



"Community resilience and inclusive sustainable development"

Thirteenth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Geneva, 2-5 December 2013)

Agenda item 11: Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention
(a) Assisting the victims

Statement by
Dr. Yaseen Ahmed Abbas
President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society

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

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Mr President,

Thank you for giving the floor to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Speaking for the first time here, let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of this important meeting paving the way to the third review conference of the convention in Maputo.

Mr President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

This thirteenth Meeting of States Parties is timely for us as the International Federation's General Assembly, just took place in Sydney in November. We have the honor to inform you that after years of preparation, two additional members have joined the Red Cross Red Crescent network – they are Cyprus Red Cross Society and the South Sudan Red Cross. With the addition of these two National Societies' efforts, we expect to extend a wide variety of services, ranging from disaster relief and risk reduction, first aid training, and health and care, to support to public authorities in the implementation of relevant international treaties, reaching people in need in 189 countries.

In Sydney, National Societies also reported on the progress made in the implementation of the Movement Strategy on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and ERWs, which they adopted in 2009 for their work in the current decade. According to the report, more than forty National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies have been active in supporting their own governments and others through cooperation with sister National Societies. Activities covered the three key areas of the Strategy:

- 1) Promoting international norms on mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war;
- 2) Preventing accidents and reducing the impact of weapon contamination; and
- 3) Providing assistance for victims, which is the area that I wish to focus on in this statement.

A number of National Societies are directly involved in victim assistance activities, either in conjunction with the ICRC, other National Societies, or on their own initiative to meet the needs of people in weapon contaminated communities.

According to the report, at least four National Societies are involved in data collection for the purpose of victim assistance efforts: the **Afghan Red Crescent Society, Albanian Red Cross, Red Cross Society of Georgia** and **Russian Red Cross Society**.

The **Lao Red Cross** and **Red Cross of Viet Nam** both conduct first-aid training in weapon-contaminated areas to improve emergency response.

The **Afghan Red Crescent Society** and **Nepal Red Cross Society** conduct awareness-raising activities on the needs of victims, their rights and entitlements, which also helps tackle discrimination against mine survivors and other disabled people.

The **Angola Red Cross, Indian Red Cross Society, Lao Red Cross** and **Nepal Red Cross Society** facilitate victims' access to services and entitlements provided by the government, the ICRC and NGOs.

Financial support provided by the **Qatar Red Crescent Society** enabled the construction and equipping of a gymnasium hall at the rehabilitation centre in Kassala, Sudan, while the **Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Myanmar Red Cross Society** and **Somali Red Crescent Society** (with **Norwegian Red Cross** support) all run physical rehabilitation centres or hospitals, whose beneficiaries include mine/ERW victims.

At least five National Societies are involved in micro-credit or income-generating activities for victims of landmines, cluster munitions and ERW: the **Red Cross Society of Georgia, Nepal Red Cross Society, Russian Red Cross Society, Sudanese Red Crescent Society** (with **Qatar Red Crescent Society** support) and **Red Cross of Viet Nam**.

During the reporting period, the **Red Cross Society of Bosnia and Herzegovina** also distributed assistance (food, hygiene parcels and assistive devices) to mine victims.

Holistic victim assistance programs comprising several of the above aspects are run by the **Cambodian Red Cross, Colombian Red Cross** and **Iraqi Red Crescent Society**. In my capacity as the President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, let me share more details of the work carried out by my own National Society:

Under the **Iraqi Red Crescent Society's** Plan for Victim Assistance 2013-2017, services have been stepped up in the areas of: education and awareness-raising; emergency and ongoing medical care; psychosocial support; training for skills and education; micro-credit projects

for disabled people; advocacy for people with disabilities and their special needs; and advocacy with the authorities for more effective policies. During the reporting period, National Society volunteers conducted a nationwide needs assessment. As a result, support will be extended to 2,500 families from landmine-contaminated regions over the next five years.

In addition to these examples of direct assistance, indirect assistance has been provided by various National Societies, such as to disabled people generally, or through programmes to improve access to emergency care or enhance the general health system, to help improve the situation of individuals and communities in mine/ERW-affected areas, such is the case of the **Lao Red Cross** supported by the **Japanese Red Cross** and **Swiss Red Cross**, similarly in the work done by **The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society** supported by the **German Red Cross**.

Since the entering into force of the Ottawa Treaty, the components of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement with its assistance to the most vulnerable population has gained tremendous experience in the field of victim assistance. One of the lessons learnt is the need to include affected individuals and communities in both programming and implementation. Moreover, **building their resilience through socio-economic reintegration** is a very important objective and priority in order to achieve the vision of the Movement Strategy, which is to ensure that civilians will no longer be affected by weapons that cause suffering and injury after the cessation of hostilities.

Mr President,

In June next year, we will be gathering at the third Review Conference to take stock of efforts since the Cartagena Summit. The well-being of victims of mines/ERWs, as well as persons with disabilities in general, relies on the policies made by their governments. This creates an enabling environment, which provides resources that can adequately support their effective participation in the society. This is also the aim of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The importance of this Convention in the current framework lies within its capacity to ensure that existing processes and programmes in support of victims of weapon related incidents take into account the needs of all persons living with disabilities. All persons in need of assistance should have access to such services without discrimination and irrespective of the cause or circumstance of the disability.

In closing I wish to conclude with a reflection. We should not content ourselves with the progress made so far in the implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Risks brought by mines/ERWs in weapon-contaminated communities and the needs of victims continue to exist. Governments and supporting partners must not drift away from their commitments. Let us work together to enhance our support to achieve the goal of a mine-free world.

I thank you for your attention.