

**Notes for ICRC intervention on  
« Special Session on International Cooperation and Assistance: Victim Assistance »**

**MBT Intersessional Week  
June 25th, 2010**

At the outset, the ICRC would like to welcome the initiative of the President to hold this session to develop a possible programme of work as concerns international cooperation and assistance, in particular for victim assistance. Strengthening cooperation and assistance will be crucial in implementing the Cartagena Action Plan, particularly for Victim Assistance. While many things have been achieved since the entry in force of the convention, while a certain number of survivors have received assistance, efforts have to continued to ensure that survivors and other persons with disabilities sees concrete improvement in their lives. The results of this special session must begin to bring tangible solutions in the form of new assistance, new resources and new cooperative engagements so that the Convention as a whole lives up to its promise to mine survivors.

In response to the first set of questions regarding the need for more clarity on the true magnitude of the efforts being made to assist States Parties, the ICRC would like to offer the following views. As the needs of mine survivors are the same as the needs of other persons with disabilities, many actors have projects to support the development and delivery of services in all affected countries. States should be encouraged to report on all activities related to disability and not only on victim assistance within the framework of the AP Mine Ban Convention. As States do have the ultimate responsibility of meeting the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, including the survivors, they should establish a body in charge of coordinating efficiently all activities related to disabilities issues, including resource mobilisation, monitoring of progress and reporting. In addition, States should perform a complete mapping of what is being done in all area's of the rehabilitation chain. One of the steps which may help States to do this mapping could be to organize a National workshop on "disability", which will bring together all national and international stakeholders.

In response of the second set of questions on 'victim assistance funding', we would like to offer the following points. For the ICRC, the financial investment in victim assistance, including substantial amounts for mine victims, over the years has allowed us to provide services (medical care, physical rehabilitation, socio-economic initiatives) and to work with national partners to develop their capacities for providing and managing services to landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. This has benefited hundreds of thousands of people. However, the lack of national capacities to plan, coordinate, and provide services frequently hampers measurable further improvement in their lives and in expanding the coverage to include also those without access until now. Over the years, we have learned that without strong national ownership to lead efforts and without a strategy to develop and/or strengthen national capacities, assistance activities have little chance to become sustainable. Another lesson learned is that programmes should not only be developed for mine survivors, but should include all persons with disabilities. Finally, programmes should not only focus on developing national capacities, Efficient use of resources also means ensuring that those in need know about and have access to the services available.

In response to the fourth set of question concerning national ownership, we wish to make the following points. National ownership is the keystone in ensuring measurable improvement in the lives of survivors and other persons with disabilities. States have the responsibility not only to ensure availability of services, but also to ensure that survivors (and other persons with disabilities) have access to it. As the owner of programmes aiming at ensuring availability and accessibility of services for survivors and for other persons with disabilities they have to take leadership in raising awareness, mobilizing resources, developing national

strategies and/or policies, monitoring the implementation of strategies and/or policies, coordinating stakeholders, etc.

Regarding the specific blockages that States Parties face in being able to mobilize resources, internally and internationally, we wish to make the following points. In addition to the economic situation of affected countries, which does severely hamper mobilization of resources internally, the lack of national ownership including the non-existence of a coordinating body also affects mobilization of resources and affects the prospects for consolidation and further development of what has been achieved so far. Without this national ownership and a coordinating body, national efforts to raise awareness are impeded. Mobilization of international resources is also impeded due to a lack of overall planning, reporting and monitoring. Without a coordinating body, it is difficult to present to international donors a clear picture of the needs, the challenges and an appropriate plan to answer the needs and to overcome the challenges. In addition, without proper reporting and monitoring it is impossible to see the achievements, which provide incentives for further investment and to motivate people internally and internationally for what remains to be done.

I now turn to the last question put to us today: How can States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention and the CRPD ensure coherence in implementing the cooperation and assistance provisions of both Conventions? A mechanism needs to be established whereby donors working on both issues share information in a transparent and meaningful way. This transparency is needed on the part both of donors and of stakeholders. There are different ways the information can be shared, for example through a donor database or a donor review published both at the Meeting of States Parties for the MBT and at the Meeting of States Parties of CRPD. A shared database will promote coordination and thus hopefully reduce duplication and aid in identifying gaps to be filled.

In conclusion, the AP Mine Ban Convention should maintain its role of catalyst for mobilizing internal and international resources which increase national capacities, as a forum for advocating for the rights and needs of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities, and as a place to promote inclusive development. In addition, States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention should encourage synergies in the implementation of victim assistance obligations with those of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War and the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Cooperation and assistance for the victims of weapons and other persons with disabilities is addressed differently in all of these conventions. But in affected countries it is exactly the same work and same challenges.