

Intersessional for the Ottawa Convention
Statement to the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance
Ms Hine-Wai Loose, Representative of New Zealand
Wednesday 23 June 2004

Our thanks to the Co-Chairs for their diligent work in preparing for and conducting this meeting. We will speak on two items under this thematic discussion, which are "*Enhancing co-operation between providers of prosthetics and orthopaedic services*" and under "*Other relevant matters*" we will address the work underway on a disabilities convention.

In terms of ensuring that mine victims are part of the long term social and economic rebuilding of a community, the necessary physical rehabilitation must be provided and there needs to be a framework in place that recognises the rights of those people with disabilities.

New Zealand's aid agency, otherwise known as NZAID, funds the Cambodia Trust Rehabilitation Project, which in turn funds the Cambodia School of Prosthetics and Orthotics. The funding is targeted at institutional strengthening and capacity building. The Cambodia School of Prosthetics and Orthotics has met with considerable success with the quality of victim support being provided recognised in accreditation to the ISO 9001:2000 Quality Management System in May 2002.

Two areas that NZAID have identified for improvement in their work in Cambodia and, where they believe there needs to be increased co-operation between prosthetics service providers, are increasing the capacity of local staff to carry out this work and the need for more attention to be paid, not just to fitting victims with prosthetics, but their overall rehabilitation and well-being.

While much remains to be done on the physical rehabilitation of mine victims, we also need to ensure that there is a social infrastructure that allows for their full participation in society. In this regard, the New Zealand Government strongly supports the work being carried out in New York on a disabilities convention. A prerequisite for poverty elimination is creating societies that are just and inclusive of all people. The New Zealand Disability Strategy can be summarised as a desire to live '*an ordinary life*' where disabled people can say '*our lives are highly valued and our participation is continually enhanced*'. An '*ordinary life*' is one which involves the same sorts of choices, rights and responsibilities that non-disabled people expect to experience. It is our objective that the work in New York on a disabilities convention builds upon the core principles of inclusion, participation, interdependence, equity and partnership.

Thank you, Madam Co-Chair.