



THIRTEENTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE ANTIPERSONNEL
MINE BAN CONVENTION

2–5 December 2013

Opening Statement by Dr. Barbara Haering, President of the Council of Foundation

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining

Mister President, Ministers, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention is an instrument of international humanitarian law with a strong development component. Against the background of our shared experience on the ground, the importance of socio-economics in humanitarian demining is increasingly being recognised. Even when mines and ERW no longer represent an immediate humanitarian crisis, they all too often remain an impediment to development for years and require long-life assistance to victims and their communities.

In this context, the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been instrumental in setting the standard for what is to be understood in terms of protecting the rights of those with physical disabilities, including mine victims.

Throughout the last years, there has been an important effort by State Parties to strengthen their victim assistance programmes. However, the lack of reliable and comparable data about victims and victim assistance limits an effective and efficient implementation. The main constraints are the absence of comprehensive information management systems for data collection and a lack of effective coordination among major actors at different levels nationwide.

Working towards global clarity in mine action represents the first strategic objective of the current multiannual strategy of the GICHD. Therefore, the Centre has adapted its Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) in order to provide solutions also in the field of victim assistance.

The development of new victim-centric information management capabilities in IMSMA will facilitate the monitoring and support the management of victim assistance process.

Thus, the enhanced capabilities of IMSMA will contribute to our second strategic objective – to support high performing national authorities and to strengthen national ownership.

The victim assistance module can be customized according to specific national structures and user needs to connect all relevant actors involved in victim registration, needs collection, service delivery and monitoring.

Moreover, assistance is not limited to landmine and ERW survivors but may include further victims such as family and community members. The system can also be expanded to disability programming or to further categories of victims of armed conflicts. Therefore, not only mine action authorities and organisations but also health- and social-welfare institutions at national and local levels, international organizations and NGO service providers may successfully make use of our new tool. On the ground, we have to make best use of capacities offered to strengthen human security. The coordinated use of a single victim assistance information management system will also facilitate the full transition of victim assistance from mine action to broader national disability programmes. At the end, this will also help ensure consistency and continuity of data after the completion of mine action activities.

The GICHD is now conducting a pilot test in Colombia at both national and provincial level, with the collaboration of ICRC. The new version of IMSMA will be available and ready to be installed in April 2014. We look forward progressing together in our common aim and continue to develop effective and efficient tools and solutions to promote the implementation of the Convention.

I wish you a successful week and I take this opportunity to invite you all to join us for a reception at the WMO Attique on Wednesday evening. There, we will bid farewell to Ambassador Stefan Husy as the current director of the Centre and welcome Ambassador Stefano Toscano as our new director.

Thank you!