



ICRC

Tenth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions Geneva, 30 August – 2 September 2022

International Committee of the Red Cross Statement on Victim Assistance

Thank you Mr. President.

At the outset, the ICRC wishes to commend the Victim Assistance coordinators Mexico and Chile for their diligent work over the past year to advance the Convention's commitment towards cluster munition victims.

The Convention on Cluster Munitions contains more precise and detailed obligations to assist victims of a weapon than any earlier weapons treaty. Today, victim assistance remains a central component of the Convention and its goal of reducing the unacceptable suffering caused by cluster munitions.

Over the first year of implementation of the robust action points in the Lausanne Action Plan, efforts to address the gaps in the accessibility and sustainability of rehabilitation services have been reported in most of the 11 States Parties with cluster munition victims in areas under their jurisdiction or control. However, several States Parties continue to face significant challenges in fulfilling the needs of cluster munition victims, ranging from physical rehabilitation and psychosocial support to social and economic inclusion. This is partly due to funding shortages, but also to the gaps of qualified professionals and structures to provide physical rehabilitation and other services to persons with disabilities including cluster munition victims.

In this respect, the ICRC continues to assist persons with disabilities through its Physical Rehabilitation Programme, including victims of mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war. Our work focuses on: improving people's access to rehabilitation services; enhancing the quality and sustainability of these services; promoting the long-term availability of services; and facilitating the social and economic inclusion and participation of people with physical disabilities through sport, microeconomic initiatives, job acquisition projects and education. Last year, 365'775 persons with disabilities benefited from our assistance. In 2022, persons with physical disabilities are benefiting from 323 ICRC-supported structures or projects (such as physical rehabilitation centers, component factories, social inclusion and training institutions) in 37 countries or territories. Notably, polypropylene technology developed by the ICRC is widely available through the social platform Rehab'Impulse, a social initiative owned by the ICRC. It is today an inexpensive and appropriate technology produced by persons with disabilities living in Switzerland and used by several organizations working for persons with disabilities, particularly in lower-income countries and countries where economy is devastated by war and violence. Devices and components produced using this technology are durable, inexpensive, adaptable to individuals' specific needs, easy to use and maintain, and compatible with various environments and climates. In these fragile contexts the ICRC is

also working on establishing partnerships with public and private, local and international development actors to better sustain the rehabilitation sector and the long-term provision of services.

Mental health and psychosocial support is provided to help persons with disabilities to overcome the psychological consequences of their experience and to promote independence, self-esteem and self-reliance. In 2021, 5'235 beneficiaries, including hospitalized weapon-wounded patients in facilities supported by the ICRC, benefited from such support, culturally and individually adapted to their psychological and physical recovery and rehabilitation needs.

Moreover, the ICRC has been proactively exploring innovative ways of financing its Physical Rehabilitation Programme to better address the needs of persons with disabilities, including cluster munition victims. The first Humanitarian Impact Bond launched by the ICRC in 2018, also known as the Programme for Humanitarian Impact Investment, will draw to a close this year. Thanks to this innovative funding mechanism, three new physical rehabilitation centres were built and run in Africa, a new quality monitoring tool, the Efficiency Improvement Measures, was created, and a digital support software for service provision management, the Digital Center Management System, was developed. Drawing on this experience and the lessons learnt, we are currently exploring in partnership with development actors three new pilot projects that will adapt this new funding model to achieve sustainability of physical rehabilitation services in protracted conflicts.

To conclude, victim assistance is a long-term commitment that requires continued resources and political will from States Parties with cluster munition victims and other States in a position to provide assistance, as well as the Convention community as a whole.

Thank you.