

## **2012 Inter-sessional Meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

### **Statement of the International Committee of the Red Cross on International Cooperation and Assistance**

17 April 2012

Mr. Chairman,

As has been stressed many times assistance and cooperation is one of the important features of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The provision is significant as it represents a shared commitment spread among all States Parties to secure the Convention's full implementation.

One of the important aspects of the Convention's provisions in this area is that it identifies a role for international and non-governmental organizations. Technical, material and financial assistance from States Parties can be channelled into the activities of such organizations if States Parties choose to do so. Paragraph 7 of Article 6 is the most specific in this regard as it stipulates that assistance for the implementation of the Convention's victim assistance obligations may be provided through the United Nations system, international, regional or national organizations, non-governmental organizations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, national red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Federation. A similar provision is also found in the AP Mine Ban Convention.

A number of CCM States Parties, both here at the intersessionals and the Meetings of States Parties, have highlighted the extent to which they contribute funds to ICRC programs to help lessen the impact of mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. Much of this funding is in response to the ICRC's Special Appeal on Mine Action. This annual appeal seeks financial support for ICRC programs operated by its delegations in war-affected countries to reduce the impact of these weapons on civilians.

As a result of its appeal in 2011, the ICRC received nearly 13 million Swiss Francs. This allowed us to undertake mine action projects in a number of States. This includes projects in countries affected by cluster munitions, such as Afghanistan, Cambodia, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Libya, Sudan and the region of Western Sahara. Of this 13 million Swiss francs, nearly 10.5 million Sfr came from government donors, specifically of Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, The Holy See, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Norway and Slovenia); 670,000 Sfr came from National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (Japan, S. Korea and Norway) and nearly 1.5 million from individual donors and organizations.

These funds helped the ICRC conduct a range of action activities. This includes preventative action in response to the presence of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. By preventative action we mean activities such as the collection of data on incidents and victims, risk reduction, risk education and clearance. In 2011, the ICRC implemented one or more of these activities in 27 countries or contexts, including cluster munition affected countries such as Iraq and Libya. In many of these contexts, the work was implemented by National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies with technical and financial support from the ICRC.

The largest part of the funds raised by the appeal have gone to the ICRC's rehabilitation services, which, in 2011, produced more than 7,000 prostheses and orthoses for mine, cluster munition and ERW victims. In addition, the ICRC works to ensure that survivors have access to further services in the rehabilitation chain, in particular socio-economic services. In many

countries it works with networks established by local and international organizations to facilitate job placement, specialized education, vocational training and micro-credits.

It should be noted that the ICRC's Special Fund for the Disabled also provides or assists rehabilitation services in two of the countries most heavily contaminated with cluster munitions, specifically Laos and Vietnam. The SFD was established to help smooth the transition when the government or local institutions take over full responsibility for maintaining formerly ICRC-assisted rehabilitation centres. It also supports centres that have not been assisted by the ICRC, by providing ICRC technology and technical expertise to improve the quality and sustainability of rehabilitation services in low-income countries.

The point of this intervention is not to detail ICRC activities in countries affected by cluster munitions, mines and other explosive remnants of war. Rather it is intended to provide a more detailed indication on how the assistance and cooperation foreseen by the Convention on Cluster Munitions is being applied and manifesting itself in affected countries through the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. Further information on the ICRC's activities can be found in the 2011 ICRC Special Report on Mine Action.

In closing Mr. Chairman, it is the view of the ICRC that the implementation of the assistance and cooperation provisions of the Convention on Cluster Munitions has been encouraging and allowed organizations, such as ours, to continue its operational activities to address the consequences of cluster munitions and other similar weapons. We stress, however, that fully achieving the objectives of the Convention will require increased capacity and resources targeted to deal with the problems cause by cluster munitions, particularly in the areas of clearance and victim assistance. The challenges will be greatest in those countries where the level of contamination is serious and where the number of victims is high. Luckily, only a few countries are so severely affected and others face a localised or residual problem. With continued and concerted effort, we believe that the challenges in these countries can be readily overcome and that the goals of the Convention can become a reality.