

STANDING COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION
PRESENTATION ON BEHALF OF THE WORKING GROUP ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE OF ICBL
GENEVA - APRIL 24th 2007

On behalf of the WGVA we are delighted to present victim assistance guiding principles. These principles build on our previous work and are based on Article 6 of the Mine Ban Treaty, the Nairobi Action Plan and other existing legal obligations and political commitments of States Parties.

The ICBL will focus future monitoring and analysis of each country's progress on victim assistance on:

- a) Implementation of the objectives the State Party has presented in the VA Standing Committee Co-Chairs' Victim Assistance Questionnaire, and
- b) Adherence with these guiding principles.

ICBL CALLS ON STATES TO ADHERE TO:

1. **Human rights perspective:** Victim assistance is a human rights issue based on the right of all people to an equal opportunity to participate in society.
2. **Inclusion:** Victims should be included in all decision-making processes that affect them.
3. **Non-discrimination:** Victim assistance programs and projects should not discriminate on the basis of any characteristic, including the origin of the injury or the person's civilian or military status.
4. **Gender and age considerations:** Development of services for victims should take into account the gender and age of the victims.
5. **Two-track approach:** While victims' rights and requirements should be ensured through programs for the general public, special services should be provided where needed to ensure access to these services for mine survivors.
6. **Accessibility:** Accessibility includes physical accessibility, economic accessibility, access to information, and providing services in a manner that is appropriate to the local cultural context.
7. **Variety, comprehensiveness and integrated nature of services:** Victim assistance should be provided through an integrated approach that includes the 6 components of victim assistance.
8. **Capacity building, sustainability and ownership:** Victim assistance is a long-term activity. States should aim to replace international services with national or local ones.
9. **Coordination of actors and stakeholders:** Planning and providing victim assistance should be coordinated among all stakeholders, at all levels.

10. Individual and tailored approach: Victim assistance should be tailored to the requirements of each specific person and the affected community, and appropriate for the country's specific situation.

And now, I pass the microphone to my colleague Abdelatif, from Sudan, who will present how these principles directly impact the life of survivors.

In the name of God, the most gracious, the most merciful, Madame Co-chair, Mister Co-Chair, delegates, colleagues, landmine survivors, peace be upon you.

I'm Abdelatif, landmine survivor from Sudan. Along with my colleagues from Yemen, Jordan, Syria and Afghanistan I took part in the facilitators training: *Multiplying The Voices*, that was on the importance of raising the voices of landmine survivors here and at home.

Victim assistance services should be made accessible to all victims. Landmine survivors, especially those from low-income countries, have little proper care and access to the services that we need and have the right to. It is a necessity to increase the efforts to make available proper services to landmine survivors, especially in rural areas as many survivors do not have the means to go to big cities.

It is also important to note that the need of survivors is not only restricted to a wheelchair or fake leg. The focus needs to be on the whole person so she or he can become capable of leading a quality life.

Therefore we call on you to intensify efforts to make available all services for those people and guarantee equalization of opportunities. This can only be through the generous support from the donor countries to enable the low-income countries to implement Article 6.3.

Developing or enhancing national legislation that guarantee the inclusion of survivors in the decision taking process is also requested to guarantee the implementation of the slogan "Nothing About Us Without Us".

Madame Co-Chair, Mister Co-Chair, ladies and gentlemen, more than 650 million persons are suffering from direct and indirect discrimination because of their disability. But fortunately last month the New Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was open for signature. This Convention that now has 85 signatories, complements the Mine Ban Treaty's Victim Assistance.

We call you to sign, ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

At the end, I hope that the voice of landmine survivors will continue to be heard and that the voice is met with actions. Peace be upon you.