

CMC Statement on Victim Assistance
Second Meeting of States Parties, Convention on Cluster Munitions
Beirut, Lebanon
15 September 2011



Good morning/afternoon Excellencies, delegates and colleagues. My name is Aynalem Zenebe. I am a survivor of cluster munitions and a representative of cluster munition victims in my community in the town of Mekele, Ethiopia. I was injured during cluster munition strikes when I was a young girl. I had to have several prostheses as my legs grew, and I was able to have access to them in Mekele. However, many cluster munitions victims do not have rehabilitation centers close. I worked hard to be able to study business administration. Many survivors around the world still wait for the chance to study. Later, to try to find a way to get decent work, I had to move far away from my home and family in Mekele, travelling for many hours by bus. And it became much harder to go to the prosthetics and rehabilitation center once I moved away from home. I still am not able to properly earn a living like so many other cluster munition victims in too many countries.

Cluster munition victims, like me, want the same opportunities as everyone to support families, work, and be a part of life in our communities.

A year ago, States Parties said that they would start to take action right away to make more services available, and to have more services reach survivors in remote and rural areas. All countries should do the same, including those yet to join the Convention. But this did not happen in the first year of the Vientiane Action Plan as promised. Survivors want to know what are your plans to change this? Many cluster munition victims in 29 countries, including the States Parties, are still without access to healthcare, rehabilitation, jobs and other forms of victim assistance in the communities they live in. The Cluster Munition Monitor reports on what has been done so far to fulfill this and other obligations to victim assistance. Many country profiles are online already. An overview will be out in November.

Over the next year, States Parties have to lead the way by doing more:

- Act now so that survivors have the rehabilitation they need, when and where they need it.
- Make sure rehabilitation centers can be reached from rural areas and that there are ramps so we can get in.
- Make sure that prosthetics and wheelchairs work in rural areas.
- Act now to make schools and all types of educational facilities open their doors to us, and other persons with disabilities.

- Make sure that all cluster munition victims have this opportunity.
- Take actions to bring skills training to areas where survivors are.
- Make sure we have a chance to get jobs and use our skills.
- Plan, by looking from the view of a survivor: is there a bus I can get on to go to work? Can I get a micro-loan as a person with disability in a remote place? Will I have to work in a building with no lift if I get a job in a city?
- Make sure that everyone knows our rights, especially people providing services.

States may not know how to make all this possible, or where to start. We offer these simple suggestions for states to act on their duties:

1. Make this a priority! Dedicate a part of the national budget to solutions.
2. Ask for help! The Convention commits other States Parties to provide assistance, both money and skills. Find out what your country needs and ask for it. If you are from a state able to give funding, put people first.
3. Include cluster munition victims and all survivors in this work! We know what we need and we have experience to share. Listen and use of our experience; it is our right, your promise, and the only way forward.
4. Follow the Convention and the Vientiane Action Plan! These documents identify many concrete steps to take to ensure services are available to all in a way that meets the needs of cluster munition victims, so respect them fully.

We count on you to take these steps so that the promise of this Convention is realized for all cluster munition victims. We have heard many of you speak of your interest and commitment to this central part of the Convention. This is a start, but the most important thing is acting.

Thank you.