

Statement on Victim Assistance
Convention on Cluster Munitions Intersessional Meetings
9 April 2014



Thank you Ms Chair.

Victim assistance in the Convention on Cluster Munitions is a serious commitment. Most cluster munition victims around the world are covered by the legal obligations of the convention, since the majority of victims actually live in States Parties. We are pleased that States Parties seem to have been doing more to improve assistance, and we look to you to keep improving on the delivery of your promises.

Many government victim assistance focal points still need authority and capacity to do their jobs. Organizations representing survivors and families and people with similar needs must be more closely consulted in coordinating victim assistance.

In order to make a difference for survivors, families and communities, States Parties must have a clear understanding of cluster munition victims' rights as well as their needs. Victim assistance responses must be coordinated, focused, and measurable. A very practical step that can be taken in all countries is to connect victims to the *existing* programs and services that can answer some of their needs. We also call on you to support initiatives and activities that provide targeted and "non-discriminatory" assistance.

At the 4MSP in Lusaka, we were boosted by the words of both states with responsibility for victims as well as donor states. There was a strong understanding that the needs of cluster munition victims can be met through a variety of approaches: through programs that support inclusive development or promote human rights, as well as approaches that specifically ensure that cluster munition victims have access to the services they need. Broader frameworks should be used whenever effective to provide assistance -- such as frameworks related to health, employment, or human rights, but acknowledging that states must keep track of whether cluster munition victims are actually able to access services available to a broader population.

Next year at the First Review Conference, the results of the Vientiane Action Plan will be measured according to its time-bound actions. But the convention will also be judged more simply, as we will ask ourselves: "did it provide assistance adequately?" The answer to this question may depend on donor and affected states talking less about abstract ideals during the next year and working harder on concrete actions that will have an impact on the lives of victims. Let's fill the gaps between the convention's requirements and reality on the ground.

Thank you.