

**STATEMENT BY THE TURKISH DELEGATION
DURING THE MEETING OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE
AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC INTEGRATION
(3 June 2008)**

Distinguished Co-Chairs,

The Turkish Delegation warmly congratulates you on your assumption of the Co-Chairmanship. You have my Delegation's full confidence and support.

As stated last April by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in his message on the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action we believe that, "*this International day serves as a reminder that, without proper support, survivors of landmines may face a lifetime of poverty and discrimination, lacking adequate health care or rehabilitation services*".

As a State Party to the Mine Ban Convention, Turkey remains determined to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines that kill or maim innocent and defenceless men, women and children.

Against this background, I would like to share with you four brief points to give a short overview of actions taken in Turkey in the field of mine victim assistance.

First, I would like to welcome the entry into force of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Disability Rights Convention). Turkey has signed the Convention on 30 March 2007. The ratification process is currently underway.

Second, civilians, including mine casualties, can receive treatment at military hospitals as well as several State and University Hospitals. The procedures outlining how civilians can apply for treatment or for rehabilitation at military hospitals can be found on the websites of the Gülhane Military Medical Academy (GATA) and the Turkish Armed Forces Rehabilitation and Care Centre.

This Center belongs to the Turkish Armed Forces. However, % 30 percent of its quota is reserved for civilians. Furthermore, those civilians which are already under rehabilitation in different regional hospitals, always receive treatment in this Center when the regional facilities fall short of addressing the needs of such patients.

Third, in addition to rehabilitation services provided in military centers, the "Orthopaedics and Traumatology Center" (OTC) which operates within the Department of Surgical Medical Sciences of the Faculty of Medicine of the Dicle University, provides rehabilitation to patients, including mine victims. The OTC is a competent center with a capacity of 1.500 general surgical treatment per year. The average capacity for prosthetic services is around 70-100 per year.

And finally, starting from 2000, a special prosthetic care program for amputees has been implemented with the contribution of Physicians for Peace (PfP), a non-governmental organization, based in Norfolk, Virginia. PfP has successfully initiated a Prosthetic Center at Dicle University, Diyarbakır. In this Center, volunteer physicians and prosthetists fit, train and rehabilitate amputees including landmine victims with prosthetics, free of charge.

The Prosthetic Center has been operating as a self-sustainable care center to fit prosthetics and train amputees. The total number of the civilian landmine victims (amputees) fitted at the Center nears one hundred. In 2006 and 2007, 16 and 19 persons benefited from their services.

I thank you.