Victim assistance (chaired by Austria and Bosnia & Herzegovina)

Lebanon Statement on Victim Assistance

Civil Society – Habbouba

Article 5 of the CCM - Victim assistance

Thank you Mr. /Madame President,

On behalf of the Lebanese delegation, allow me to begin the statement by thanking Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina for assuming the responsibility of coordinating VA under the CCM, and also for their active roles within the CCM Coordination Committee and their support to the Presidency.

Lebanon is heavily affected by cluster munitions. The legacy of the 2006 war on Lebanon has led to more than 409 victims. These were 384 males and 25 females mostly aged 19 years and above with children less than 18 years making 30% of the total victims.

The LMAC manages and coordinates the implementation of mine victim assistance in Lebanon, through the MVA National Steering Committee that includes both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

MVA in Lebanon is either provided directly by the Government (Ministry of Public Health or of Social Affairs) or by non-governmental organizations (local or international). Funding of local NGOs working on MVA is through international NGOs, donor countries or the Lebanese government.

It should be noted that the MVA sector suffers from severe lack of funding, though recently the Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed LMAC that China and Spain would be providing MVA funding and Austria would be providing funding through the UN.

In Lebanon, assistance is provided using a right based approach and in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law with no discrimination at all. Usually, assistance is age and gender-sensitive and includes medical care, rehabilitation and psychosocial support as well as social and economic inclusion.

Advocacy and lobbying efforts by civil society in Lebanon led to the establishment of the National Law (220/2000) on the rights of persons with disabilities and efforts are ongoing to enforce it. To note, Lebanon has been very active in the process leading to the development of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Lebanon has signed it but not yet ratified.

Advocacy and lobbying efforts are continuing for the purpose of mobilizing national and international funding and resources for MVA.
A survey of landmine and cluster bomb victims has been carried out in Lebanon since 1998; however due to lack of funding, the data has not been updated since 2010.

The NPA and LMAC have recently initiated an assessment for MVA in Lebanon. I think the international expert just returned from Lebanon and we are awaiting the findings. This needs assessment is in line with the Lebanon National Strategy 2011-2020 that requires a regular needs assessment of cluster munitions victims.

In accordance with this strategy, a national MVA plan is in place with a provisional budget. Nonetheless, we await the results of the needs assessment to have a clearer idea about activities so as to specify the roles and contributions of relevant actors.

Important to note are the advocacy efforts of the civil society organizations with the Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon that resulted in a government funded Mine Victim Assistance Program established at the Ministry of Social Affairs.

This is the result of coordination and heavy advocacy work led by the civil society in Lebanon with endorsement and support from the Lebanon Mine Action Center. The collaboration between concerned non-governmental organizations and the government has been instrumental for the provision of victim assistance in Lebanon. Again, victim assistance as it is in Lebanon is based on contracts and agreements done by the concerned ministries to the NGOs. For instance, prosthetic limbs are supplied by NGOs through contracts and agreements by the Ministry of Public Health. Socioeconomic activities are supplied through contracts and agreements by the Ministry of Social Affairs. To summarize, we could say that MVA in Lebanon is being under trial to be integrated in existing coordination mechanisms. Yet, lots of work remains to be done in this regard, but at least we have started.

As for MRE – LMAC: Colonel Marie Abdel Massih

The LMAC manages and coordinates the implementation of mine risk reduction education in Lebanon, through the MRE National Steering Committee that groups governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Since the 2MSP in Lebanon, MRE activities were limited to public information dissemination through TV interviews or to refresher school activities in certain areas in the South. However, a national mine awareness week is planned on April 23-27, 2012. It includes face to face interventions, games, and school based activities in addition to public activities. MRE has been integrated in the national school health curriculum. More advocacy work is being undertaken in order to integrate it in the public education curriculum.