

**ICRC Intervention on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance
11th Meeting of the State Parties to the Mine Ban Convention**

Friday, 2 December 2011

Despite the global economic crisis, data published by Landmine Monitor shows that donors have remained generous and that world-wide financial resources allocated to mine action, including national contributions, have remained relatively high.

Those resources are nonetheless not yet meeting all needs in mine action. The large number of mine clearance extension requests is an indicator of the extent of this problem, since many of those requests identify a lack of financial or technical resources as a strong impediment to the fulfilment of their obligations. As underscored over the past days, lack of resources also presents a challenge to the full implementation of victim assistance obligations under the Convention.

In some cases, more effective and efficient use of resources could help address these issues. For example, as we have heard during this meeting, the expanded use of safe land release methods can reduce the need to employ much more expensive manual clearance resources. At the June Intersessional meetings, we also heard concerns from ICBL about overly "heavy" coordination mechanisms, which are not always proportionate to the actual mine clearance or victim assistance work being undertaken.

In other cases, however, States that have clearly defined their funding needs have not been able to secure the requisite level of resources, in part because the vast majority of resources continue to be allocated to a small number of mine-affected countries. Needs in those countries are vast, but we cannot forget those other States with fewer survivors, or lower levels of contamination, which often still require a boost in order to fulfil their Convention obligations. In this regard, we note that the ability of States Parties to secure assistance for mine action is being observed by some States not yet party, who are watching closely to see if their needs can be met through this Convention.

As commented already by several other speakers, in addition to financial resources, technical assistance and the sharing of experiences between mine-affected countries can be extremely valuable, as demonstrated by the cooperation between Colombia and Cambodia reported earlier. Such forms of cooperation and assistance are indispensable, as mine-affected States have developed significant experience across all areas of mine action.

The ICRC was very pleased with the creation at the 10th MSP of the new Standing Committee on resources, cooperation and assistance. As specified in the report of the President of the 10th MSP, the Committee has already taken several initiatives, such as the Tirana Symposium on cooperation and assistance in the field of victim assistance earlier this year. We hope this Committee will continue to actively engage all relevant actors in discussions on improving the global quantity and quality of resources, access to them, and their most efficient use.

As set out in the *Cartagena Action Plan* and discussed at the meeting in Tirana, capacity building and strong national ownership are key to the long-term sustainability of victim assistance programmes. The ICRC has direct experience of this in many countries, including Cambodia, where we believe our approach of supporting the national authorities – in this case the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation – combined with close collaboration with the National Red Cross or Red Crescent society - has reaped substantial benefits.

In Cambodia, since the beginning of our support to the MoSVY, the ICRC has taken a "back-seat" in the management and provision of physical rehabilitation services at the Phnom Penh component factory and at the two physical rehabilitation centres located in Battambang and in Kompong Speu. While direct support was provided to survivors, the ICRC work closely with MoSVY, at the centres and at central level, to develop their capacities to plan, manage and provide physical rehabilitation services. The Cambodian Red Cross also transferred the casualties database to the authorities, while maintaining its social re-integration programmes with disabled persons, including landmine survivors. The ICRC will strive to adopt such an approach as often as possible, to ensure the development of true partnerships with the States in which we work.

As a final point, the ICRC strongly supports the conclusion at the Tirana meeting, of the necessity to maintain a "twin-track approach", whereby clearing mined areas and assisting survivors are recognised as a development issue where appropriate, but dedicated mine action funding also remains available to provide for specialised services and cover cases that do not readily fit the development paradigm. In this regard, we believe that it is important to examine the impact of reductions in dedicated mine action funding on overall funding levels, for example within the European Union.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasise the ongoing importance of resources, cooperation and assistance to tackling the remaining challenges facing States Parties under the Convention. We look forward to working with the Standing Committee to develop its ideas and support States Parties to identify efficient and effective solutions to these challenges.