



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Sixth Meeting of States Parties to the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

(5 – 7 September 2016)

Statement on Victim Assistance

Geneva, 6 September 2016

Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva office, UNMAS

Mr. President,^{1 2}

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA) comprising the United Nations entities³ involved in mine action.

The United Nations is pleased to communicate, for the first time in this setting, that its Policy on Victim Assistance in Mine Action has recently been updated. This Policy takes into account the more recent and robust normative environment, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), with its clearer provisions on victim assistance. The updated Policy reflects the commitment of the United Nations to enhance its contribution and support to this important mine action pillar.

Over one third of United Nations mine action programmes support the delivery of victim assistance services. Out of the 25 programmes that have participated in the Nations Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism (M&E), of the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018, 11 invest in victim assistance⁴. These programmes, if needed, and to complement national efforts, can provide gender and age sensitive assistance, including healthcare, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, livelihoods and social inclusion services.⁵

The United Nations engages with victim assistance support as needed and requested by the national authority. The types of support tend to focus on support for individual projects, such as the development of surveillance programmes or victim assistance service provision.

¹ Ambassador Henk Cor van der Kwast, Ambassador at large, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament

² Coordinators of the Working Group on Victim Assistance: Australia and Chile

³ The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer), and the World Bank (Observer).

⁴ Albania, Cambodia, Colombia, Eritrea, Lao PDR, Mali, Myanmar, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan (Darfur) and Tajikistan.

⁵ Data and analysis from the Mechanism for Monitoring and Evaluation for "The Strategy of the United Nations for Mine Action 2013-2018."



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UNMAS and UNICEF support victim assistance programmes in a multitude of countries and territories, including Afghanistan, Colombia, Mali and South Sudan.

In Afghanistan, in 2015, UNMAS coordinated and funded projects in Kabul, Kandahar and Herat, that provided physical rehabilitation and vocational training for female and male victims. Through funding from the United States Agency for International Development, UNMAS has also commenced implementation of the Afghan Civilian Assistance Programme III, which delivers immediate assistance packages to victims of mines, explosive remnants of war and armed conflict, and provides long-term physical rehabilitation, psychological support, as well as reintegration services. In Mali and South Sudan, UNMAS funds Handicap International to provide physical, psychological and socio-economic recovery for victims of explosive hazards. UNMAS is also committed to supporting states in strengthening the victim assistance capacity of national authorities, for example, in Colombia.

At the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS), a number of United Nations entities endorsed the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action. The Charter represents an important step towards ensuring non-discrimination of persons with disabilities, including survivors of mine and explosive remnants of war incidents.

The United Nations supports the wide range of fields encompassed, as well as the set of good practices and examples listed within the victim assistance guidance document produced as a follow-up to the workshop on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance held last May. Therefore, the United Nations also takes this opportunity to thank the Coordinators on Victim Assistance, the Coordinators on Cooperation and Assistance, and Handicap International for holding the workshop.

Earmarked funding for victim assistance has been decreasing for a number of years. The United Nations calls for victim assistance dedicated-funding, until mainstream funding had demonstrated that it is fully inclusive of all persons with disabilities, particularly survivors and vulnerable populations, and including indirect victims.

Last but not least, States Parties that identify challenges in the delivery of services to cluster munitions victims should request support from the United Nations and other relevant actors.

Thank you.