

**Statement by the Committee on Victim Assistance (VA) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
To the Twenty-third session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**

Delivered by the Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the Conference on Disarmament
on behalf of the VA Committee*

17 August 2020

I am honoured to address you in my capacity of Chair of the [Committee on Victim Assistance](#) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention which includes Chile, Sweden, Thailand and my own country Italy.

The Convention is an international humanitarian disarmament instrument that has been acceded to by 164 States and is the cornerstone of the international effort to end the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines, weapons that are indiscriminate and continue claiming casualties even decades after conflicts have ended. They cause traumatic injuries and threaten “the right to life” in affected countries.

The Convention was the first disarmament instrument to include provisions for support to victims/survivors. Article 6.3 contributes to protecting the rights of the individuals injured by anti-personnel mines as well as affected families and communities.

Over the past two years, the [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) has recommended the development of a General Comment on [Article 11 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#).

We understand that the CRPD Committee has not been in a position to prioritise the development of a General Comment on Article 11, but we hope that it will be considered in the near future as it would support States and organisations to better understand the important linkages in our work and strengthen synergies between International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Human Rights Law (IHRL) with regards to the rights of persons with disabilities prior, during and after situations of risks and emergencies.

We are encouraged by the adoption, last year, of the [UN Security Council Resolution 2475](#) as well as the launch of the [Guidelines on the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action](#).

The Resolution and the Guidelines should lead to an increased awareness on the urgency and importance of the safety and protection of persons with disabilities in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

We recognise the significance of the [UN Disability Inclusion Strategy](#) which provides the foundation for the UN to lead by example in ensuring full inclusion of persons with disabilities – including landmine survivors – in its policies and programmes.

In December 2019, the Convention's States Parties adopted the five-year [Oslo Action Plan](#) which provides a tool for States Parties in the implementation of the provisions of the Convention.

The *Oslo Action Plan* reiterates States Parties' commitments to respond to the needs of mine victims and to protect their rights. It further aligns mine action humanitarian efforts with the CRPD.

The Plan calls for disability inclusive efforts in risk education, policies, planning, monitoring and reporting. It also stresses the need to ensure “the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination.”

I would like to draw your attention to the Plan's [Action 40](#) which requires States Parties to,

“ensure that relevant national humanitarian response and preparedness plans provide for the safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters, in line with relevant international humanitarian and human rights law and international guidelines.”

This commitment mirrors [Article 11 of the CRPD](#), further complementing safety and protection efforts of persons with disabilities including landmine survivors in situation of risks and humanitarian emergencies.

We are grateful for the collaboration with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. I would like to thank you, Chairperson Basharu, for your contribution to [Fostering Partnerships](#). The fostering of partnerships was the theme of this global conference on victim assistance and disability rights which brought together over 180 experts from 41 States.

The conference took place in September 2019 in Jordan providing a unique opportunity for representatives of landmine affected countries, civil society and other stakeholders to share lessons learnt and best practices in meeting the needs of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities.

The conference, sponsored by the European Union, called for enhanced integration of victim assistance into broader disability, human rights, development and poverty reduction frameworks. The *Fostering Partnerships Chair's Report* is available on the Convention's website. Copies can be made available by contacting the Implementation Support Unit of the AP Mine Ban Convention. [Ed note: [find the report in four languages here](#)]

During the Convention's Intersessional Meetings held on 30 June – 2 July 2020, the Committee organized a panel discussion on [Victim Assistance, Safety and Protection in Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies](#). The Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Colombia, the Iraqi Alliance of Disability Organization, the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and Handicap International participated in what amounted to the first effort of the VA Committee to spread awareness of the new action enshrined in the *Oslo Action Plan*.

The VA Committee's work surrounds support to the Convention's [30 States Parties that have reported having responsibility for a significant number of landmine survivors](#)¹. Many of these States have reported on their efforts towards inclusion of landmine survivors in broader national frameworks. The Convention's VA Committee encourages the CRPD Committee to consider the situation of landmine survivors in these 30 States in its deliberations.

This (2020) is an important year for the Convention as it is the first of implementation of the *Oslo Action Plan*. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other partners, especially during the Victim Assistance Experts Meeting that we are planning to convene on the margins of the [Eighteenth Meeting of States Parties](#) in November 2020 in Geneva. The Experts Meeting will provide an opportunity for continued dialogue, and exchange of experiences and best practices among national authorities with responsibility for survivor assistance.

Before closing, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Catherine L. Pedreros Puentes from the Secretariat of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities for briefing our Committee in January during our annual retreat.

In conclusion, I would like to assure you that we will continue to enhance synergies with CRPD frameworks and would like to encourage the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to make sure landmine survivors are included in relevant policies and programmes of the CRPD.

Thank you.

*Check against delivery

¹ Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Jordan, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, Yemen and Zimbabwe.