

**Inter-sessional Meeting
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
25-26 June 2015**

EU statement on victim assistance

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

It gives us a great pleasure to see Belgium presiding over this inter-sessional meeting, the first after the Third Review Conference of the Convention in Maputo, Mozambique last June.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Mozambique for its leadership which was instrumental for a successful Review Conference.

In Maputo, States Parties of the Convention acknowledged the remarkable accomplishments achieved in eradicating anti-personnel mines, but also recognised the need to ensure the full implementation of the Convention's commitments. The new review cycle will give a renewed opportunity to States parties to translate the commitments undertaken in Maputo into tangible results.

The Convention's norms on victim assistance are the clearest expression of the humanitarian spirit which drove its conclusion. The Maputo Action Plan adopted in June 2014 puts a focus on monitoring and supporting the implementation of the victim assistance commitments in a measurable and time bound way, as well as on the integration of victim assistance into broader national **and regional** policies and frameworks for disability and development. The Committee on Victim Assistance, as part of the new machinery adopted in Maputo to meet the challenges of the future, will play an important role to assist States Parties in delivering concrete results on the ground.

Important progress on providing assistance to anti-personnel mine victims has been achieved. However, more efforts are needed in order to ensure adequate assistance to victims in accordance to their needs. For the European Union victim assistance is a core component of its Mine Action Strategy. We are committed to providing concrete and sustainable assistance to victims, their families and communities.

The EU believes that in order for victim assistance efforts to be sustainable in the longer term, they need to be integrated into broader disability policies. The EU also particularly emphasises the importance of the full participation of survivors of anti-personnel mines explosions in decision-making and policy-making on issues affecting them.

Our goal is to ensure full participation of survivors in all spheres of society on an equal basis with others and in a sustainable way. This goal can be better achieved taking also into consideration the continued relevance of and synergy with other international instruments and norms. In this regard, we wish to underline the strong linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities, which provides a wider framework to comprehensively address the needs of survivors, the realisation of their political, social and economic rights, and to ensure respect for their inherent dignity.

The European Union is supporting the efforts of States Parties to fulfil their victim assistance commitments and to respond to the related challenges. The EU and its Member States have committed significant funds to victim assistance in many countries and regions of the world. Victim assistance was also one of the four priority areas of EU projects in support of the Cartagena Action Plan.

The EU is now working on the elaboration of new projects in support of the Maputo Action Plan. Victim assistance will continue to be an important dimension of the new projects.

Thank you