



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration

Costa Rica

Cluster Munitions Convention

2 - 5 September 2014

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to present Afghanistan's progress towards its obligations under Article 5 of the CCM. The Afghan Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Disabled (MoLSAMD) is the focal point in Afghanistan for issues related to victim assistance and disability, but works closely with colleagues in other ministries and with national and international stakeholders. With the generous support of donors, we collaborate to meet the challenge of providing age-adequate and gender-sensitive assistance to survivors of mines, ERW and cluster munitions and other persons with disabilities through a holistic and integrated approach.

The Law on the Rights and Benefits of Persons with Disabilities focuses on issues of victim assistance and, in March 2013, a number of articles were amended to bring them more into line with the principles of the CRPD. There has since been an increase in the financial support granted to those with war-related disabilities, which includes the victims of cluster munitions, landmines and other ERW, from 1500 to 5000 Afghani per month. Other new laws within the health, education and gender sectors have also incorporated disability. In particular, the Electoral Law has further enshrined the political rights of persons with disabilities.

In April 2014, the MoLSAMD inaugurated the National Disability Institute to provide professional training and education on physical rehabilitation, hearing and visual impairments, advocacy and research activities. The MoLSAMD and other national and international agencies have also worked to raise awareness among Civilian Technical Assistance Program Advisors within ministries, UN agencies and government entities of how to include and mainstream disability into development and humanitarian activities.

To provide structural support to the disability agenda, both the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education have established specific departments for disability issues including the Disability and Rehabilitation Department (DRD) and the Inclusive Education Department respectively. Since 2007, they have provided a week of training on disability and rehabilitation

issues to around 2000 health staff in 20 provinces. DRD has developed a four year strategy on physical rehabilitation and disability.

To better support the inclusion of children with disabilities, the Ministry of Education has trained 4185 school teachers and 3819 children with disabilities and their parents since 2009 on inclusive education, seeking to fulfill the right of all in Afghanistan to a quality education.

UNMAS has continued to provide its financial, technical and capacity support to the government and has funded numerous high priority victim assistance projects across Afghanistan's provinces.

The MoLSAMD, MoPH, MoE, MACCA and DMC have jointly monitored projects funded by UNMAS implemented in nine provinces of the country. These projects have incorporated an array of activities including physical rehabilitation, accessibility, mainstreaming centers, peer support, vocational training, inclusive education, awareness, advocacy and capacity building for persons with disabilities, their families, communities and government staff.

To support the government in improving its professionalism, the MoLSAMD, with the financial support of UNMAS, trained 95 MoLSAMD staff during 2013 on advocacy, advanced databases, rehabilitation, decent employment for persons with a disability and good governance.

While there is tangible progress on the ground, in particular the ratification of conventions and the amendment of the disability law, but the scale of VA services is inadequate compared to the need. Our caseload is heavy – due in part to the significant number of victims – and physical infrastructure is limited. Our strive will continue to achieve our obligations and improve the lives of all Afghans with a disability.

Thank you.