



## BRIDGES BETWEEN WORLDS

### GLOBAL CONFERENCE ON ASSISTING LANDMINE AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE REMNANTS OF WAR VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS IN THE CONTEXT OF DISABILITY RIGHTS AND OTHER DOMAINS

MEDELLIN, COLOMBIA  
3-4 APRIL 2014

#### CHAIRPERSON'S SUMMARY

##### BACKGROUND:

1. Bridges between Worlds was a global conference that aimed to advance the international community's understanding regarding the place of assistance to victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war in broader contexts. It was hosted by the Government of Colombia with the assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Implementation Support Unit. It was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of Colombia, various partners of the Government of Colombia, and the European Union, through the European Union's Council Decision in support of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's 2010-2014 Cartagena Action Plan.
2. Bridges between Worlds was held further to the understanding that assistance to victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war should be integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to human rights, disability, health, education, employment, development, poverty reduction, social security, transitional justice and other domains. That is, while assisting landmine victims is a specific promise made through the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention but *victim assistance* is not as world unto itself. Rather, it is part of – or should be part of – other worlds.
3. It was recalled that 15 years after the entry-into-force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention – and on the eve of the Convention's third five-year review – it was timely to ask some fundamental questions about the bridges between the world of landmines and broader domains such as disability, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction.
  - a. What efforts have been made to build bridges to date and what have been the outcomes of these efforts, particularly in light of the commitments made by the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention through the Cartagena Action Plan?

- b. What practical steps can be taken to further build and strengthen bridges between worlds?
  - c. How can we ensure that when bridges are built they truly enhance rather than overlook the advancement of the full and effective participation of mine victims in their societies on an equal basis with others?
4. The purpose of *Bridges between Worlds* was to address these questions. This was done particularly with a view to considering how victim assistance may be pursued by the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention following their Third Review Conference. In addition, it was emphasized the outcomes of the conference were more broadly applicable given the consistent approach taken to victim assistance by all relevant instruments of international humanitarian law.
5. *Bridges between Worlds* took place on 3-4 April 2014 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Medellin, Colombia. The location of the event was significant for a number of reasons, including the fact that Medellin is located in the Department of Antioquia – the most mine-affected in the country, registering, since 1990, a fifth of all landmine casualties in Colombia. Furthermore, *Bridges between Worlds* took the issue of victim assistance back to Colombia where, in 2009 at the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World, the international community adopted the Cartagena Action Plan, which sees States commit to promote and protect the welfare and human rights of landmine survivors and mine-affected communities.
6. All States were invited to *Bridges between Worlds* as it was recognized that each State can play a role in achieving the full and effective participation of women, girls, boys and men living with an impairment in their societies on an equal basis with others. In total, thirty five States attended the conference, including many represented by officials with responsibilities related to the breadth of the conference's subject matter.
7. The participation of relevant international and non-governmental organizations was encouraged in *Bridges between Worlds*, including organizations with a specific focus on landmine and other explosive remnants of war issues and organizations from other worlds, such as disability rights, health care, employment and other domains. It was understood that the participation and expertise of international and non-governmental organizations was vital to the success of the conference.

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S CONCLUSIONS**

8. While the international community convened in Medellin on 3-4 April 2014 to discuss *Bridges between Worlds*, in fact, there are not different worlds. There is one world with physical, attitudinal and other barriers preventing the full participation of women, girls, boys and men living with a disability including landmine survivors, in all spheres of their societies on a basis equal to others.
9. Individuals, organizations and States concerned about the well-being and the guarantee of the rights of landmine survivors largely share the same agenda as those concerned about well-being and the guarantee of the rights of persons with disability more generally, as well as those concerned about individuals injured and left living with disabilities as a result of other causes, such as gun violence. Clearly more and better can be done for all affected individuals and their family members by all actors who share such an agenda working together. While there are different subgroups of persons with disabilities, there is more strength in unity than in division.

With unity it will be possible to have a strong voice to advocate for the rights of all persons with disabilities including landmine survivors and those living with a disability from any other cause.

