

## Comments on Serbia's extension request

### Intersessional Meeting of the Mine Ban Treaty

7-8 June 2018

Serbia has an excellent understanding of the extent of the remaining challenge and has the necessary capacity to complete its clearance obligations. The extension request is comprehensive. Serbia's task, with the support of States Parties, is to secure the funding required to finish the job.

#### *Among the positive points:*

- Serbia has presented a clear overview of the progress made since the first extension request. It has provided a clear picture of the extent of the remaining challenge, as well as the annual targets and costings for clearance.
- We welcome the progress made since the previous extension request in completing clearance in one municipality.
- The extension request puts the remaining antipersonnel mine contamination in the context of the remaining overall ERW contamination, including cluster munition remnants. This enables an understanding of Serbia's overall mine/ERW problem and clearance obligations, and of the total resources required.
- We welcome and encourage Serbia in its intention of completing clearance well before the 2023 deadline, if funds are available.

We also welcome Serbia's commitment to provide national funding: 36% of the planned budget for the extension period is from national funds. However, we are concerned that Serbia has not yet secured any of the 1.6 million euros of international funding required for the new extension period. The challenge is considerable, as neither has Serbia secured the 20 million euros required to address the remaining challenge of cluster munition and other explosive remnants of war.

The first extension request was assessed by States Parties to lack ambition. This second extension request is for a similar amount of land to be released in a similar amount of time. We therefore believe that Serbia can be more ambitious in its targets in this second extension period. We urge States Parties to support Serbia in completing its small remaining clearance challenge.

***We would like to see the following in a revised extension request:***

- A detailed resource mobilization strategy, along with an update on efforts made and progress achieved in securing international and additional national funds for the extension request period. As a lack of funding was the main impediment to completion during the first extension period, what measures will be taken to secure the funding required?
- A commitment and plan to provide regular updates to State Parties on progress made.
- An update on the process of developing national mine action standards. These should include land release methodologies in line with IMAS.