

***Meetings of the Standing Committees of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction***

***Geneva, 02-06 June 2008.***



***BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA  
STATEMENT***

***Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education  
and Mine Action Technologies***

***Update on implementation of Article 5. obligation and details on request submitted  
under Article 5.***

***Mr. Chairman,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentleman,***

*Bosnia and Herzegovina, during past ten years, has always been fully committed to the implementation of the Convention's aims and obligations as well as mutually agreed tasks given by subsequent progress reports and we did substantial progress in our efforts to eradicate mine contamination in previous years.*

*Nevertheless, despite our strong commitment, as we already stated on past 8MSP in Jordan and on the past meetings of standing committees, Bosnia and Herzegovina due to significant level of mine contamination still present in our country, will not be in position to fulfill obligations stated under article 5. of the Convention until our completion deadline on 01. March 2009.*

*Therefore, Bosnia and Herzegovina, with respect to our obligations, has prepared and submitted official extension request supported by all the necessary data and documents presenting our achievements, present situation and future plans in correspondence to foreseen time lines and obligations given by the Convention.*

*Our official extension request for additional 10 years period, commencing on 01 March 2009, present for consideration of states parties and formal decision of the 9MSP in November this year, with attached form of the voluntary Template and the document "Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Strategy 2009-2019" which explains further our plan to fulfill our Article 5. obligations in foreseen period, has been submitted end of March this year .*

*Recognizing importance of the process of preparing and analyzing requests submitted under Article 5., for further success of the Convention's norms implementation and necessity for full transparency in this process, Bosnia and Herzegovina gave utmost significance to the our internal process of evaluation of past achievements and subsequent preparation of realistic, transparent and achievable strategic plan for the period beyond 2009.*

*Having this in mind, our essential document "Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Strategy 2009-2019" has been based on three main premises*

- First - to support future full achievement of convention's aims and obligations*
- Second - to serve as realistic basis for the continuity and strategic progress of mine action in future period and*
- Third - to ensure stable and continuous funding for mine action as insufficient funding could continue to undermine our efforts in future.*

**Mr. Chairman,**

*Fulfillment of all planned tasks for this year presents important precondition for the start of implementation of the new Mine Action Strategy for the period 2009-2019.*

*In this respect, our 2008 annual Operational Mine Action Plan anticipates reduction of mine suspected area in total of around 240 million m<sup>2</sup>*

*This is expected result of our intensive efforts to further reduce mine suspected areas and clear mine fields during this year, in order to achieve level of foreseen extent of mine contamination at the beginning of 2009.*

*Mine clearance and technical survey projects for 2008 are planned at level of around 12 million m<sup>2</sup> (10 million m<sup>2</sup> of technical survey and 2 million m<sup>2</sup> of mine clearance)*

*This is somewhat more in comparison to last year results. To achieve the aims given by 2008 operational plan, we assured total financial input of around 27 million Euro including donor and national budgets and in kind work of national capacities.*

*Applying different area reduction methods in first quarter of 2008, mine suspected area in Bosnia and Herzegovina was further reduced in total for around 50 km<sup>2</sup>. Out of which 3 million m<sup>2</sup> of mined areas were cleared trough technical survey and mine clearance operations, 28 million m<sup>2</sup> was reduced through general survey and the rest of around 19 million m<sup>2</sup> was reduced through analysis and estimation of suspected area within systematic survey operations.*

*During mine clearance operations in first quarter of 2008, we found and destroyed 444 AP mines, 77 AT mines and 166 unexploded ordinances. This is in average of around 12 mines per hectare of cleared minefield. At the same period permanent marking was done on 1.8 million m<sup>2</sup>*

*Unfortunately, we still have new mine accidents, in the first quarter of 2008, we recorded four mine accidents with five fatalities and six injured persons.*

*In first quarter of 2008, we continue with community integrated mine action projects. This approach increase risk reduction effect, with optimal use of resources, available funding and mutual liaison of different mine action activities. This gives the results, not only in square meters or number of mines destroyed, but in visible and measurable overall impact reduction in all communities where these projects were implemented.*

*We also expect that that further comprehensive implementation of MRA projects in local communities and MRA educational programs in schools in connection with permanent marking projects, will in near future result with no new mine victims. Our ambition is to achieve mine safe environment as soon as possible and we consider that an important step toward total eradication of all minefields in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

*As we speak, there are further 1 million m<sup>2</sup> of mine clearance projects as well as 2 million m<sup>2</sup> of technical survey works in progress. We also expect completion of several more tenders for mine clearance works shortly.*

*National mine action structure is fully developed and operational capacities for mine action are present. All necessary standards for the organization of work, field implementation, recording and quality control of operational activities were endorsed and implemented.*

*Unfortunately, the fact is that present operational capacities were significantly unemployed throughout past years due to ever present lack of sufficient funding and consequently the respective strategic plans and annual operational plans have never achieved full implementation.*

*The donors funding for Bosnia and Herzegovina, throughout past several years, remained more or less constant on the annual level of around 13 to 15 million Euros. At the same time, the increase of participation of state budget funding of mine action is visible and it is now around 10 million Euro annually, but available funds in general are still rather insufficient to employ all the present capacities that can achieve projected maximum of around 30 million m<sup>2</sup> of mine clearance on annual level.*

