

Landmine Monitor Statement on Victim Assistance, 28 November 2008

Landmine Monitor Statement on Victim Assistance

9th Meeting of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty, Geneva, Switzerland

Delivered by Katleen Maes, 28 November 2008

Co-chairs, colleagues, and friends, thank you for giving the ICBL's Landmine Monitor project the opportunity to speak.

You will expect us to say that Landmine Monitor has found that the status of victim assistance is still deplorable in many countries, including in several VA26 states, and that financial contributions for victim assistance were insufficient or, at best, untraceable. Even if this statement is correct, we will not elaborate on it, because now we need to look ahead.

The Second Review Conference in 2009 will mark another milestone for the Mine Ban Treaty and it might be the "make or break" conference for victim assistance. Putting it very simply, can we present enough tangible progress to justify further investment in the issue? At the Eighth Meeting of States Parties the co-chairs for victim assistance reminded us that "an unambiguous assessment of success or failure will be expected at the Second Review Conference in 2009." (1)

First and foremost, all affected states will have to be their own judge and jury... and we are not only looking at the VA26 countries, but every single affected State Party in this room. Can we expect States Parties' reports to show that they have enhanced care, rehabilitation and reintegration efforts during the period 2005-2009 by ensuring significant increases in service provision, effectively addressing the needs, bringing psychosocial support on par with those for physical rehabilitation, and increasing and developing capacities? All of this was committed to in the Nairobi Action Plan.

Will your reports show progress or should we expect to see the status reports we have been seeing until now?

Be assured that consistent progress reporting is possible. You have heard the ICRC making reference to several Landmine Monitor findings. In turn, we have been able to report on all the 19 ICRC programs in the VA26 over the years, because the ICRC has set up a proper monitoring and reporting mechanisms within its country programs.

Our networks have been mobilized since 1999, but we will make an extra effort to measure if and how the lives of survivors, their families and communities have improved between 2005 and 2009.

But we also need your information. And we still need to know:

- Those of you with plans: how you are monitoring your activities and what progress does your monitoring show us?
- Those of you with objectives: when will you have concrete action plans and will you start implementing these before the Second Review Conference?
- For those of you without plans or objectives: what are your obstacles and what practical solutions might exist to overcome these before the Second Review Conference?
- Donor states: can you indicate the funding allocated to victim assistance until 2009 and as well as your plans for funding post-2009?

Landmine Monitor global analysis shows us when stockpile destruction and clearance deadlines have been violated. We also report how states honoured their specific victim assistance commitments as presented in the Nairobi Action Plan or under the VA26 process.

We should all be clear on the needs of this process:

- Achieve as much as possible and show this by the Second Review Conference;
- Make the best action plan possible for 2009-2014;
- And most importantly, make sure we are able to start implementation and monitoring of the 2009-2014 plan the very day the Second Review Conference ends.

At this point in time, one of the main conclusions since 2004 would have to be that we have spent four years on planning and coordination, with insufficient implementation. Landmine Monitor research shows us that implementation of activities often was not linked directly to the objectives or planning processes, and, in some cases, even occurred in spite of them. Countries achieving the most progress often received sustained support by the UN or other international agencies, and remained heavily dependent on international funding. Even these countries were rarely able to produce reliable and consistent data.

The Mine Ban Treaty was instrumental to the strong victim assistance language of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which most of you will sign next week and hopefully ratify as soon as possible. It also influenced the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. But we might have to conclude that in terms of victim assistance and reporting on it, the Mine Ban Treaty is showing its age.

These two newer conventions have now raised the bar with concrete assistance obligations, rights provisions and regular reporting requirements. As some 15 of the VA26 countries also suffer from the human consequences of cluster munitions, the 2009 Review Conference would be the prime opportunity for the Mine Ban Treaty to lead the way once again. Make an action plan concrete enough to benefit all those affected by mines, cluster munitions and ERW all over the world.

(1) "Mid-Term Review of the Status of Victim Assistance in the 24 relevant States Parties," Eighth Meeting of States Parties, Dead Sea, 21 November 2007, p. 6.

-