

Opening Remarks delivered by UNMAS

Victim Assistance Side Event: *United for Survivors*

Palais des Nations, Room XXVII

Wednesday 12 February 2020, 3pm to 4.15pm

Introduce the Panelists

- Ms. Martha Hurtado, Coordinadora, Grupo de Accion Integral contra Minas Antipersonal (Coordinator of the Group for Integrated Action against Anti-personnel Mines) and Deputy Commissioner of the Mine Action Programme, Colombia
- Mr. Nigel Ellway, Executive Director, Revive Campaign, Head of Secretariat, All Party Parliamentary Group on Explosive Threats
- Mr. William A. Bagley, Associate Research Engineer – Explosives John Hopkins University, Whiting School of Engineering, Energetics Research Group
- Mr. Tancredi Francese, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament and Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Trends highlighted by the UN Secretary-General in his report on mine action

- Data collected by the monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013–2018 provided insights into the countries and territories where the United Nations carries out mine action.
- In the 12 countries and territories where data have been consistently available since 2015, explosive ordnance casualties decreased by 32 per cent overall between 2015 and 2018. In the majority of those countries and territories,

fewer than 100 casualties were recorded per year. Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mali and Sri Lanka are countries where casualties have been successfully reduced.

- However, in 2018, when data became available for countries such as the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen, overall casualty figures increased. The highest number of reported casualties in 2018 was in the Syrian Arab Republic, followed by Afghanistan and Yemen.
- Over 80 per cent of reported casualties were boys and men.
- In 2018, data showed that 41 per cent of casualties were caused by explosive remnants of war, 29 per cent by anti-personnel mines and 21 per cent by victim-operated improvised explosive devices.
- Furthermore, in the context of the current urbanization of warfare, aggravated by the increase in the duration and intensity of conflicts, explosive remnants of war continue to inflict a heavy toll on civilians.

What victim assistance entails?

- One child amputated at 5 years old will need 40 prostheses throughout his life, but he will need much more than assistive devices.
- Victim assistance has many components: **emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological and psycho-social support, inclusive education, social and economic inclusion, and for all this to be effectively planned, programmed and budgeted, data collection, information management and adequate legislation must be acted upon.**

Oslo Review Conference

- States Parties have committed to “ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination”.
- The Action plan proposes actions on Victim Assistance to strengthen access to health services and increase social and economic inclusion of victims.

UN own commitment

- Protection and assistance to victims of explosive ordnance is the top priority of the United Nations on Mine Action 2019-2023. UNMAS work with national authorities and humanitarian partners to ensure that survivors and indirect victims receive adequate assistance.

Financial Support for Victim Assistance:

- According to the Landmine Monitor 2019, “International support for victim assistance in 17 countries as well as global activities totaled \$44.7 million in 2018, compared to \$27.7 million in 2017. Although this represents an increase in volume of \$17 million, as a proportion of all international support provided it remains near the upper end of the 4–7% range observed since 2013.
- Half of all dedicated victim assistance went to just four countries: Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, and Syria; while a continuous decline was recorded for most of the other recipients.

- Donor support explicitly dedicated to victim assistance remains difficult to track and improved reporting on the allocation of international support by donors is still needed.

Purpose of the side event

- UNMAS organized this side event to explore challenges faced by governments and other actors in coping with rising number of victims and will discuss what policy changes are required to better protect and support victims of explosive violence.
- Speakers and participants are invited to propose solutions, make commitments and take action.