*With present average costs of mine clearance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, full capacity utilization requires available annual funding on the level of around 40 million Euros and that is foreseen productivity level for full implementation of our aims given by Mine Action Strategy for 2009-2019 and to achieve mine free Bosnia and Herzegovina until 2019.*

**Mr. Chairman,**

*Now I will share some highlights of our extension request and forward some explanatory information.*

*In accordance with the evaluation of current strategic and operational goals, financial, operational and resources plans, as well as analysis of mine victims assistance and general assessment of the mine problem, it can be concluded that general mine impact in Bosnia and Herzegovina in past 10 years period has been significantly reduced. From more than 100 mine victims in 1996-1998 to average of around 20 new victims annually in last five years. However, mine contamination is still present and still takes its victims*

*The first urgent demining phase, in first two years after the war, was implemented despite adverse circumstances and obstacles. Later it was recognized to plan mine action according to priorities and country's long-term needs and development plans, taking in account available knowledge and techniques. Previous experience indicates also a significant discrepancy between real needs for mine action in Bosnia and Herzegovina and financial input from local budgets and our donors, there were ever present lack of funding.*

*In 1998, after first surveys and estimations have been done, total of 4200 km<sup>2</sup> of suspect area was established.*

*During past period (1997-2007) since organized mine clearance projects have been implemented through operations of general and systematic survey, we reduced this area for 2311 km<sup>2</sup>, and additionally through direct mine clearance operations we relised further 77,5 million m<sup>2</sup>.*

*So according to the assessments for 2008 we estimated 1812 km<sup>2</sup> of suspected area i.e. 3, 6% of total country area.*

*BHMAC assessment and Plans for 2008 predict further reduction of suspected area for additional 239 km<sup>2</sup> through general and systematic survey tasks.*

*Therefore, in January 2009, when BH Mine Action Strategy for the period 2009-2019 comes into effect, total suspected area as estimated will be 1,573 km<sup>2</sup>*

*The Strategy foresee all strategic and operational goals which have to be fulfilled in order that Bosnia and Herzegovina become mine-free country in 2019 and is based on a important and clear assessment of the size of the present threat.*

*It may not be accurate in the finite sense, since we have never had more than 60% of accurate minefields records so we mostly rely on surveys, but it is an entirely professional and expert assessment in which we have great confidence and which allows meaningful allocation of operational assets and financial planning on annual basis.*

*These estimations foresee the following extent of the mine contamination at the beginning of the 2009:*

*- Total suspected area of 1573 km<sup>2</sup>*

*- Total risk area of 592 km<sup>2</sup>*

*Risk area represents identification of mined locations as a result of conducted general survey of suspected areas with identified borders, threat and priority levels*

*- Total number of suspected minefield locations = 13.077*

*- Estimated number of mines, UXO and ERW = 220 000*

*In our endeavors to achieve "no new mine victims" goal, the Strategy adopts a new approach to the third priority category of risk area and that is the concept of prevention of access to this area. It represents higher level of prevention than the permanent marking and through legal instruments will describe prohibited areas and the measures by which mine action, police and local authorities will be involved in the identification, control, notification, and maintenance of physical barriers and warnings over these areas.*

*Furthermore, it is reasonable assumption that, over the period of the Strategy, emerging survey technologies will provide the means for complete reduction of this risk areas. Specific revision of the situation and subsequent development of operational plans for these areas will take place in 2012.*

*In order to accomplish our aims for next 10 years period it is essential to achieve annual operational levels of mine clearance and technical survey operations of around 30 million m<sup>2</sup>, as foreseen in the Strategy. Since present operations, capacities already allow for this scale of operations this means that we have to achieve our annual targets in funding in order to be able to manage subsequent annual operational plans.*

*Estimated total funds for implementation of operational plans for the period 2009-2019 are set on the level of around 40 million Euros annually.*

*In accordance with these strategic aims, the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, during process of endorsing new Mine Action Strategy for 2009-2019, took commitment to significantly increase state budgets for mine clearance in next and following years. In addition, the Ministry of Finance of Bosnia and Herzegovina already initiated appropriate actions during next rounds of state budget planning and preparation phases in order to involve additional funds covering for foreseen shortfalls for next and following years.*

*Even with sharply increased state and local funding, we still partly rely on support of donor community on planned levels of around 10-15 million Euros annually until 2012, and than we foresee gradual fading out of donor financing to around 2,5 million Euros in ending years of extension period.*

*Total estimated financial means for the implementation of all strategic and operational plans in next 10 years period, amounts to around 400 million Euros, which include at least 75 million Euros from donor funding. If we manage to achieve this level of funding during the extension period, Bosnia and Herzegovina will complete its obligation under Article 5. of the Convention and in 2019 we foresee our country as mine free.*

*Therefore, in conclusion, Bosnia and Herzegovina express its full support to the present work of the Presidency, the states chairing and co-chairing this committee and presidency experts on analyzing and questioning received extension requests and we extend our willingness and readiness to give all respective information in order to make this process as efficient and transparent as possible.*

**Thank you**