



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Intersessional Meetings (APMBC)
(20-22 June 2022)

3. Matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Victim Assistance

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva Office, UNMAS

Mr. President¹,

As this is the first time, I am taking the floor, please allow me to commend you for your leadership and efforts as President of the 20th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Mr. President,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)².

Excellencies,

The United Nations welcomes the Intersessional Meetings of this Convention as a priceless opportunity to look together at an early stage, at the progress made and to discuss the main challenges still to be faced to reach the goal of a world free of landmines by 2025. This year marks the midpoint of the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan. In the Action Plan, the States Parties reaffirmed their commitment to not only end the casualties caused by anti-personnel mines for all

¹ H.E. Ambassador Alvaro Enrique Ayala Melendez, Chargé d'Affaires, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations in Geneva, President of the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties (20MSP).

² The United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes are: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.



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people, and for all time – but also the suffering caused. Because the States Parties recognized already back then the tragic truth that achieving a mine-free world will not immediately mean a world without suffering caused by mines – in other words a world without mine victims and survivors. The scourge of landmines will be felt long after the last mine has been cleared.

Excellencies,

Sustainable, continuing, and integrated assistance to victims is crucial to end the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines and to leave no one behind.

The United Nations commends and welcomes the signs of continued improved national commitment to victim assistance. 63% of the countries and territories from which the United Nations Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism collected data in 2021 now have a national disability policy - compared to 60% in 2020. In addition, more national authorities in 2021 reported having a national representative for victims and survivors of explosive ordnance. To be precise: an increase from 40% in 2020 to 47% in 2021.

Mr. President,

To ensure sustainability of victim assistance, supporting national authorities, including in establishing appropriate national policies, is vital. The United Nations is also stepping up to the challenge.

For instance, in Colombia, UNMAS provided a national adviser on victim assistance to the government to strengthen its capacity to care for survivors through the National Victim Assistance System. In Somalia, UNMAS has helped lay the groundwork for nationally and locally run services that are tailored to the needs of explosive ordnance survivors.



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Mr. President,

The United Nations commends the work of the members of the APMBC Committee on Victim Assistance, Algeria, Ecuador, Italy, and Uganda, including the organization of the Victim Assistance retreat which took place earlier in January this year. The United Nations welcomes the Committee's informative preliminary observations of today, which underline the remaining challenges in assisting victims very well.

Excellencies,

The importance of good and high-quality data collection on victims and their needs cannot be overstated. To enable good decision making, data must be disaggregated by sex, age, and disability. Standardizing all data collection and data management practices is key and should be conducted in line with the minimum requirements of the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), which stipulate the logging of detailed information. The proper analysis and dissemination of data is paramount to avoid costly duplication of efforts within the mine action sector and humanitarian sector more broadly – in times when funding to reach those in need is already scarce.

Mr. President,

Victim Assistance lies at the very core of Strategic Outcome 2 of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy 2019-2023. Referral mechanisms are a priority of this strategy, to ensure that casualties have access to specialized support.

As an example, in Nigeria, in 2021, UNMAS developed a dedicated project with a consortium of two local NGOs to identify, assess needs, and refer direct and indirect victims towards available and accessible services in nine local government areas of the states of Borno, Adawama, and Yobe. A mapping of services has been completed, collecting information on multi-sectoral assistance. Almost 200 persons with disabilities, including 50 direct victims of explosive



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ordnance-related incidents, were oriented or referred to various services, including the ICRC Rehabilitation Centre in Maiduguri.

Excellencies,

Victim assistance is a core pillar of mine action. One of the main challenges to implement it properly remains its underfunding. The United Nations stands ready to deliver assistance, but the level of assistance remains impacted by this lack of funding. The United Nations calls on all States to concentrate efforts on solving this challenging problem.

Thank you.

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