



Republic of Zambia

STATEMENT BY THE ZAMBIAN DELEGATION TO THE FOURTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS, 9TH TO 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2013

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

MR. PRESIDENT, DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Zambia is pleased to hear that many States Parties and signatories to the Convention on Cluster Munitions have taken steps to meet their obligations with regards to victim assistance and to implement relevant points contained in the Vientiane Action Plan. While such steps are important, Zambia is concerned because information on the ground indicates that much more needs to be done to provide adequate response to the needs and to fulfill the rights of survivors and victims.

Zambia acknowledges the assistance of Cooperating Partners to develop and implement Victim Assistance policies and programmes, including establishing and improving data collection mechanisms; supporting coordination and strategy development; and facilitating the integration of the needs of landmines and cluster munitions survivors into broader health and social services. Further, Zambia is satisfied with Cooperating Partners' continued support and promotion and application of an age and gender sensitive approach in all aspects of their work.

MR. PRESIDENT

Zambia supports the views expressed in the Lusaka Progress Report that there is need to ensure that victim assistance activities are based on the needs and priorities of those affected, and that resources are made available and used efficiently; to create sustainable services and programs, and to ensure that the lifelong needs of victims are met; to fully integrate Victim Assistance efforts with the wider agenda on development, disability and human rights and to make best use of opportunities that allow for a holistic approach that encompasses all victims of explosive remnants of war.

For instance, as the main international instrument to promote and protect the human rights of persons with disabilities, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) remains relevant to human rights instruments that States Parties to the CCM need to take into account when providing assistance to victims of cluster munitions. It is therefore implied that States Parties to the CCM which have also ratified the CRPD are under a legal obligation to implement article 5 of the CCM consistent with the CRPD.

MR. PRESIDENT

Zambia is alive to the fact that providing gender and age-appropriate assistance for the care, rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration of survivors requires predictable funding and long-term programmatic commitment. To this end, a dual approach is necessary – a shorter term targeted victim assistance programme to ensure that the specific rehabilitation and reintegration needs are met; and a longer term strategy to ensure that victim assistance is integrated into broader national health, social welfare, and other structures, services and policies. Above all, of particular concern is meeting the needs of children, whose physical, educational, social, and vocational requirements are dynamic.

Zambia notes with satisfaction the engagement of Cooperating Partners with States and others who are cooperating in areas of medical treatment, psychosocial support, vocational training, and creating income generating opportunities for victims. To ensure sustainable residual capacity of states beyond the completion of clearance or other obligations, Zambia is aware that Cooperating Partners are mainstreaming Victim Assistance into advocacy and policy work which is related to the broader issues of persons with disabilities agendas.

Further, Cooperating Partners support to national legislative frameworks, for example, integration of the support to victims into legislation on disabilities is contributing to the realization of a human rights-based approach.

However, Zambia would like to highlight that in many contexts data and information on the number, nature, and specific needs of survivors is missing or unreliable. This situation is compromising the planning, prioritization and implementation of victim assistance efforts. Zambia, therefore, believes that it is critical that States invest in establishing national data collection and surveillance systems that will inform and guide not only victim assistance programmes but mine action activities in general.

MR. PRESIDENT

In conclusion, Zambia is satisfied with the Cooperating Partners' continued willingness to provide assistance to States in developing and enhancing such data collection systems and other technical support other than victim assistance. To this end, Zambia would like to congratulate Cooperating Partners and urge them to maintain the same levels of commitment towards assisting States to achieve their obligations to victims.

Thank you.