

**Seventh Meeting of the States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines
Geneva, 18-22 September 2006**

ICRC Statement on Victim Assistance

Wednesday 20 September 2006

Thank you Madam President.

On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), let me begin by thanking our sister organisation, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies for its statement. We wish to echo the important messages put forward by the Federation, as well as those of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), on this crucial agenda item.

We thank the States Parties that have significant numbers of mine victims to care for, for taking the floor to report on the situation of mine victims and the status of their programmes to assist them. This reporting process is very important for the Convention, in particular for enabling the Meeting of the States Parties to monitor compliance with the Convention's victim assistance obligations.

In this regard, we thank in particular Ambassador Streuli, for his excellent statement yesterday afternoon on behalf of Switzerland and Afghanistan, co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, reporting on the status of implementation of victim assistance commitments under the Nairobi Action Plan, in which he highlighted the many challenges which States Parties with significant numbers of mine survivors to care for will need to overcome if they are to be in a position to report progress in fulfilling this fundamental Convention obligation at the Second Review Conference in 2009.

In particular, he noted the need for States Parties to move forward in the process of setting their own specific objectives and developing plans of action that will lead to tangible improvements in the services available to mine victims, survivors and other persons with disabilities, emphasising that this is first and foremost the responsibility of each State and that action must be taken as part of the State's broader health care, social services, rehabilitation, and human rights systems.

We also note from both Ambassador Streuli's report and from the interventions of the concerned States Parties that the concerned States Parties still have a lot of work to do to develop objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART), and comprehensive national plans to achieve their objectives.

We commend the work done this past year by the co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and the victim assistance specialist of the Implementation Support Unit supported by Switzerland, to assist States Parties in developing victim assistance objectives and plans.

In the coming year, the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance must place greater emphasis on efforts being made at the national level to develop victim assistance objectives and plans, and of course to implement these plans. This is of crucial importance if progress is to be recorded in 2009. And as we highlighted in our opening statement on Monday, particular focus should be placed on developing national and local capacities.

Finally, like others before us, we wholeheartedly welcome the adoption in August 2006 of the final text of the draft Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and we urge all States Parties to endorse this Convention at the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly.

Thank you.