

**INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME 2003-2004
STANDING COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND
SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION
Geneva, February 10, 2004**

A D D R E S S
**by Amira Arifović-Harms, Head of Delegation
of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Excellencies,
Dear Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentleman,

Eight years after the war, Bosnia and Herzegovina, unfortunately, still belongs to the group of the most heavily mine-contaminated countries in the world. Although, due to the lack of financial resources, BiH has not succeeded to establish its own centralized data base on mine victims.

The only available register in our country is the one prepared by the ICRC. All data has been collected through a cooperation of the International Committee of the Red Cross and a network of staff and volunteers of the Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in both entities.

According to the above-mentioned database, since the beginning of the war in 1992, until the end of 2003, we had more than 4800 landmine and UXO victims in our country. Just in the period since the end of the war, until the end of the last year, there were over 1470 mine victims. Out of that number, 316 children, younger than 18 years, were killed or injured.

Since 1997, different programs and projects with regard to mine victims assistance have been implemented.

Landmine Survivors Network BiH (LSN) has conducted 6 projects on mine victim assistance.

During 2003 Landmine Survivors Network visited over 6.100 victims, made interviews with 213 and established the first contacts with 221 survivors. Moreover, they payed 257 visits to the regional hospitals. There were 312 direct assistances to mine victims, and 2.000 items of educational material were distributed. The training course related to the small bussiness creation was organised, and activities on rising awareness of victim rights were conducted. The first exhibition of arts and products made by mine victims was organised. In order to enhance their social reintegration, the serial of sports activities was organised and supported by Landmine Survivors Network.

NGO «HOPE '87» has been conducting 2 projects related to civilian war victims assistance. These projects, which include medical, educational and employment assistance, were launched in 2002, and will last until the end of this year.

The project aiming at rehabilitation and social reintegration of young persons was finantialy supported by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency. Republic of Austria sponsored the project for medical and social rehabilitation of war victims in Sarajevo.

Jesuit Refugee Service International conducted following projects: »Children mine victims assistance program«, »Olderly mine victims program«, »Computer School« and «Reconsruction».

During 2003, medical rehabilitation for 66 mine victims from BiH was provided by Slovenian Institute for Rehabilitation. The treatmant was financed through the International Trust Fund. Within this rehabilitation program, different prosthetics, as well as resocialization treatman, were provided.

Overall, there are 13 public and 14 private different organizations in BiH that provide assistance to war veterans and civil war victims, free of charge. BiH has four clinical centres, a network of general hospitals and a public health centre in every

municipality. State run welfare centres exist in every municipality and they assist landmine survivors at the local level.

The Landmine Survivors Network, Jesuit Refugee Service, Queen's University and ITF are providing assistance in victim rehabilitation (orthopaedic adapting and physiotherapy).

There are different programmes provided by International Rescue Committee, Adopt a Minefield, Hope 87 and Landmine Survivors Network for social inclusion and support (vocational trainings and sport activities).

Psychosocial support programs are organised by the Jesuit Refugee Service, Landmine Survivors Network and Hope 87.

Financial support for living and orthopaedic distribution is performed by Landmine Survivors Network, Jesuit Refugee Service, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and the Ministry of Health of RS.

The LSN, Jesuit Refugee Service, Queen's University, Adopt a Minefield, Hope 87, International Rescue Committee and GENESIS are working on programs in order to raise public awareness on problems of disabled persons.

It is important to mention that, on the state level, legislation, which would cover care and assistance for disabled persons, is not in place, yet. There are many differences between existing legislation in the entities, which cover this field, but the similarity of both is that they define only rights of civilian victims and disabled veterans.

During 2004, Handicap International, in cooperation with UNICEF, plans to implement the project "Research of mine victim assistance". The aim of this project is to collect all information needed for planning of further activities in this field. On the basis of the results of this project, BiH MAC plans to develop a long-term strategy for mine victim assistance in our country.

Finally, I would like to inform you, that BiH MAC, being aware that it is not possible to develop comprehensive and effective strategy for the assistance to mine victims in BiH, without having all relevant information on one place, plans, during this year, to assess the possibility of establishing a single, centralized data-base on mine victims on state level.

Thank you.