



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction

Oslo, Norway

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Statement under Agenda Item 7 (d): Victim Assistance

Mr. President,¹

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the 12 members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action.²

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“Victim rights”.

“Assistance to survivors of explosive incidents”.

This matter is about “people”; real people with injuries, visible or not; women, men, children who will forever be shaken by nightmares and lose sleep.

¹ H.E. Hans Brattskar, Ambassador of Norway to the UN in Geneva.

² The United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes are: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.



It is about prevention and protection; people whose countries bear the primary responsibility to care for them and people who must have access to quality of services, respect and employment.

It is about generations lost for lack of support; it is about gender-based and other violent behaviors which will emerge when psycho-trauma is not addressed right away.

When elaborating the UN policy on victim assistance or coordinating the Mine Action sub-cluster, the UN faced the challenge posed by the multi-sectoral character of victim assistance many components: emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological and psycho-social support, inclusive education, social and economic inclusion, and for all this to be effectively planned, programmed and budgeted, data collection, information management and adequate legislation must be acted upon.

At national and global level, the United Nations encourages stronger synergies and coordination between the mine action sector and social services, health, education, disability, just to name a few.

It is critical for States Parties to adopt the Oslo Action Plan and, most importantly, to implement their obligations and commitment to “ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination”. The necessary legal instruments exist. States parties must comply with their obligation under Article 6 (c)

From the United Nations practitioners’ perspective:



- Victim assistance must be systematically considered, integrated in Humanitarian Response Plans and **funded**.
- For planning and programming to be effective, data sharing, data collection and information management are critical.
- Contingent upon funding availability, UNMAS plans to reinforce, for the benefit of the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, a Monitoring and Evaluation capacity also including risk management.
- Whilst the United Nations supports the agenda on “inclusion of people with disabilities”, assistance to victims of explosive ordnance cannot wait.
- Under its coordination for the Mine Action Area of Responsibility, together with *Humanity & Inclusion*, closer synergies between Mine Action, Child Protection, and the Education Cluster aim at increasing the survival rate of children survivors of mines or explosive remnant of war.
- Victim Assistance is featured high on the UN Mine Action Strategy; one of the priorities is “referral mechanisms” to ensure survivors’ access to a full range of specialized support available. The United Nations already has them in Darfur, Mali, Yemen, Tajikistan, the Occupied Palestinian Territories, amongst others.

The inclusion of victims in national disability strategies and case management systems is vital to strengthen the long-term comprehensive support required by survivors. Cambodia has done it with UNDP support. Afghanistan is doing it with UNMAS support, through an online system to monitor the delivery of assistance to persons with disabilities including victims of explosive ordnance.



Too many victims bleed to death. State Parties need to focus greater attention on first aid, medical evacuation, trauma care and peer support. Injury surveillance systems must be strengthened to identify risk factors and know populations at risk.

Excellencies,

On International mine awareness day 2019, the UN Secretary General launched UNMAS ‘Safe Ground’ campaign aimed at “turning minefields into playing fields” and raising awareness and funds in support of Victim Assistance.

This campaign is to be carried out by all mine action stakeholders according to their means and capacities. Take it worldwide and please make sure that next year, we all report to survivors and affected communities that progress is being made on this humanity matter.