



## **United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action**

**Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions  
Oslo, 12 September 2012**

### **Statement on Victim Assistance**

**Delivered by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Director, UNMAS  
on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA)**

Mr. President,

I deliver the following statement on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising the 14 United Nations Departments, Agencies, Funds, and Programmes involved in mine action.

The United Nations welcomes the useful presentation by Mr. Lou Maresca of ICRC, which has highlighted the current key challenges in the field of victim assistance.

The United Nations is pleased to hear that many States Parties and signatories to the Convention on Cluster Munitions have taken steps to meet their obligations with regards to victim assistance and to implement relevant points contained in the Vientiane Action Plan. While such steps are important, our experience from the field shows that much more needs to be done to provide adequate response to the needs and to fulfil the rights of survivors and victims.

Within the context of mine action, the United Nations has been providing assistance to a number of states to develop and implement Victim Assistance policies and programmes, including establishing and improving data collection mechanisms; supporting coordination and strategy development; and facilitating the integration of the needs of landmines and cluster munitions survivors into broader health and social services.

The United Nations supports the views expressed in the Oslo Progress Report that there is a need to enhance cooperation between States Parties and civil society actors on the ground; to strengthen linkages across related international legal instruments, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities; and to secure predictable funding for victim assistance through a renewed effort at international assistance and cooperation.

As the main international instrument to promote and protect the human rights of persons with disabilities, the CRPD should be included in the list of applicable human rights instruments that States Parties to the CCM need to take into account when providing assistance to victims of cluster munitions. This means that States Parties to the CCM

which have also ratified the CRPD are under a legal obligation to implement article 5 of the CCM consistent with the CRPD.

The United Nations continue to support and promote and apply an age and gender sensitive approach in all aspects of its work.

Providing gender and age-appropriate assistance for the care, rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration of survivors requires predictable funding and long-term programmatic commitment. To this end, a dual approach is necessary – a shorter term targeted victim assistance programme to ensure that the specific rehabilitation and reintegration needs are met; and a longer term strategy to ensure that victim assistance is integrated into broader national health, social welfare, and other structures, services and policies. Of particular concern is meeting the needs of children, whose physical, educational, social, and vocational requirements evolve over time.

The United Nations as part of its engagement with States and others regularly facilitates medical treatment, psychosocial support, vocational training, and creates income generating opportunities for victims. To ensure sustainable residual capacity of states beyond the completion of clearance or other obligations, victim assistance is being mainstreamed into advocacy and policy work related to the broader persons with disabilities agendas.

Another aspect of the support by the United Nations relates to national legislative frameworks. For example, integration of the support to victims into legislation on disabilities helps to ensure a human rights-based approach. This has been the case in Afghanistan and Lebanon, amongst others.

The United Nations would like to highlight that in many contexts data and information on the number, nature, and specific needs of survivors is missing or unreliable, which may compromise the planning, prioritization and implementation of victim assistance efforts. It is therefore critical that States invest in establishing national data collection and surveillance systems that will inform and guide not only victim assistance programmes but mine action activities in general.

The United Nations, for its part, stands ready to provide assistance to states in developing and enhancing such data collection systems. We also stand ready to extend other technical support related to victim assistance, which may be required.

Thank you,