

**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, 25-29 May 2009.



**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA
STATEMENT**

***Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education
and Mine Action Technologies
Update on implementation of Article 5.***

During the course of 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted the extension request in accordance with article 5. of the Convention, and subsequently passed through respective process of preparation, assessment and finalization of all necessary strategic and background documents in framework of the Convention and in accordance with mutually agreed mechanism for granting of the foreseen extension period.

Finally, the Ninth Meeting of the State Parties, held last November, assessed the request submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina for an extension of deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas in accordance with Article 5.1 of the Convention and unanimously agreed to grant the request for an extension until 1 March 2019.

In granting the request, the 9MSP noted that, even with a consistent and sizeable effort having been undertaken by Bosnia and Herzegovina going back even before entry into force of the Convention, Bosnia and Herzegovina still faces a significant remaining challenge in order to fulfill its obligations under Article 5. and noted further that final success is contingent upon increased performance in technical survey, an ongoing, although decreasing, high level of donor funding and the initiation of and thereafter constantly increased funds provided by local governments on different level.

Having this in mind Bosnia and Herzegovina has done significant efforts to achieve foreseen benchmarks by the end of last year and first quarter of 2009 and to prepare itself for projected performance during this year in lines with requirements given by essential document "BH Mine Action Strategy for period 2009-2019"

In this respect, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2008 has maintained high level of mine clearance and suspected area reduction through number of general and systematic survey, technical survey and mine clearance projects.

Applying different area reduction methods in 2008, mine suspected area in Bosnia and Herzegovina was reduced for around 85 km². Out of this total amount, 14,8 million m² of mined areas were cleared through technical survey and mine clearance operations, 29 million m² was reduced through general survey and the rest of around 41 million m² was reduced through analysis and estimation of suspected area within systematic survey operations.

These 14,8 million m² of clearance and technical survey in 2008 is our best annual achievement in clearance operations since we started with mine action program.

During mine clearance operations in 2008, we found and destroyed 2582 mines, 230 AT mines and 3131 unexploded ordinances. This is in average of around 8,9 mines per hectare of cleared minefield.

Total funds spent in 2008 on all mine action projects (including clearance, MRE and permanent and urgent marking and including budget funds for our Armed forces and civil protection demining teams) were around 31 million Euros. Around 20 million or 64% were from donor funding either direct bilateral funding or through the ITF.

Last year our total mine suspected area shrink further to 1670 km² or 3,25 % of total state territory.

Having in mind that we had to achieve benchmarks of foreseen extent of mine contamination at the beginning of our extension period we induced significant efforts on extended additional systematic and general survey operations in first quarter of 2009 and managed to achieve starting benchmark for next ten years period which is 1573 km² of total suspected area. It is fully in line with and based on projections given by "BH Mine Action Strategy for period 2009-2019"

Bosnia and Herzegovina's 2009 annual Operational Mine Action Plan anticipates further reduction of mine suspected area for 151,65 million m² reflecting strongly our intensive efforts to further reduce mine suspected areas and to clear present mine fields

Mine clearance and technical survey projects for 2009 are planned at level of around 31 million m² (21,5 million m² of technical survey and 9,5 million m² of mine clearance) and 115,75 million m² will be reduced through general and systematic survey operations.

This is significantly more comparing to what we usually do on annual basis especially in the area of technical survey projects but with regular financing, we are ready to achieve projected targets. In order to fulfill 2009 operational plans we have to assure total financial input of around 40 million Euros including donor and national budgets and additional work of national capacities. 65% of necessary funds for this year have already been secured and the shortfall is foreseen to be covered through eventual rebalancing of local budgets during the course of this year. This is not going to be easy process for our Ministry of finance, having in mind that, circumstances of worldwide financial crisis this year imposed further heavy limitations to our ever so limited and overweighed local budgets on different government levels.

Nevertheless, at this time, clearance, survey, marking and MRE projects are ongoing as planned.

Applying different area reduction methods in first quarter of 2009, mine suspected area in Bosnia and Herzegovina was reduced further for around 23,1 km². Out of which 3,85 million m² of mined areas were cleared through technical survey and mine clearance operations, 6,85 million m² was reduced through general survey and the rest of around 13,4 million m² was reduced through analysis and estimation of suspected area within systematic survey operations.

During mine clearance operations in first quarter of 2009 we found and destroyed 366 AP mines, 14 AT mines and 156 unexploded ordinances. This is in average of around 9,7 mines per hectare of cleared minefield. At the same period permanent marking was done on 1.0 million m²

Unfortunately, we still have new mine accidents, in the first quarter of 2009, we recorded five mine accidents with two fatalities and one injured person.

We also continue with communities integrated mine action projects. BH Mine Action Centre conducted survey and risk assessment of different mine actions in additional four high impacted communities. For each of these impacted communities, integrated mine action plan is prepared, including mine risk education plan. Integrated mine action approach increase risk reduction effects 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 ongoing comprehensive implementation of MRA projects in local communities and MRA educational programs in schools in connection with access prohibition measures on III priority category risk areas and permanent marking projects, which is one of our priority strategic aims, 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 m² of mine clearance projects as well as 2 million m² of technical survey works in progress. We also expect completion of several more tenders for mine clearance works shortly.

Fulfillment of all planned tasks for this year presents important precondition for unimpeded implementation of aims given by BH Mine Action Strategy for the period 2009-2019, and subsequent future annual MA Operational plans.

In this respect, Bosnia and Herzegovina strives to maintain high level of suspected area reduction through number of survey and mine clearance projects and to achieve foreseen benchmarks, consequently raising further general security and safety levels of living standards and development in our country but also sincerely reflecting on trust and support we were given by states parties being unanimously granted requested extension period on the 9MSP.

Thank you