



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Seventeenth Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
(26-30 November 2018)

Victim Assistance

Madam President,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.¹

The latest Landmine Monitor² indicates that for the third consecutive year, the numbers of casualties by landmines and explosive remnants of war remain as high as ever, since the Landmine Monitor started this work in 1999. On average, one person falls victim to explosive devices almost every hour of any day while the lives of many others are irreversibly impacted. About two thirds were civilians, and nearly half children.

On behalf of the United Nations, I would like to convey three points:

First, The United Nations commends the increasing efforts of States to include victims in broader national policies. The United Nations congratulates Iraq and Uganda for convening recently national meetings to establish policies on persons with disabilities, including survivors of explosive hazards. We thank the European Union for supporting both initiatives and for its

¹ The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer), and the World Bank (Observer).

² International Campaign to Ban Landmines; 2018 Landmine Monitor Report; November 2018.



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leadership in victim assistance. We also welcome the resumption of the Victim Assistance Expert meeting in the margins of the States Parties Meeting.

My second point is on data collection and accountability. The Landmine Monitor is highly valuable. While it does not include all hot war-zone reporting, its data shows an increase in casualties over the past three years. We at the United Nations have a Monitoring & Evaluation mechanism for the UN Mine Action Strategy, funded with the generous support of Australia, Denmark and the Netherlands. Our analysis which covers many conflict zones, and which depends on the presence of national mine and ERW injury surveillance systems, has confirmed the increase in casualties. In a nutshell, we are sure that the number of victims is increasing and concerned that many accidents go underreported.

Equally worrying, we do not know the extent to which victims are receiving the assistance they need and have the right to. Number of people die due to the lack of emergency health care in conflict and poverty-stricken regions. Again, reliable estimates of how many are simply not available.

The mine action community still falls short of what is required to develop an evidence-base on victim assistance. States have decided to integrate their victim assistance into their broader humanitarian and development action plans including through investment in national health systems. We hope that they will put in place reporting mechanisms to ascertain that survivors are reached through this approach and to account for victim assistance.

Three. The United Nations through its new strategy on mine action for 2019- 2023 is committing to increase its efforts in this area. The United Nations will take a stronger advocacy



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and coordination role for sustainable support to survivors, affected family members and communities, consistent with the UN global commitment to ‘leave no one behind’. The United Nations Strategy will support national mechanisms to ensure that the rights of victims are protected. Putting in place strong national mechanisms can increase focus and create a better umbrella under which victim assistance services can be delivered.

Excellencies,

In view of this, the United Nations calls on all States Parties to increase their support for victim assistance. We must fulfil our commitments to meet the emergency and long-term needs of survivors, affected families and communities.

Thank you.