



**"Supporting mine victims, preventing harm and suffering"**

Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Geneva, 3-7 December 2012)

Agenda item 10: Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention  
(a) Assisting the victims

Statement by  
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President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society

On behalf of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Mr President,

Thank you for giving the floor to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Speaking for the first time here, let me begin by congratulating you on assuming the Presidency of this important meeting, which is taking place at the mid-way point between the second and third review conference of the Convention. On behalf of the International Federation and its National Societies in 187 countries, I also take this opportunity to congratulate Somalia and Finland, for which the Convention came into effect this year. We wish them success and look forward to cooperating with them through our National Societies.

We also wish to extend our congratulations to Poland who is about to ratify the Convention soon. The Polish Red Cross has been working with the Government in various areas and we trust that this partnership will continue bearing fruitful for effective implementation of the Convention.

Mr President, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

In accordance with the Convention and Action #62 of the Cartagena Action Plan, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, by law auxiliary to local public authorities, continue to provide support in implementing the Convention. Their work, in particular in affected countries, covers two major program areas. One is with the purpose to alleviate human suffering through victim assistance, and the other is to prevent further suffering through

services such as mine risk education or awareness raising activities for victims or people at risk of becoming victims of landmines or other explosive remnants of war. These two program areas are two sides of a same coin and must be carried out in conjunction.

In my capacity as the President of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, let me share my society's experience in providing victim assistance. In line with the Cartagena Action Plan, the Iraqi Red Crescent Action Plan for Victim Assistance was reviewed and adopted for the period 2013-2017. Under this plan, we have increased services focusing on 1) Prevention through education and awareness raising 2) Health services and emergency aid, as well as physiotherapy, rehabilitation and handicap aid supplies, 3) Psychosocial support, 4) Training for skills and education, and 5) Last but not least, advocacy for people with disabilities and their special needs. All of these services mean to improve the lives and livelihood of victims and their families, and ensure better socio and economic integration in society.

So far, 150 families have received support this year. In the near future, we are looking forward to extending that support to 2'500 families through the implementation of the strategic plan over the next 5 years. This particular 5-year plan, to be implemented by the Iraqi Red Crescent Society, is with a total budget for 2013 of 200'000 USD to provide support to families of the most vulnerable groups from the landmine contaminated regions.

Programs focusing on long-term support to victims can also be found in my sister National Societies in many countries. For example, in Cambodia, the Red Cross branches at the community level play an active role in the identification of those with physical disabilities living in remote areas. These people in need are referred to Physical Rehabilitation Centres to receive further assistance, which has been provided in cooperation with the Ministry of Social Affairs Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, and ICRC.

Mr President,

Under the guidance of the Convention, much has been achieved. However, we all need to do more. The sad statistic that Colombia suffered its 10.000<sup>th</sup> Mine Victim this year is just one indication that continued effort and support is needed - by all of us. As I mentioned earlier, in addition to victim assistance, risk reduction efforts, through clearance and education, must be conducted to prevent further suffering. Since 2005, the Nepal Red Cross Society is at the forefront of an awareness program (through Emergency/Mine Risk Education) in the country with the technical and financial support of the ICRC. As a result, the number of people injured and killed by landmines and other explosive remnants of war has been reduced by 80% in 2011, after 5-year implementation.

Mr President,

The fact that the opening day of this MSP coincides with the International day for persons with disabilities is a fortunate coincidence. The implementation of the Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities should be an invaluable part of actions taken by States to fulfill their victim assistance obligations. The CRPD will improve the lives of millions of people living with a disability worldwide, including landmine victims, if it is universalized and implemented faithfully.

As President of the Iraqi Red Crescent I have first hand knowledge of the suffering landmines cause to individuals, their families and the entire society. We, States Parties and organizations like the Red Cross and Red Crescent, have a responsibility to ensure that these victims have access to the assistance they need and have an adequate legal framework to ensure that their rights are in place. To move forward, last week in Agra, India, several National Societies, ICRC and IFRC attended the first Community Based Rehabilitation World Congress and had a one-day meeting to discuss the best ways for the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement to further promote the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and discuss best practices in National Societies' work towards Disability Inclusion.

Mr President,

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is committed to the implementation of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Strategy on Landmines, Cluster Munitions and other Explosive Remnants of War. Cooperation within the Movement has moved the implementation of the Convention forward but we need more partners and support on the ground. Through effective partnerships at country level with adequate assistance to meet needs, we can reduce the impact of landmines and build the resilience of local communities affected by these kinds of explosive weapons. Only by working together we will be able to live up to the promise we have given to the victims through the Convention and contribute to the sustainable development of their and our communities.

Thank you for your attention.