

**Eight Meeting of the States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines
Dead Sea, 18-22 November 2007**

ICRC Statement on Victim Assistance

Thank you very much Mr. President.

On behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross, let me begin by thanking States Parties for have taken the floor and reported today on the status of implementation of their Victim Assistance Programmes. As mentioned in his opening speech by the Vice President of the ICRC, the ICRC is encouraged by the increasing focussed and nationally oriented work which has been done by States under the framework created by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance over the recent years. The development by affected States Parties of SMART victim assistance objectives and national plans pursuant to those objectives is great achievement.

The ICRC provides support in 17 countries, among the group of 24 States which have a significant number of mine victims. However, in most of these countries, we are not witnessing on the ground tangible improvements in the services available to mine survivors. They are not enjoying the type of benefits which they have the right to expect from this Convention. Despite progress made, most countries are still not able to cope with the needs of people with disabilities. These needs, which are based on basic human right, are often addressed by international or non-governmental organisations. We would like to emphasise that it is primarily the responsibility of States Parties to take ownership of services to people with disabilities, including mine victims.

It is crucial that affected countries increase their commitment to ensure that their existing victim assistance objectives and plans of actions are effectively implemented. In addition, more commitment is needed both by the affected countries and by the donor's community to ensure full integration in society of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors. We believe that the donor community should report more on the allocation of funds but also ensure that recipient countries provide more information on the extent to which those funds have advanced the enjoyment of rights of persons with disabilities.

The ICRC believes that much more needs to be done to monitor progress in the affected States of their plans of action. While plans of action have been developed by all affected countries, it is rare to find a monitoring system which can track progress in the 24 affected countries. Guidance of what a national implementation and monitoring framework might look like can be found in the newly adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, signed by 14 of the 24 States with most mine victims.

Under that Convention, States Parties shall designate:

1. Focal point(s) on disability to ensure that these issues are prioritised and leadership taken;
2. A coordination mechanism within government to facilitate related action in different sectors and at different levels;
3. States Parties shall also establish an independent national mechanism to promote, protect and monitor the implementation of that Convention.

The Convention also requires that these mechanisms be supported through the systematic participation and inclusion of people with disabilities. The countries that will become party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities should not try to duplicate these frameworks for the Mine Ban Treaty, but should use the framework established under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities. We urge the groups of 24 most affected countries under the Mine Ban Treaty to become party to the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities as soon as possible. For those who do not become party, we would nonetheless hope that they would be inspired by the mechanisms put under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities.

Thank you.