



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Statement on matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Victim Assistance

Geneva, 25 June 2015

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva Office, UNMAS

Mr. President,

As a preliminary comment on the report of the Committee on Victim Assistance, as summarized by the distinguished delegate from Costa Rica, the United Nations notes and appreciates that the Committee reached out to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We encourage the Committee to reach out to other United Nations entities of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, including its chair UNMAS, which is currently coordinating the drafting of an updated United Nations Policy on Victim Assistance. The United Nations would appreciate developing further interactions, synergies and partnerships with the Committee.

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)¹, comprising 14 United Nations entities involved in mine action.

The United Nations has listened carefully to the presentation by the Committee on Victim Assistance, as well as to its observations.

For the United Nations, victim assistance is one of the key pillars of mine action. One of the four strategic objectives in “The Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018” is to comprehensively support mine and ERW victims within the broader responses to injury and disability. Updating the 2003 United Nations Policy on Victim Assistance is one of the key commitments contained in the Strategy, and in doing so the United Nations is taking into account the more recent and stronger normative environment. This stronger normative includes the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) with its clearer provisions on victim assistance, also based on the incremental work of the APMBC.

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



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The updated “United Nations Policy on Victim Assistance in Mine Action” will be published soon following its approval. The Policy in its current draft reflects the United Nations’ commitment to enhance its contribution and support to this mine action pillar. In addition, in 2014 UNICEF published the “Guidance on Child-focused Victim Assistance,” which is now broadly available.

Regarding contributions of the United Nations to victim assistance in countries, over one third of United Nations mine action programmes are engaged in the delivery or support of victim assistance services. United Nations mine action programmes most frequently provide livelihoods and social inclusion services and work to complement national efforts and ensure access to victims to a broad range of services.² Two specific examples follow:

In Afghanistan, UNMAS is launching a US\$30 million three-year victim assistance project to provide survivors with immediate assistance, to strengthen existing services and to help the Afghan government meet the needs of victims from conflict.

In South Sudan, United Nations mine action organizations have assisted, through their participation in the National Victim Assistance/Disability Working Group, in the development of the South Sudan National Disability Policy, to be approved by the national Council of Ministries.

Thank you.

² Data and analysis from the Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation for “The Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018.”