

Tuesday 29 November 2011

SUMMARY

Assisting the victims

The main focus of this morning's session on victim assistance centered on progress made, with many states (**Sudan, Afghanistan, Albania, Jordan, Chad, Yemen, Burundi**) calling for further funding or technical support to continue their commitments made to survivors.

Australia reflected on the past year co-chairing the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance with **Uganda** and reminded delegates of the parallel program on victim assistance running during the 11MSP where experts will share experiences and lessons learned.

Sudan, speaking for the first time since the separation of South Sudan, explained that the role of the newly established National Disability Council is to implement CRPD obligations and administer victim assistance programs.

Afghanistan reported that the Ministry of Social Affairs is finalizing a new action plan to commence in 2012, which includes victim assistance and persons with disabilities. They described their greatest challenges as a lack of technical support and funding.

Serbia reported that the number of survivors was unknown and called for funds to allow completion of a survivor database established in 2009.

Cambodia, with assistance from the Implementation Support Unit, and in consultation with stakeholders and implementing partners is now reviewing its National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2009. In 2011, the Cambodian school of prosthetics was integrated into the Ministry of Social Affairs, and progress is being made to provide access to education and livelihoods at the provincial level.

Albania is currently reviewing national legislation for compliance with the CRPD and stated that it would welcome donations of prosthetic materials.

Colombia spoke about outreach work with indigenous populations in heavily mine-affected communities and stated that 100% of civilian mine victims are given guidance about their rights and procedures for accessing care.

Tajikistan highlighted the need for victim participation in all victim assistance activities including high-level meetings, and stated that they included two survivors in their 11MSP delegation. **Tajikistan** also spoke about roundtables carried out to discuss joining the CRPD and Convention on Cluster Munitions as well as the workshop it hosted on social integration of victims which allowed for sharing of information between **Tajikistan, Afghanistan, and Iran**.

Uganda reported that it is prioritizing collection of data on victims and working with HI and ULSA to build capacity for maintaining the information management system. **Uganda** stated that mainstreaming of services for victims with disabilities is crucial to sustainability.

Mozambique reported on the approval of new packages for basic social protection for poor and vulnerable people including those with disabilities. They announced that they are now devising their second national plan of action for 2012-2019 which will include civil society and survivors.

The **Democratic Republic of the Congo** reported on activities in 2011 including the establishment of a working group consisting of government and NGOs, to assist landmine and ERW victims.

Guinea-Bissau announced that it inaugurated a centre for rehabilitation in 2011 with support from ECOWAS and ICRC, but pointed out a lack of funds in recent years.

Iraq announced that it will finalise its new national strategy next week which has been devised with input from various stakeholders.

Jordan said that it “pushed for progress” in the last year, giving an update on various activities, including a microcredit program and establishment of a prosthetic center. They laid out requirements for assistance, including funding for capacity building to allow for participation of survivors in policy making fora, and assistance in examining obstacles preventing persons with disabilities from entering the workforce.

Thailand reported that over the past year a wide range of programs have been carried out including vocational training for survivors, and simulations to improve emergency medical response in affected areas. They have cooperated with several countries on production of affordable prosthetic limbs and announced that they stand ready to assist others in this regard.

Peru announced the creation of a committee to coordinate victim assistance, and reported on well-received RE activities in remote high-risk areas, noting difficulties caused by distance and climate, and challenges in reaching indigenous peoples with RE messages. **Peru** advocated for adaptation of RE tools, taking into consideration local customs and languages, in order to reach people effectively.

Chad announced that a plan of action for victim assistance has been created and approved, but that implementation may be delayed by lack of funds.

Yemen gave an update on its three-phase victim assistance program, comprising 1) survey to understand the nature of victims’ injuries which is carried out in victims’ villages, 2) free comprehensive medical exam carried out at a major medical center, and 3) ongoing medical support provided once the survivor returned home. **Yemen** included detailed figures on beneficiaries of its victim assistance programs.

Senegal gave examples of victim assistance activities carried out, including provision of scholarships, educational materials, and mobility devices.

Burundi noted that the needs of victims in Burundi surpass the capacity to address them, and estimated that over \$5 million in international funding would be required to adequately assist survivors.

Eritrea took the floor to give a welcome update on its victim assistance activities, indicating that institutional rehabilitation is being phased out and replaced by community-based rehabilitation. Updates on victim assistance activities from Eritrea have been infrequent.

South Africa and the **ICRC** both stressed the importance of victim assistance activities, and committed to continuing to support such activities.

UNMAT stressed that victim assistance is relevant to the whole international community, not only those active in the sector.

Margaret Arach Orech and Bekele Gonfa Oba delivered a statement on behalf of the **ICBL** calling on states to push harder to make progress on the Cartagena Action Plan, with only three years left to fulfil commitments. They also urged states to join the CRPD and use it as a framework for meeting obligations to mine survivors.

Australia drew delegates' attention to the June 2011 publication that it funded, "Assisting Landmine and other ERW Survivors in the Context of Disarmament, Disability and Development," released by GICHD, which aims to promote a unified approach to victim assistance.

General exchange of views

Once victim assistance statements were concluded the **11MSP President** opened the floor for remaining general exchange of views statements. **Italy, China, Myanmar, Holy See, Mexico, Luxembourg, Slovakia, Iraq, India,** and **Portugal** made statements, as did the **ICBL**, and the **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies**. **Turkey** exercised the right of reply in order to respond to several issues mentioned in the **ICBL's** statement.

