

STANDING COMMITTEE MEETINGS OF THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION
OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL
MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

Geneva, 23 June 2004

STATEMENT of GERMANY

Dear Co-Chairs, dear Co-Rapporteurs,

Within the framework of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, landmine victim assistance is an important area in which assistance is given to countries that are affected by landmines. While the fulfilment of most obligations contained in the Convention is bound by deadlines, such as the destruction of landmine stockpiles or landmine clearance, victim assistance is a long-term task for which no deadline can be specified; it requires an equally long-term willingness on the part of donor countries to support assistance efforts.

From this responsibility arises the need for projects to provide short-term humanitarian support, as well as for a long-term strategy in the area of development cooperation.

For reasons of similarity, landmine victims – in so far as no further differentiation is made – are also understood to include victims of unexploded ordnance – despite the fact that the provisions of international law regarding assistance for victims of unexploded ordnance are far less clear than for landmine victims.

Support provided for landmine victims within the framework of humanitarian assistance

The Federal Foreign Office provides victim assistance as part of its humanitarian assistance, both as emergency aid and through its cooperation with organizations in the area of mine action.

During armed conflicts, or after they have ended, emergency aid is required, on the one hand to provide medical assistance to landmine victims and on the other hand to ensure an immediate supply of artificial limbs. The Federal Foreign Office finances projects in both areas: medical assistance is made available through humanitarian assistance funds, while other assistance for landmine victims is provided through funds for mine action.

The support made available by the Federal Foreign Office aims to ensure that assistance can be offered quickly and without delay in emergency situations. The goal is to make available the required assistance to victims, and to bring them relief as quickly as possible. That is why emergency humanitarian operations are always limited in duration and not necessarily designed for the long term. In this respect, they differ from development cooperation projects. Basically, however, it is desirable that whenever possible and sensible, humanitarian projects should be made part of development cooperation, so as to ensure long-term support for, as well as rehabilitation and reintegration of, landmine victims in the affected regions.

Support provided for landmine victims within the framework of development cooperation

Landmine victim assistance through specific long-term projects is part of development cooperation of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and of NGOs.

The aim of these projects is to assist the rehabilitation of landmine victims and to reintegrate them into the labour market.

The following activities are promoted:

- medical attention and assistance for, as well as rehabilitation of, landmine victims (artificial limbs),
- psychosocial counselling of victims and their relatives (in particular children),
- vocational and professional training for landmine victims,
- micro-credit programmes to assist landmine victims,
- providing assistance to landmine victims and non-victims through an integrated approach involving village or community-based development projects.

The respective health and labour ministries charged with victim assistance are also to a varying extent provided with institutional consultancy services, with a view to systematic and wide-ranging implementation of these specific activities. This is intended to strengthen the technical capacity of these institutions and to improve the financial sustainability of their programmes.

Possibilities for integrating landmine victim assistance into social policy approaches of development cooperation

In addition to providing consultancy with regard to implementing specific activities, two further development cooperation approaches are relevant for providing systematic victim assistance:

1. Social security systems

The inclusion of victim assistance into the consultancy on social policy that is provided to developing countries, for example with a view to the establishment of social security and health insurance systems, has barely begun. This is not least due to the fact that the countries with large landmine problems and a great number of landmine victims are for the most part also the poorest countries, in which the establishment of contribution-based social security systems is currently unrealistic. This at least applies to rural populations and to former combatants, the two social groups that have the largest number of landmine victims. However in further developed countries (e.g. the Balkans, Colombia), the framework conditions meanwhile exist to begin making victim assistance an element of social policy.

2. Social funds

Social funds were created to efficiently promote social programmes in many states within the framework of restructuring processes and the so-called Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) processes, i.e. national programmes to reduce poverty as a condition for partial debt cancellation pursuant to the initiative of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund for the most highly indebted countries – frequently referred to as the HIPC (Highly Indebted Poor Country) Initiative. Although these funds are suitable for providing long-term victim assistance, they have previously hardly been used for this purpose.

Both strategic approaches, social security systems as well as social funds, appear to be suitable for systematic integration into PRSP processes. This applies in particular to countries

in which peace agreements have been reached, and for which subsequently large donor conferences have been held and reconstruction programmes established (e.g. Afghanistan and Iraq).

Funding

For 2003 the German government allocated 3.4 million Euro to victim assistance. As described before these were projects funded from two different sources, the Federal Foreign Office and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development in Afghanistan, Angola, Iraq, and Viet Nam.

Compared with the figures for 2002 with 2.65 million USD this is an increase of 35% for victim assistance and more than 17.5% of which was spent for mine action.

Thank you for your attention