres to be released through clearance. During this extension period the BHMIC will carry out a “country assessment” to establish a more realistic baseline for planning, improve its information management capacity and continue carrying out survey and clearance activities in accordance

with its annual priorities. Bosnia and Herzegovina will submit a request for extension by 31 March 2020.

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation

8. The Committee observed that Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that methods for release of suspect and confirmed hazardous areas are defined through national standards and standard operational procedures which are in accordance with the international standards for mine action (IMAS) including Standards and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on non-technical survey, technical survey and mine clearance. Bosnia and Herzegovina further reported that in cooperation with its partners it had commenced the process of revision of all the mine action standards and SOPs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that by the end of 2017, the draft had been completed and are currently in the process of being adopted by the Demining Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Committee observed that it would welcome information on the status of these SOPs.
9. The Committee recalled its conclusions from the 16MSP that Bosnia and Herzegovina reported that a draft Demining Law has been shared for public consultation and forwarded to the Council of Ministers for adoption. The Committee further recalled the BHMIC also initiated the process of drafting its Exit Strategy of Mine Action (2019-2025) to be adopted by the Council of Ministers in October 2017. The Committee would welcome updated information on the progress of these matters from Bosnia and Herzegovina on the progress of these matters.

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

10. The Committee recalled that the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties (9MSP) had requested that Bosnia and Herzegovina provide updates with respect to a variety of commitments made and milestones contained in its extension request. The Committee recalled that the 9MSP noted that, while the plan presented in Bosnia and Herzegovina's request was workable and ambitious, its success was contingent upon increased performance in technical survey, a high level of donor funding and the sustained and increasing availability of funds provided by local government. The Committee observed that many of these matters are addressed in the request submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2018 and remain pertinent to activities today.

VI. Mine risk reduction

11. Bosnia and Herzegovina reported on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, including prioritisation of most impacted groups of the population. Bosnia and Herzegovina also reported it had taken measures to alert migrants to Mine/ERW/Cluster munitions risks. The Committee noted the actions taken by Bosnia and Herzegovina in Mine Risk Education and welcomes further information on its efforts to ensure that these activities are age-appropriate and gender-sensitive, coherent with applicable national and international standards, tailored to the needs of mine-affected communities and integrated into ongoing mine action activities, namely data gathering, clearance and victim assistance as appropriate.