Italy announced €2.5 million earmarked for mine action in 2011, and reassured states that the financial crisis will not make **Italy** renege on its commitment.

China provided details on in-kind technical and financial contributions towards training and activities in the clearance and victim assistance sectors in 40 countries, and expressed willingness to continue to cooperate with affected countries and relevant international organizations. **China** also gave an update on compliance with CCW Amended Protocol II on landmines to which it is a party, and stated that it continued to abide by its ban on export of antipersonnel mines.

Myanmar announced pleasure at attending a Mine Ban Treaty MSP as an observer for the first time. **Myanmar** denounced "indiscriminate use" of antipersonnel mines by insurgents, but maintained that matters of self-defense and national security should be considered. Myanmar committed to continue to study the treaty and keep abreast of developments in the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty.

Mexico called on states to make use of triangular or South to South cooperation, and expressed concern that the multiple clearance deadline extension requests set a bad precedent for the treaty.

Luxembourg gave details of its €2 million contribution in 2011 for global activities and activities in **Afghanistan**, **DRC**, and **Sudan**.

Slovakia announced that it contributes and plans to continue contributing to areas of mine action where it has the experience and the means to add substantial and effective value to the efforts of the international community.

The **ICBL** made a wide-ranging statement, welcoming new States Parties, condemning new use, reviewing serious compliance issues (including **Congo's** failure to meet its clearance deadline, and the failure of four states to meet stockpile destruction deadlines), reminding states that the allegations of use by armed forces in **Turkey** are still unresolved, raising the issue of states that discover mine contamination after their Article 5 deadlines have passed and noting that discussion is needed about procedures to address this situation, expressing concern about mines retained that are not being used for training, and noting with concern that submission of transparency reports is at an all time low. The ICBL concluded by relaying some of the major findings from this year's Landmine Monitor report. ICBL statements delivered at the 11MSP are available online: <http://www.icbl.org/index.php/icbl/Treaties/MBT/Annual-Meetings/11msp>

At the end of the session **Turkey** exercised its right of reply to respond to the **ICBL's** statement, stating, as it has in the past, that the judicial process was underway to investigate the allegations of use of mines by the armed forces, and that findings would be shared once the judicial process was complete.

The **International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies** called for states to establish an environment that enabled partnerships between governments and organizations, and detailed examples of national Red Cross activities in Cambodia and Colombia.

India reported details of demining operations carried out in **Afghanistan**, **Cambodia**, **Angola**, and **Sri Lanka**, and expressed the opinion that the development of military alternatives to mines would enable the achievement of a mine-free world.

Portugal gave details of a seminar on humanitarian conventions it hosted for Portuguese speaking Africa countries and Timor-lest.

Holy See and **Iraq** also took the floor.

Clearing mined areas

Colombia and **Switzerland** spoke as outgoing Co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, and offered to share their experiences and contribute to discussions on the work of the extension request analyzing group and on the proposals put forward on enhancing the analysis of extension requests.

Nigeria and **Burundi** took the floor as states declaring completion of mine clearance obligations. **Nigeria** praised the advice and technical assistance of the Implementation Support Unit and urged states to provide funds for ISU activities. **Nigeria** offered its expertise to countries with remaining clearance obligations. **Burundi** praised a variety of donors and organizations that provided assistance necessary for it to fulfil its obligations.

States parties that were previously granted clearance deadline extensions, **Guinea-Bissau**, **Jordan**, **Denmark**, **Uganda**, **Zimbabwe**, **Chad**, provided updates on the progress of their clearance activities.

Guinea-Bissau, with an extended deadline of 1 January 2012, stated that as of June 2011 22% of its clearance task remained to be completed, but that it was expected to be complete by the end of this year.

Jordan, with an extended deadline of 1 May 2012, stated that it was confident it would meet this deadline, despite some unexpected challenges that arose in completing clearance. **Jordan's** detailed statement included information about clearance and verification activities and funding for the activities.

Denmark stated that it would complete clearance before its extended deadline of 1 July 2012, and offered to share its experience in clearing a dynamic coastal area with any interested state.

Uganda noted that it has faced challenges in implementing its Article 5 obligations, but stated that it would meet its extended deadline of 1 August 2012. It announced that mechanical clearance would begin in December, with the assistance of NPA, and continue for seven months, allowing for increased pace. It also committed to continuing to clear ERW contamination after fulfilling its Mine Ban Treaty mine clearance obligation. It expected to complete ERW clearance in three years.

Zimbabwe announced that it would not meet its extended deadline of 1 January 2013 and that it would submit a third extension request in March 2012. **Zimbabwe** stated that despite frantic efforts to secure resources, little progress has been made, though it shared news of a productive visit by the director of the Zambia Mine Action Center to **Zimbabwe** to share advice and experiences of working with international demining operators. **Zimbabwe** noted that its Ministry of Foreign Affairs is officially responding to a proposal for joint demining of border areas with **Mozambique**, and indicated that the response would likely be positive. **Zimbabwe** also provided information about the Request for Proposals for undertaking survey which resulted in the submission of proposals by three international organizations that are currently being evaluated.

Chad stated that it would not meet its extended deadline of 1 January 2014, but that it would use its remaining time to clarify the remaining challenge and create a comprehensive annual action plan which will be included in its third extension request that it committed to submit on 31 March 2013.