

**EIGHTH 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**

Dead Sea, Jordan, 18-22 November 2007

Written Statement by

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Item 11d – Consideration of the General Status of Implementation

Assisting the Victims

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Ethiopia takes seriously its obligations to assist landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. It is clearly understood that activities to assist mine survivors should not exclude persons injured or disabled in another manner; however, to meet the aims of the *Nairobi Action Plan* special consideration should be given to survivors and other persons with disabilities living in mine-affected areas.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has a mandate to address issues relating to persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors. Since the last Meeting of the States Parties in September 2006, three workshops were convened which specifically focused on the issue of victim assistance.

On 22-23 November 2006, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in conjunction with Landmine Survivors Network, hosted a two-day workshop. This workshop was the first of its kind, and served as a preliminary meeting in which all stakeholders dealing with disability issues in Ethiopia were invited to discuss Ethiopia's victim assistance objectives under the AP Mine Ban Convention and the new UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

On 23 August 2007, as part of a *process support* visit by the Convention's Implementation Support Unit, a round-table was convened with funding support from the Government of Austria. The round-table brought together representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Education, Austrian Embassy Coordination Office for Development Cooperation, Addis Ababa Prosthetics Orthotics Centre, Cheshire Services Ethiopia, Ethiopian Federation of Persons with Disabilities, Ethiopian Mine Action Office, Ethiopian National Disability Action Network, Handicap International, International Committee of the Red Cross, International Labour Organisation, Landmine Survivors Network, Rehabilitation and Development Organisation (RaDO), and the World Health Organisation. The main objective of the round-table was to identify priorities in the areas of data collection, emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological support, social and economic reintegration including education, and legislation and policies for persons with disabilities, and to discuss the next steps in developing a national response to the issue of landmine victim assistance.

And on 24-25 September, the ICRC implementation workshop reaffirmed the importance of integrating victim assistance strategies in overall national health and social policies and strategies.

Several recommendations emerged from these workshops including a meeting of all relevant ministries and other key actors working in the disability sector with the aim of starting a process to develop a comprehensive plan of action to address the rights and needs of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities & to identify a Focal Person (most likely working at Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs) to coordinate the process of developing a plan of action for mine survivors and other persons with disabilities to meet the aims of the *Nairobi Action Plan* and Ethiopia's obligations as a State Party to the AP Mine Ban Convention; and, that the development of the comprehensive plan of action for victim assistance should be a complementary process to actions related to the ratification and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Other developments include:

- Ethiopia signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Consultative forums addressing the issue of accessibility for people with disabilities have been conducted;
- Disability-focused sensitization programs have been transmitted over the National Radio;
- The existing Developmental Social Welfare Policy is under revision to accommodate the issue of disability and rehabilitation adequately;
- The Right to Employment for people with disabilities, Proclamation No.101/1994, has been revised;
- The National Plan of Action concerning the rehabilitation of people with disabilities is under revision;
- The Ethiopian National Disability Action Network is established to enhance provision of rehabilitation services; and,
- A National ad-hoc committee is established to coordinate Community-Based Rehabilitation programs.

While some progress has been made on the disability issue more generally, reasons for our slow progress in developing a comprehensive plan of action to address Ethiopia's obligations under the AP Mine Ban Convention in relation to victim assistance include the lack of human resources to coordinate the inter-ministerial process necessary to produce sustainable outcomes. Therefore, my ministry will be investigating opportunities to secure funds for recruiting a specialist consultant to coordinate the collaborative efforts of relevant ministries and other key actors in the development of a comprehensive plan of action. We call on the international community to support these efforts.

Thank you.