



9th 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 (Geneva, 24-28 November)

Agenda item 12.d. “Assisting the Victims”

Statement by Mr Lim Chhiv

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Cambodian Red Cross Society

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Chair,

Thank you for giving me the floor to speak on behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

We are, as you know, here today in our capacity as an international organisation, but we speak with the experience of our community base everywhere in the world. Our intention is to provide an update on the progress made by our National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in assisting the population affected by landmines, and through that to mark out some considerations which we see as essential points for consideration at the 2nd Review Conference.

It is vital to maintain momentum in the work against anti-personnel mines.

They are not “yesterday’s issue”. Coming from Cambodia, I know. This is also true in many other parts of the world.

We need fresh commitments of support for the work we and our partner organisations are doing at the community level.

We now need to see Governments and others meet and strengthen their existing commitments. Much has happened in other areas of international commitment to support the most vulnerable and this experience should also be applied to the victims of land mines.

Briefly, this includes the very important attention which is being given to community participation in development and humanitarian work in support of the Millennium Development Goals. It also includes the increasing attention being paid to community resources, especially volunteers, in these humanitarian and development contexts.

And, crucially, it includes the action of Governments and National Societies together at the 30th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent in November 2007 when they adopted a resolution on the auxiliary partnership of National Societies with the public authorities of their countries, at all levels.

Since the signing of the Convention in 1997, the National Societies, as auxiliaries to their public authorities and with the active support of IFRC and the ICRC, have been supporting their State Party partners in providing assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs (Article 6 Paragraph 3).

International cooperation is also key to addressing these challenges. Apart from working together with State Parties and other agencies such as UNICEF and Handicap International, the collaboration within the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is also crucial.

This conference has seen some fine examples of international cooperation, including through the excellent workshops sponsored by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance. We, through our Psycho-Social Support centre, have offered detailed examples of experience there, but I will now mention some of the programs run by National Societies.

Facing the problem of re-emergence of mines, the **Colombian Red Cross Society** remains engaged in prevention and preparedness relating to conflict and “mine accidents”. The engagement is with focus on inter-agency cooperation and linkage with other humanitarian programs, with a holistic approach.

With support from the Spanish Red Cross and Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development (AECID), the Colombian Red Cross runs programs (800,000 USD to June 2009) with the civil population in 6 departments of the country, with a broad range of activities:

- ✓ Advocacy (teachers and community leaders)
- ✓ Psychosocial support with a right-based approach
- ✓ Accompany during medical treatment
- ✓ 3 months support with basic food and non-food aid items, if required
- ✓ Financial support for transport & accommodation cost, including 1 accompanying person, and cost of drugs not covered by the State.
- ✓ As last resort, provide prosthetic limbs, and
- ✓ Facilitation of meetings and forming of self-help groups.

The Colombian Red Cross, as many of you know, is a key stakeholder in the country supporting the public authorities to reduce the suffering of victims through the provision of a wide range of health and care services, training and informal education programs.

Chair,

I have also the honour to share with you the progress made by my National Society, the **Cambodian Red Cross**.

Cambodia has one of the highest numbers of landmines and unexploded devices in the world. Although progress has been made and the number of the victims has decreased since 1997, landmines are still affecting its people, in particular those living in rural areas. According to Cambodia Mine/UXO Victim Information System (CMVIS), from 2006 to July 2008, 1040 people were killed or injured as a result of 605 accidents.

The **Cambodian Red Cross Society**, as auxiliary to the local authorities, with their trained volunteers has been active for over a decade providing support to the population injured by landmines and other explosive remnants of war without discrimination.

In 2007, the Cambodian Red Cross, with financial and technical support from the Australian Red Cross, developed the Community Based Mine Action Program Strategic Plan (CBMAP) for the period 2007-2012. This Plan brings together the CRC’s Mine Risk Education and Mine Risk Reduction with its 846 trained volunteers (MRER), along with the Cambodia Mine/UXO Victim Information System (CMVIS), under a single programmatic “umbrella”.

Chair,

Assistance to landmine survivors cannot be sustainable if it is not provided for the long term and in a continuous way. Such supporting programs should be placed in the broader context of development

and must be maintained long after the completion of implementation of other Convention aims. We pay tribute to the work of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining for its leadership in this field, and for the inspiration it has provided to so many delegates at this conference.

We, however, have seen that as demining proceeds successfully, the programs lose their media focus and with that, sadly, the attention of much of the donor community. As a consequence, support for the health and care and the rehabilitation of the survivors have been moved to other budgets, or simply cut down. Facing the current financial crisis, we are seriously concerned that resources will be further diminished.

As I already stressed, **we need fresh commitments of support to survivors** and sincerely hope that the 2nd Review Conference will see all stakeholders bringing their achievements to the attention of States, and that the result will be the renewal of Nairobi Action Plan commitments to care, rehabilitation and reintegration.

And that this will be followed by the provision of the necessary resources and support to the stakeholders.

The IFRC will prioritise this issue in the period ahead, and we look forward to participants in this important conference taking home our message about the need for sustained program support and ensuring that it is fully respected in relevant budgetary and other processes.

Thank you.