10. The world has changed since 1997 when the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted. At that time, simply ensuring that the Convention would contain provisions recognising the landmine victims was a challenge. Now, 15 years later, this is accepted as the norm.
11. Those involved in the anti-landmines movement, including landmine survivors, contributed greatly to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. The CRPD in turn brought the human-rights approach to the world of disarmament. The adoption of the CRPD changed the perspective of persons with disabilities from objects of assistance to holders of rights. It has been recognized that all articles of the CRPD apply to victim assistance.
12. The CRPD has been instrumental in providing to conventional weapons instruments clarity regarding the end state of their efforts related to assisting survivors. That is, the end state is the same for *worlds*: the full participation of all women, girls, boys and men, including landmine survivors, in all spheres of their societies on a basis equal to others. Working back from this end-state can assist in reinforcing the importance of measurability of efforts to assist survivors. It will only be possible to have evidence of progress as concerns affected individuals, their family members and communities if clear indicators have been established at the national level.
13. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions have been instrumental in leveraging the landmines / cluster munitions issue to open up a dialogue on disability issues where one may not be at present taking place. Moreover, resources mobilised in the context of the landmines / cluster munitions issues, and initiatives undertaken, such as reinforcing survivor networks, have benefited broader populations beyond simply landmine survivors and their families.
14. Funding for a variety of individual issues areas is scarce. Collaboration in mobilising resources makes much more sense than competing for diminishing funds. As well, collateral damage can occur when different subsets of persons living with disabilities compete for scarce resources as a hierarchy is created which suggested that some people are higher up because of how they acquired their disability when this is fundamentally wrong and contrary to the rights based approach. No matter the sources of funds, funds should be invested in a way which is in line with the CRPD's rights-based, inclusive approach.
15. The post-2015 development agenda stands to provide a great opportunity for enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities through putting disability on the agenda which will guide the work of States, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations for the next fifteen years. All persons with disabilities regardless of the cause, and all those whom support them, should recognise the potential benefit this could bring.
16. While work must continue to advance the disability rights agenda at the international policy level, at the same time efforts must continue to ensure that women, girls, boys and men living with disabilities, including landmine survivors, are actually able to realise these rights in their everyday lives. Inclusive development is a key means to help realise this as it offers a sustainable strategy to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors and their family members and communities, in social, economic, cultural and political spheres.
17. All humanitarian and development efforts, and assistance for these efforts, should be inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities, including mine and other explosive remnants of war survivors. This means a twin-track approach of integrating disability into development

programmes, supporting disability-specific programmes to address targeted needs, and promoting and enabling the active participation and contributions by persons with disabilities in these efforts.

18. While international humanitarian legal instruments refer to victims, with the term victim understood broadly to include individuals directly affected, families and communities, the terminology is dated and presents a conceptual barrier to moving forward. There is the need to move from viewing survivors as victims but rather as rights-holders who should be empowered to claim and advocate for their rights.
19. There is a need to move beyond an *either or* debate, as it is unproductive to debate whether the focus should be placed on investing in immediate benefits *or* on investing in rights long-term. Both are important. This discussion should be rebalanced to recognise the importance of investing in both approaches, thereby emphasising that both top down (rights and policy based) and bottom up (service delivery) approaches are complimentary and together will lead to more tangible sustainable results on the ground.
20. Discussions on assisting survivors within conventional weapons instruments are important, must continue and will continue, as this largely is now a normal course of business for these instruments. The challenge now with respect to these discussions is two-fold. First, there is a need to make these discussions highly productive and supportive ensuring measurable progress in fulfilling the promise made to survivors of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. That is, there is a need to embrace a *less talk, more action* principle, and to ensure the best use of the time of those participating in those forums. Second, there is a need to balance discussing survivors within the confines of conventional weapons instruments with taking the conversation to other arenas (e.g., health, human rights, labour, disability rights, etc.) where matters are considered that are central to fulfilling the promise to survivors.
21. The States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention have recognised and fully embraced that victim assistance is a human rights issue. The rights based approach suggests an end point to work towards, and that is a world in which all persons can participate in society in a basis equal with others. This provides a degree of measurability which is vital in the lead up to Maputo. The Maputo outcomes must insist on a shift in focus from inputs and activities to outputs and what is actually being achieved in relation to the end point.
22. A variety of practical steps can be taken to build stronger *Bridges between Worlds*, ensuring that the promise to landmine survivors is integrated but visible in other arenas:
  - a. Interested actors can make use of the mechanisms that are in place for implementation of the CRPD, for example, the formal reporting process, the preparation of shadow reports and the dialogue of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Member States of the CRPD, the majority of which are also parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.
  - b. International and non-governmental organizations from the world of disability rights and the world of landmines have not always worked close enough to date and there was great scope for closer collaboration, including making a tangible difference on the ground. The International Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition and the International Disability Alliance could collaborate more closely through, for example, enhanced cooperation between member organisations at the national level and, at the international level, through the inclusion of ICBL / survivor representative on the IDA Coordinating Committee.

- c. Implementation support structures and secretariats for different international legal instruments could do more to work together on implementation of the different instruments. This is important as the same States that are responsible for the well-being of large numbers of landmine or other explosive remnants of war survivors are those that have accepted the human rights standard relating to persons with a disability in the CRPD.
- d. In order to identify best practice, goals and indicators, a series of case studies should be undertaken looking at different contexts and the circumstances of victims through different perspectives such as the victims themselves, the family, the community, civil society, the disability rights movement, the government, the international community, and development assistance partners. This would reveal information about what was going on in society and what is important for persons living with a disability.
- e. State Parties' representatives with leadership roles on assisting survivors in the conventional weapons instruments could take the discussion to other forums that are relevant for the issues of landmines, such as the World Health Assembly, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the International Labour Conference. The proposal of the President-Designate of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Maputo Review Conference to appoint a special envoy on victim assistance was noted.
- f. Tools developed by international organizations, such as the WHO's Global Disability Action Plan, should be well promoted and used where relevant. In development of tools, the WHO could consider the implications of service delivery in remote and rural areas and other areas where there are large numbers of landmine survivors and other groups of vulnerable people.
- g. Actors from a variety of *worlds* – be they landmines and cluster munitions, gun violence, armed violence, etc. – could create a movement that is truly non-discriminatory and one that could make a strong contribution to the global disability rights' agenda.