



8th Meeting of States Parties to the Mine ban Convention (8MSP)

18-22 November, Dead Sea, Jordan

Agenda item 11.d. “Assisting the victims”

Statement by Mr. Ahmed Gizo
Head, Middle East Regional Office, Amman
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Chair,

Thank you very much for giving the floor to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at this landmark meeting, marking the tenth anniversary year of the Ottawa Treaty.

We also appreciate the opportunity that this meeting of States party is providing to the participants in the Middle East. Participants have the chance to witness progress made in this region in the implementation of the Treaty and engage in more on-site discussion in various areas of land mine issues.

I will not repeat what others have said about the significance of the Treaty or the processes it has engaged. That is self-evident. I will, however, say that the Red Cross Red Crescent movement has played an active role and inspired a momentum for the adoption of Ottawa Treaty on banning of the anti-personnel landmines.

The National Societies use the Treaty, and its spirit, in their advocacy with governments and – perhaps even more importantly – in their work with the people of their countries. As community-based organisations, they gain insights into the needs of people which immediately translate into programs bringing assistance and support to the survivors of landmines where needed in the world.

Our worldwide network of National Societies counts almost 100 million volunteers and staff. Their contribution to victims of anti-personnel landmines comes forward in many forms. It includes support for the work of the Societies in countries directly affected, and the work of those directly affected Societies working with their own communities.

We need fresh commitments of support for this work. We find, to our dismay, that as demining proceeds successfully, support for the victims is sometimes moved to other budgets and the resources provided to people whose lives, families and communities have been ruined diminishes.

The injuries and disabilities caused by landmines require long-term health and care programming directed for the survivors’ rehabilitation. National Societies in mine-infested countries are providing support. Their programmes however, are too often not able to draw enough attention from the national governments and wider donor community. We want to see much stronger long-term program commitments from national governments in terms of mobilizing and allocating the necessary resources to support the mine action activities in general and the mine victims in particular.

It should be provided through national mechanisms including the Red Cross or Red Crescent Society, not just because of their expertise and their commitment to the impartiality and humanity within our Fundamental Principles but because their membership of the worldwide Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement gives them a unique opportunity to absorb and deploy best practice and the expertise of others.

In this short statement, I will offer three brief examples of what this means in practice:

- Last autumn right after 7MSP in Geneva, the Belgian Red Cross and the Netherlands Red Cross organised a major fund-raising campaign on the landmine issue in association with local radio stations. The campaign reached out to the population to raise awareness in the area relating to landmines. As the result about 5 million euro was raised and contributed to the ICRC's 2007 mine action appeal. (Relevant to "Cooperation and Assistance" of the Nairobi Action Plan (2005-2009), Action #43)
- Apart from providing direct assistance to the survivors, many NS, such as Colombia, Finland, Poland, Slovakia and UK, are also engaged to promote adherence to and national implementation of the Convention. Some, such as Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and France, participate in the policy-making level in the development of national policies or laws in this area, including through participation in national commissions on anti-personnel mines. (Relevant to NAP Action #8)
- I have also the honour to share with you the progress made by the Jordan Red Crescent in the area of mine risk education. Landmine's socio-economic impact on a society is tremendous. To reduce the impact and the number of unnecessary injuries and deaths, the Jordan Red Crescent continues carry out its mines awareness program, in cooperation with ICRC. Apart from traditional awareness raising activities, such as lectures, sketch plays, workshops and exhibitions, field visits with population directly concerned, such as farmers, shepherds and nomads are also organised to promote safer practices. Total number of beneficiaries in only three of eight provinces prioritised for awareness-raising – Ajloun, Al-Tafileh, and Almafraq – exceeded 10'000 in 2006.

Chair,

In the interests of saving time, my delegation has submitted a written text as our contribution to the general debate at this conference. I will, however, pick up one point here.

The work of the IFRC and National Societies to assist the victims of anti-personnel mines will move to a new level, we expect, when the recently-adopted Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities enters into force and its implementing Committee is created.

We expect National Societies, when they work to provide their governments with information on the needs of persons with disabilities, also to highlight the needs of mine victims.

We also expect that the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities will accept the spirit of the Ottawa Treaty's provisions when taking up the challenge to pay special attention to the situation of persons or communities disabled by land-mines. The IFRC stands ready to assist this process, with resources enriched by the exchange which this important Conference has hosted.

Thank you.