

Special Session on International Cooperation and Assistance

Meetings of the Standing Committees  
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines  
and on Their Destruction

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On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Thank you Madam President.

As this is the first time that the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is taking the floor, the IFRC takes this opportunity to thank you, Ambassador Eckey, for the substantial outcomes of Cartagena. We also thank the Co-chairs for the fruitful discussions this week, which allows States and other stakeholders to share updates on the commitments they made at the 2nd Review Conference.

Madam President,

International cooperation and assistance is crucial for the Convention's implementation. Nevertheless, only with enhanced local capacities, can national ownership be promoted and truly owned by the government.

As you know, more than 20 National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies participated in the Cartagena Summit. In parallel to the Summit, a 3-day workshop took place focussing on the updated Movement Strategy on landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war that was adopted at the Council of Delegates in Nairobi in November 2009. Concrete action points were discussed in relation to three key areas:

- the development, promotion and implementation of legal norms,
- operational activities for alleviating the effects of these weapons, and
- assistance to survivors and persons with disabilities.

These commitments do not necessarily imply the creation of new programs. Effective implementation depends, rather, on our ability to adjust existing programs to the humanitarian reality on the ground. The ability to address challenges with an integrated approach meeting local needs is also key.

Allow me to take a well-known Red Cross and Red Crescent activity – disaster preparedness – as an example. In weapon contaminated areas, the risk brought by landmines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war should be taken into account during local assessments of risk and community vulnerability and capacity. Plans can then be developed accordingly with the participation of local communities bringing all stakeholders on board, with resulting activities potentially ranging from risk mapping and awareness raising to mitigation.

For example, in Cambodia, the Red Cross volunteers and youth are important agents for disseminating landmine awareness throughout the community, in different locations such as in schools, in the field, at home, in groups, as well as through media especially targeting vulnerable groups in high-risk areas to change their risk-taking behaviour.

In addition, the Cambodian Red Cross supports the Government in data collection and gives priority to first aid training which is an important component of victim assistance. This integration of "mine action" into existing programs of organisations is an essential element in mobilising and using resources efficiently and in ensuring both results on the ground and their sustainability over time.

In terms of international cooperation, as a representative of IFRC from Norway, I wish to share an example of the Movement cooperation in Cambodia. For a long time, the Norwegian Red Cross, in partnership with Australian Red Cross and ICRC and in collaboration with the Cambodian Red Cross have been providing support to address the needs of vulnerable populations in weapon contaminated areas. Such support provided in accordance with the priorities and the programs of the Cambodian Red Cross has born fruit in local communities, and will continue and be enhanced in the near future.

Madam President,

Today, while Member States are beating the drum for the preparation of the Summit on the Millennium Development Goals in September, let us remind ourselves that no development can be achieved at local level in areas where weapons remanents are present, which by their nature are unable to distinguish between combatants and civilians, which continue to kill and maim civilians and cut off their access to basic services.

In closing, the IFRC calls upon States to address the humanitarian and developmental impact brought by landmines in a cross-disciplinary way; and, as indicated in Action #62 of the Cartagena Action Plan, to fully recognise and further encourage the full participation in and contribution to the implementation of the Convention by relevant institutions at all levels. The National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in 186 countries through their auxiliary role supporting public authorities in the humanitarian field continue, with co operations at all levels, to fulfil their commitments with local actions.

Thank you Madam President.