

**ICRC intervention
Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance
Mine Ban Treaty Intersessional meeting, Friday 24 June 2011**

Other matters of Interest - cooperation and assistance

The International Committee of the Red Cross would like to comment on the subject of merging mine action and development cooperation, or specifically, the merging of mine action and disability assistance programmes. We recognise that improving the health and well-being of a general population through development cooperation often benefits mine victims, their families and communities. We also recognise that disability is a development issue. Supporting mine victims through development cooperation is therefore a sensible component of a "twin track approach", as discussed in Tirana, providing that dedicated mine-action funding is also maintained.

Nevertheless, the ICRC remains concerned about the recent trend towards the mainstreaming of mine action funding into development assistance, or in some cases, the total integration of mine action assistance into disability assistance. This trend has often involved dissolving pre-existing and effective dedicated funding mechanisms, such that it is difficult to subsequently identify and quantify funding actually attributed to mine action. We would welcome hearing more from donors that have implemented this approach and in particular, the impact that it has had on funding levels for mine action.

Mine victims and their communities may be neglected by a purely development approach. In particular, the ICRC is concerned that some States Parties will be unable to access development assistance, despite being mine-affected, because of legitimate competing priorities or because their needs do not fit neatly within the development paradigm.

Situations that could "fall through the cracks" with a purely development approach, include:

- States urgently needing emergency transportation, care and treatment services for mine victims to ensure they survive the immediate injury (as compared to long-term physical rehabilitation and reintegration needs);
- small mine-affected countries, which are often overlooked by donors; and
- countries with antipersonnel minefields in isolated or sparsely populated areas. Such minefields may or may not have a serious humanitarian impact, so their clearance may or may not be a development priority. Yet, the clearance of *all* AP mines in mined areas under a State Party's jurisdiction or control remains an obligation under this Convention. The failure to clear may also, in some circumstances, even constitute *use* of AP mines.

In this respect, the ICRC welcomes the call by the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Draft European Parliament Resolution on Progress on Mine Action to the European Union to restore a dedicated budget line for mine-action. According to available figures, with the abolition of a dedicated budget, mine action funding dropped from 68 million euros in 2006 to roughly *half* of that in subsequent years. We urge other donors which have phased out such budget lines to adopt a "twin-track approach", rather than rely on a single source of development funding.

The ICRC commends Australia on its advanced Mine Action Strategy for 2010-2014, which we understand operates in synergy with its Disability Strategy but has a separate funding commitment. We note that other donor countries are also devising or reviewing their mine action strategies. Still others, despite not having a strategy in place, continue to provide substantial funding under the Convention, which is to be applauded.

In conclusion, we wish to emphasise the ongoing importance of resources to tackling the remaining challenges facing States Parties under the Convention. We welcome the first session of this Standing Committee and look forward to the evolution of its approach to ensure it can provide effective and timely support to States Parties.

Thank you.