

**11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the  
Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines,  
Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 28 November - 2 December 2011**

**ICRC Statement on Victim Assistance**

29 Nov. 2011  
PM

Mr President,

The ICRC, through its Physical Rehabilitation Programme and through its Special Fund for the Disabled, has for many years provided support to 21 of the 26 States Parties that have acknowledged their responsibility for numerous landmine survivors. We are still providing assistance to 17 of these States. In most of these countries we have witnessed many improvements in ensuring access to physical rehabilitation services.

In Cambodia, we have seen the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation increasingly committed to the management of physical rehabilitation activities, including financial participation. In Colombia, with the support of the ICRC, the Ministry of Social Protection adopted a 5-year programme to support physical rehabilitation, which will improve the quality of the services provided. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, we welcome the new law regarding the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty, which mentions that all services to mine survivors will be covered by the State. In Ethiopia, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has, with our support, developed a national strategy for the development of physical rehabilitation services. Following close collaboration between Guinea Bissau and the ICRC, the Ministry of Health rehabilitation centre located in Bissau is now able to provide services. In Nicaragua, the Ministry of Health has initiated a programme to decentralize services outside Managua. In Iraq, physical rehabilitation services are now also available in Nassiriya in the south of the country, which provides for the first time accessibility to services in this region..

These are only a few examples of what has been achieved over the years in the countries where the ICRC provides support. However, much more remains to be done to increase accessibility to services, to improve the quality of the services provided and to ensure that services will remain available for the entire life of the survivors. Physical rehabilitation is an indispensable element of ensuring the full participation and inclusion in society of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Restoration of mobility, through the use of devices such as prostheses and orthoses, is the first step towards enjoying such basic rights as access to food, shelter and education, getting a job and earning an income, and, more generally, having the same opportunities as other members of society.

Physical rehabilitation, while important, is not the only measure needed to ensure the full participation and inclusion of survivors and other persons with disabilities in society. As defined at the Nairobi Summit, Victim Assistance include work in the areas of: data collection, emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological support and social reintegration, economic reintegration and the establishment, enforcement and implementation of relevant laws and public policies. While Victim Assistance includes these six components, it is a process involving a holistic and integrated approach rather than a series of separate actions. In order to measure achievement in improving the quality of life of survivors, which is the aims of victim assistance, we have to look at the overall process, and not only its individual components.

Action #29 on the *Cartagena Action Plan* calls on relevant States Parties to report to all States Parties on the status of their victim assistance efforts, including resources allocated to implementation and challenges in achieving their objectives. However, reporting on the status of national victim assistance efforts is not mandatory and apart from Form J, there is no standardized reporting format regarding victim assistance.

We believe that it is now necessary to develop a standard reporting format for States Parties in regard to Victim Assistance efforts. As we have seen today, most States Parties that report on their efforts do not report on the holistic and integrated approach, but rather report on specific actions in one of the six components of Victim Assistance. Without a standardized reporting format and mechanism, it is impossible to measure how successful these efforts are in improving the lives of mine survivors and ensuring the full participation in society of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities.

Since the Nairobi Summit, many efforts have been undertaken by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration, the Implementation Support Unit and VA experts, to develop tools for States Parties to assist them to provide a comprehensive response for victim assistance. Most States Parties that have acknowledged their responsibility for numerous landmine survivors have developed a Plan of Action. These Plans of Action should now be used as a basis for more systematic reporting. Of course, the ICRC stands ready to support States' work on this issue.

In conclusion, Mr President,

The ICRC will maintain its support to survivors and their families in States Parties and non-States Parties, to ensure that they have access to appropriate services. We will also continue supporting the development of national capacities in the provision of appropriate services to persons with disabilities, including survivors of mines and other weapons (ERW, cluster munitions).

We are also committed to work closely with affected States, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration, and the ISU, to ensure that weapons survivors in all affected countries will experience measurable and tangible improvements in their lives.