



"Supporting mine victims and building resilience of local communities"

Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
(Oslo, 11-14 September 2011)

Agenda item 10.c.: (c) Consideration of matters pertaining to victim assistance
in accordance with Article 5

Statement by
Mrs Åsne Havelid
Secretary General of the Norwegian Red Cross

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Mr President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) thanks you for the floor. We appreciate the MSP taking place in Oslo, a place where many of our National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies have engaged in the process and contributed to the adoption of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Mr President,

For the IFRC, this Convention is first and foremost about people, and not a type of weapon. It is about providing the protection all people are - or should be - entitled to. And it is about building resilience of local communities.

In the Red Cross Red Crescent's work to overcome the humanitarian consequences of weapon contamination we build resilience through several methods. Examples range from providing micro credit to victims of weapons in Cambodia to running physical rehabilitation centers in Somalia; from giving safe behavior workshops and care for victims in Colombia to running an ambulance service in Lebanon. Working in accordance with our seven principles, particularly the principles of impartiality, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies often have access to victims in areas not accessible to other actors, providing much needed assistance under difficult circumstances.

Mr President,

As stated in its Strategy 2020 one of the strategic aims of the IFRC is to promote social inclusion. This is especially important for the most vulnerable people in our society. Persons with disabilities, such as victims of weapon contamination, are usually among the most vulnerable in a society. In addition to not receiving healthcare due to insufficient health facilities and social safety nets, these people often have to deal with stigmas and discrimination, as well as reduced economic prospects. Fulfilling the obligations of article 5 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and furthermore, achieving universal accession to and implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), can and will help overcome some of these limitations for victims of weapon contamination.

Mr President,

Red Cross Red Crescent National Societies believe the Convention on Cluster Munitions has saved lives and limbs of countless civilians. We have much to learn from this Convention when we face other humanitarian challenges in today's and tomorrow's conflicts.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that the IFRC believes this convention and its implementation is not about weapons, it is about people and their communities. States and organizations such as Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies share a responsibility to do all we can to ensure that victims of these weapons have access to the assistance they need and that their communities receive support in order to increase resilience. By working together we will be able to live up to the promise we have given to the victims through the Convention and contribute to the sustainable development of their communities.

Thank you for your attention.