



THE UNITED NATIONS MINE ACTION

Statement of the United Nations Mine Action Team to the 9th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty (Geneva, 24-28 November 2008)

Victim assistance (Actions # 29-39 of the Nairobi Action Plan)

During the course of 2008, the United Nations Mine Action Team supported victim assistance activities in a number of countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan. In Afghanistan, the UN has actively supported capacity development and mainstreaming of disability issues within key Government Ministries, and advocacy for the signature of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Mine victims in Iraq, especially outside of Iraqi Kurdistan, require urgent assistance. A joint pilot initiative of the Ministry of Health and UN Nations/Centre for Disease Control for injury surveillance is ongoing with the intention of extending these services to the whole country.

The United Nations Mine Action Team continued to assist Sudan to further implement the National Strategic Framework and Work Plan for Victim Assistance, by supporting data collection, needs assessment and pilot projects for physical rehabilitation and vocational training. UNMAS, in collaboration with UNDP, UNICEF, UNOPS and Sudanese authorities, has organized this week in the Palais des Nations a photo exhibition entitled “Rebuilding the lives of landmine survivors in Sudan”.

We wish to note that 26% percent of the projects in the 2009 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects are dedicated to victim assistance programmes – the highest percentage to date. Unfortunately we note that only 8% percent of 2008 projects received funding and would therefore encourage those in a position to do so to support survivor assistance initiatives.

We continue to advocate for the universalization of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by countries affected by mines and explosive remnants of war and we always highlight the way in which this new treaty supplements the victim assistance provisions of the APMBT.

To this end, the UN and Survivor Corps have developed a toolkit on the CRPD to support the ratification and implementation of the Convention in affected countries. The tool kit was also presented at the Annual International Meeting of Mine Action Programme Directors and UN Advisors.