

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

### **I. Progress in implementation**

1. Serbia reported that it completed one project during 2017 addressing 275,800 square metres of suspect hazardous area through clearance in Bujanovac municipality and in the process destroyed 3 Anti-personnel mines and 1 UXO. Serbia also reported that it is currently conducting technical survey on a second project measuring 113,600 square metres.
2. The Committee observed that the information provided by Serbia on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided previously, particularly in its 2013 extension request. The Committee further observed that this information was disaggregated according to area released through clearance, and area released through cancellation.
3. The Committee welcomed Serbia employing the Guide to Reporting adopted by the Fourteenth Meeting of the States Parties (14MSP).

### **II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge**

4. The Committee observed that Serbia had provided high degree of clarity regarding its remaining challenge by providing a summary table of six remaining areas suspected to contain anti-personnel mines in six localities of Bujanovac municipality. Serbia reported that, as of 1 April 2018, 12 SHAs totalling 2,354,540 square metres remained to be addressed.

### **III. National plans for clearance and survey**

5. The Committee noted that Serbia submitted a request for extension in 2018 for consideration by the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties. The request includes a work plan for completion including addressing a total of 2 areas in 2018 measuring 649,000 square metres, 3 areas in 2019 measuring 462,400 square metres, 2 areas in 2020 measuring 467,880 square metres, 2 areas in 2021 measuring 269,240, 1 area in 2022 measuring 291,400 square metres, and 2 areas in 2023 measuring 214,620 square metres.
6. The Committee observed that funds for demining operations in 2017 were allocated from the Serbian State budget, which the Serbian Mine Action Centre (SMAC) matched with US funding. These funds were allocated for technical survey of five projects measuring 995,200 square metres. Serbia reported that it had completed one project and is currently conducting technical survey on a second mined area, with a further three projects to be implemented based on securing funds from donors and other sources of funding.
7. The Committee noted that Serbia will double its allocation of funding from the State budget for demining operations in 2018. In this regard, the Committee observed that Serbia has committed to increase its financial resources to fulfil its obligations during the next extension period.

### **IV. Efficient and expedient implementation**

8. In its 2018 report Serbia provided a description of the methods used to release areas suspected to contain mines. The Committee observed that Serbia would benefit from ensuring, in a manner consistent with Action #9 of the Maputo Action Plan that the most relevant release standards, policies and methodologies, in line with IMAS, are in place and applied for the full and expedient implementation of the Convention.

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

9. The Committee observed that Serbia was acting upon the decisions of the 13MSP having submitted an updated work plan to the Committee in March 2016. The Committee noted that the lack of adequate financial resources as one challenge confronting Serbia in completing its Article 5 obligations by 1 March 2019. The Committee noted that Serbia had a plan to increase contributions from its State budget for demining operations in 2018 and that this demonstrated greater national ownership in this regard. The Committee welcomes further information from Serbia to keep States Parties regularly apprised of Serbia's national contribution to implementation.
10. The Committee noted that in this context, Serbia using all resources and techniques available, could be in a position to proceed with implementation much faster than suggested and that this would benefit both the Convention and Serbia itself. The Committee recalled that in granting the request, the 13MSP had noted the importance of external support to ensure implementation and that Serbia could benefit from developing a resource mobilisation strategy, and welcomes further information from Serbia on possible resource mobilisation strategies that take into account the need to reach out to a wide range of national and international funding sources.

## **VI. Mine risk reduction**

11. Serbia has reported on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines. Serbia reported that contaminated areas are visibly marked with warning signs in Serbian and Albanian languages. Serbia further reported that affected communities are informed about demining activities, including through schools and other media. The Committee noted the actions taken by Serbia 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.