

JUNE 2005 INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

VICTIM ASSISTANCE CANADA

Thank you Chair,

Canada has supported and participated in the survivors Summit that took place just prior to the First Review Conference. We reiterated our commitment to assisting victims of landmine accidents. We also repeated the messages from the Survivors meeting on the conference floor.

We think that survivors have a right to proper care and to opportunities for reintegration not only in the sense of the Mine Ban Treaty but also in broader terms and to the same level as other people with disabilities.

The responsibility for providing assistance to survivors should rest in the hands of mine affected countries. It is only through the implementation of the relevant action points in the Action Plan that survivors will see their situation improve.

Assistance to survivors from donor source will not suffice. Nor can it be sustainable over long periods of time. This is why it is so important for survivor assistance programmes to be developed at the national level and integrated into other national health, rehabilitation and re-integration programmes.

While the Convention provides coverage for survivors, we believe survivor organizations and networks need to link up as much as possible to national and international networks working for the rights of the disabled. The needs of the survivors may be specific in some ways; however they will gain also in working with broader disability groups to obtain more in terms of recognition, of favourable legislation and policies.

For its part, Canada will continue to support victim assistance in two ways:

One through the traditional support to projects aimed at helping survivors directly. In this connection, we are providing for a four year grant to the ICRC for its rehabilitation programme. This year, we are starting two new projects in Northern Uganda in support of the Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief and for World Vision Canada for victim assistance re-integration and MRE in communities affected by civil disturbances. Each partner will receive a contribution of \$600,000 Canadian over three years to add on to its own contributions. We are currently looking at the possibility of supporting rehabilitation institutions in Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine through the rehabilitation department of the Collège de Montmorrency. If successfully planned this project would add a contribution valued at \$1.1 million to these institutions cooperating in a regional project.

The other approach we are taking is to support capacity building and networking. We believe this is an effective way of investing limited resource so that survivor's organizations can be strengthened and can give themselves the means to secure more support from their governments. So in this perspective, we are providing support for capacity development to the LSN over three years. This support is to help national organisations build capacity. In addition, CIDA is exploring new avenues in the context of integrating mine action in development. On this theme, we are exploring with the Canadian Council for the disabled the feasibility of holding a roundtable to look at ways of including survivors in the broader development work of Canadian NGO's. At the same time, we are looking at the linkages between survivor assistance and the broader disability agenda. How for instance, can the survivor networks link and benefit from the World Bank sponsored Global partnership for Disabilities and development.

Chair, I will close with these few words. There are deadlines for clearance that need to be met but support for survivors goes well beyond these deadlines and our community needs to keep providing needed support and also searching for new ways of integrating survivors to support their development and that of their families and communities.

Thank you.