

Convention on Cluster Munitions: Fourth Meeting of States Parties

Statement by Norway on Victim Assistance

Thank you, Madam President,

Let me also thank the Coordinators of the Working Group on Victim Assistance, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Afghanistan, for their efforts throughout the last year, and for their report on the status of the implementation of Article 5.

Norway considers the legally binding obligation for States parties to provide for the medical, psychological, economic and social wellbeing of victims of cluster munitions, as a fundamental and ground-breaking part of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The comprehensive definition of victims contained in Article 2, and the clear set of obligations enumerated in Articles 5 and 6, have contributed to strengthening international practice on the issue of victim assistance, and have helped raise the visibility of survivors and affected communities. These obligations have also helped clarify a differentiated set of responsibilities. Article 5 of the CCM re-affirms the principle that each State holds the primary responsibility for the well-being of its citizens, while Article 6 commits donors and others to support the efforts of affected States to that end.

As stated at the Intersessional Meeting in April, Norway is concerned that the effective realisation of the victim assistance provisions will prove difficult, unless greater emphasis is placed on situating our efforts in the context of other initiatives and programmes that assist victims of violence; that promotes the rights of all persons with disabilities; that informs labour market standards; and that addresses gaps in the provision of health services – all based on the principle of non-discrimination.

Norway has, for that reason, made a special effort to promote the inclusion of victims of cluster munitions and armed violence in fora outside this Convention and let me give you some examples.

- Norway has recently published a document outlining our international work to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Humanitarian efforts, including support to victims of cluster munitions and landmines, is one of four identified priority areas.
- We have tried to include an explicit reference to victims of armed violence in the Outcome Document of the High-Level Meeting on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals for persons with disabilities that will take place in New York in two weeks' time.
- We raised the issue of victims of landmines and cluster munitions in the meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in June, as well as in several side-events.
- In March this year, we raised the experience of cluster munition victims and mine victims in the thematic debate on persons with disabilities and employment in the Human Rights Council.

- We have also worked through our membership in the boards of various UN entities to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities in their strategic plans.
- In addition, we support the development of a Model Disability Survey by the World Health Organisation, the World Bank and a broad range of stakeholders. An important objective for us would be to ensure that the survey is inclusive and attentive to the situation of mine and cluster munition victims, recognising that the disaggregation of data is essential both for designing and executing programmes and for reporting purposes.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions commits us to pursuing an extensive agenda on victim assistance. The amount of money earmarked for projects predominantly targeted at victims of cluster munitions is not a good indicator of the extent to which States engage with that agenda. In order to be effective, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and sustainable, any approach to victim assistance must involve existing national disability, development, public health and human rights frameworks.

As a State party fully committed to its obligations under Article 6 of the CCM, Norway is therefore concerned that international assistance provided to affected states should include support to strengthen those frameworks. Norway will continue to provide funding for projects where victims of cluster munitions and landmines are the primary beneficiaries, on the condition that any services are made available to all with similar needs independent of the cause of the injury. But not least, we will maintain that a broad engagement with affected states on health, development and human rights is necessary to achieve the full realisation of the victim assistance provisions included in the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Thank you.