



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

12th Meeting of States Parties to the Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement on Victim Assistance

Agenda item 10 (a)

Geneva, 4 December 2012

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

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.

The United Nations reaffirms its strong commitment to victim assistance, a key pillar of mine action.

Victim Assistance is central to United Nations mine action and, therefore became the focus of one of the strategic objectives in the United Nation Mine Action Strategy for 2013-2019. As a priority of the UN strategy, which will be launched next January, you may wish to note that in drafting the UN Strategy, special attention was given to ensure victim assistance efforts are integrated into broader agendas and frameworks on disability, public health and social welfare, development, and human rights and not to run in parallel to them.

As I mentioned earlier, the United Nations will also review and update its policy on victim assistance next spring; similar to the approach followed in elaborating the UN Strategy. This will be undertaken through a wide consultative process that will take into account new developments in International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, in particular the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). To this end, we look forward to engaging affected states as well as experts and practitioners of not only mine action but also health, disabilities, and human rights sectors.

The CRPD plays a prominent role as a guiding framework and as an important implementation tool for effectively addressing the needs and fulfilling the human rights of persons with disabilities, regardless of mines and explosive remnants of war being or not the cause of disability. In order to support this important endeavor, the UN would like to appeal to States in a position to do so to explore funding possibilities, in particular to assist UNMAS lead the UN to a successful outcome.

As highlighted yesterday by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Navi Pillay, during her statement at the high level opening ceremony, when victims of mines and other explosive devices acquire a disability, they fall under the scope of the CRPD. Linking victim assistance in mine action and the implementation of the CRPD will make a significant contribution to improving the lives of victims and survivors of mine and ERW incidents, including their families and communities.

The United Nations welcomes new accessions to the CRPD, especially by mine and ERW-affected states. In this regard, we heartedly congratulate Afghanistan for its recent accession and welcome the recent decision taken by the Albanian Parliament to ratify the Convention.

In addition to high level political commitments, the United Nations undertakes victim assistance activities in a number of countries, many of which are States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention. This support facilitates the full integration of victim assistance into the broader national disability, public health, social welfare and other relevant frameworks on an equal basis.

The United Nations continues to promote a holistic and integrated approach to victim assistance in mine action and considers that it can only be successful if it is based on age and gender sensitive criteria.

For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the UN Mine Action Coordination Centre (UNMACC) supports victim assistance together with the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs, as well as with the ICRC, other UN entities, national and international NGOs. Among other activities, these efforts address resource mobilization for victim assistance; advocacy for the accession to the CRPD; as well as capacity development of NGOs in donor liaison and development of proposals.

In Sudan, a victim assistance programme in Darfur, as part of the UNAMID operation, has been established as part of the mine action structure, and is currently assisting the integration of landmine and ERW victims into their communities. The United Nations is also working to establish a data collection mechanism for victims and has provided a grant to two national disability organizations. This database is required to support rehabilitation efforts and the integration of the needs of victims into relevant disability bodies.

Similarly, in Chad the United Nations supports the Government to incorporate a victim assistance component into its national mine action strategy to update data on victims; and to advocate for the accession of Chad to the CRPD. This participatory process includes disability and victim assistance organizations, as well as the Ministries of Health and Social Affairs.

Finally, the United Nations welcomes all national focal points for victim assistance and/or disability present this week and wishes them a productive discussion during the

victim assistance parallel programme, which this year is dedicated to the monitoring and evaluation of national plans.

I thank you