



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Third Review Conference of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement on “Assisting the victims”

Agenda item 7 (d)

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Delivered by Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Director, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS)

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action¹ (IACG-MA), comprising 14 United Nations entities involved in mine action.

Victim Assistance is one of the core objectives of the Convention. At least 29 States Parties have reaffirmed their responsibility for the well-being of mine victims. Moreover, the United Nations would like to remind States Parties, in a position to do so, that they shall provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of mine victims, as provided for in paragraph 4 of Article 6 of the Convention.

The United Nations recognizes that mine and explosive remnants of war survivors and victims do not have sufficient access to the required services, thus denying them the possibility to be fully reintegrated in their societies, regaining their dignity, in short, depriving them their full rights.

Assisting victims is one of the four core strategic objectives of the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018, which emphasizes the importance of “comprehensive support [to be] provided by national and international actors to mine and ERW victims within broader responses to injury and disability.”

In many affected countries the victim assistance work of the United Nations with national authorities, especially that of UNDP², UNICEF³ and UNMAS⁴, contributes to

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

² In 2013, UNDP provided nearly 170,000 victims in affected areas with sustainable employment opportunities. UNDP supported initiatives that promote vocations training, access to small grants, livestock, psychosocial support, rehabilitation and government employment in countries such as Albania,

the implementation of the Convention provisions and humanitarian objectives with regard to victim assistance. Victim assistance shall continue to be systematically integrated into mine action as well as development programmes and plans.

Mine action programmes, including those supported by the United Nations, continue to provide significant assistance to anti-personnel landmine victims. This ensures that specifically targeted assistance actually benefits the entire disability sector and contributes to the implementation of relevant instruments of International Humanitarian Law addressing victim assistance, such as this Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and Protocol V on explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The Mine Ban Convention constitutes an important framework for advancing the rights and addressing the needs of mine victims, including survivors, and also their immediate families and the affected communities. The United Nations urges States Parties to abide by the relevant provisions in the Convention.

Efforts to address their needs and rights, also, need to be expanded beyond the framework of the APMBC into broader disability rights, health, or development frameworks to ensure greater access and sustainability.

Multilateral frameworks such as those provided by the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)⁵ as well as the World Health Organization's global disability action plan 2014-2021, entitled "Better health for all people with disability"⁶ are other useful cadres for addressing and enhancing the rights and needs of survivors in the long term. They should be strengthened to ensure they serve as an effective means for the provision of adequate resources to the entire constituency of persons with disabilities. The effective implementation of such frameworks does contribute to

Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, Colombia, Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Mozambique, Tajikistan and Yemen.

³ For example, in Eritrea, a country where the majority of casualties are children, and where disability and victim assistance are a national priority, UNICEF has been mobilizing support to assist the Government in strengthening orthopedic workshops to expand the provision of services on mobility devices for child survivors and other children with disabilities, and to develop community-based referral services and protocols on victim assistance for child survivors, including psychosocial support.

⁴ UNMAS, through a number of its field programmes, has been supporting victim assistance and the development of policy and legal frameworks for persons with disabilities overall. For example, in Afghanistan it has funded a physical rehabilitation project that provided orthotics and prosthetics to some 500 persons and another project in support of physical accessibility in Helmand, Herat, Kabul and Kandahar, including the building of more than 100 ramps in key public locations. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, UNMAS supported the economic reinsertion and physical rehabilitation of landmine/ERW victims and other persons with disabilities.

⁵ The CRPD regime also consists of annual Conference and Committee of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The United Nations Partnership to promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Multi-donor Trust Fund (UNPRPD MDTF), managed by UNDP, has been created to foster a collaborative effort aiming at mobilizing resources to advance disability rights around the world.

⁶ This action plan has three objectives; (a) to remove barriers and improve access to health services and programmes; (b) to strengthen and extend rehabilitation, habilitation, assistive technology, assistance and support services, and community-based rehabilitation; and (c) to strengthen collection of relevant and internationally comparable data on disability and support research on disability and related services.

achieving an inclusive society, with the full participation of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities.

Members of the IACG-MA actively participated in the Conference “Bridges between Worlds” held recently in Medellin, Colombia and would like to reiterate their congratulations to Colombia for its initiative. In addition to recognizing the need for further in-depth dialogue in this field, the United Nations welcomes the commitments made by representatives of the anti-personnel landmine and disability right movements present in Medellin to work closer together.

Finally, the IACG-MA would like to thank Austria and Costa Rica, Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, for their tireless efforts in encouraging States Parties to fulfill this obligation.

Thank you.