

## **8MSP Norwegian intervention on Victim Assistance**

Your Royal Highness, Mr. President

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to say something about one of the most important areas of the Mine Ban Convention ; assistance to the mine survivors.

In accordance with the Mine Ban Convention, the main responsibility for assisting mine survivors lies with the national authorities, but also other state parties have obligations towards mine survivors. Norway will continue to support the national authorities in their endeavours to fulfil their obligations in this field. The only way to secure good and long term programmes for rehabilitation and reintegration of people with disabilities, including mine survivors, is to integrate these programmes into long term development plans. Mine survivors have to be involved in making these plans. The aim must be to have them **reintegrated** into the society, as full, active and equal participants in the community.

We know that there is a risk that such programmes may disappear in the discussion on the use of scarce resources in a situation with a lot of needs. We, both mine affected governments and donor governments, must secure that assistance to mine survivors does not disappear when development priorities are being made. All States Parties, be it mine affected countries or donors, have obligations under the convention to assist mine survivors. With the new Convention for the rights of Persons with Disabilities, we hope that the efforts to meet the needs of mine survivors and others with disabilities will be strengthened and more visible. We believe and hope that there will be synergies between the two conventions that will empower the 650 million persons with disabilities in the world. More than 85 countries have signed the new convention. Norway will encourage and work for more countries to sign and fulfil their obligations to secure disabled persons a dignified and normal life.

The implementation of the Mine Ban Convention depends on national responsibilities on the legal side, both on establishing laws and regulations and implementing them. Furthermore, the obligations in the Mine Ban Convention, fortified by the Convention for the rights of Person with Disabilities, bring challenges, both of a practical and administrative character. There is a need for capacity building of staff at all levels in the bureaucracy as well as in the social and educational sector. This must be given priority. In these efforts, the competence and expertise in the civil society both at the national and local level, should be drawn upon.

Experience shows that there is a lot to achieve with better cooperation, coordination and information sharing between the different actors at local and national level.

Mr. President,

Norway will continue to put physical, psycho-social and socioeconomic **reintegration** of mine survivors and other people with disabilities in society on the agenda in our discussion with partners. Norway's direct support to mine survivors will be channelled through NGOs, the victims' own organisations such as The Landmine Survivors Network, through the Red Cross Movement and the UN system. Through bilateral development cooperation programmes in sectors as education, health, micro-financing and others, we also reach out to these target groups. We also have earmarked support to the ISUs Victim Assistance work. In 2005, Norway and Nicaragua, as co-chairs of the standing committee on Victim Assistance, prepared a questionnaire to assist relevant State Parties in preparing victim assistance objectives. We would like to remind State Parties of this tool which has been further developed over the last two years.

Mr. President.

Mine survivors are both men and women. Norway would like to stress the importance of including gender sensitivity in all aspects of mine actions, also in mine survivor's assistance. There is an increasing awareness and knowledge of the variety of challenges women are exposed to - as mine survivors; as mothers, wives or relatives of people killed or injured by mines and at the same time they may be the local capacity in basic health supply, in education and children's' up-bringing and in general awareness work. Norway is convinced that a gender-sensitive approach in mine victim's assistance will enhance both effectiveness and efficiency.

Thank you, Mr President