

**13th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 2-5 December 2013**

Statement by Norway on Victim assistance

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Thank you, Mr. President

Yesterday we celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, and this year's theme is "Break Barriers, Open Doors; for an inclusive society and development for all."

As we reflect on the situation for victims of landmines, that theme aptly captures both achievements made since the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted in 1997, and the main challenge facing our community of States Parties.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has contributed to breaking barriers and opening doors, and has led to important improvements in the life of many victims of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. It has raised the visibility of survivors, and established a normative framework on victim assistance that has since been elaborated, both in the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention has also charted a path towards a more inclusive society, where every person can participate in and benefit from social and economic development. As the Third Review Conference draws nearer, it is, however, fair to say that the Convention has not fully delivered on that vision, and that, in itself, it probably never will.

Creating an inclusive society, in which the rights of victims of landmines, other explosive remnants of war and persons with disabilities more generally are realised and respected, is an expansive agenda. It requires a multifaceted response from various institutional actors, both domestically and internationally, in a way that is sustainable. It requires competence, influence and budgets, far beyond what any single, specialised agency or institution commands. Effective victim assistance requires dialogue and cooperation with those responsible for health and social policy, labour market standards and human rights. One of the main questions for the post-3RC period and the Maputo Action Plan is therefore how States Parties and other Stakeholders can enhance such dialogues and cultivate synergies with implementation structures that exist beyond this Convention and other weapon-specific frameworks. Of particular relevance is the CRPD, as well as the activities undertaken by the WHO and the ILO.

Mr. President,

Norway has since the very beginning of this Convention been an advocate for the centrality of victim assistance. We firmly believe that this Convention is about human beings first and weapons second. We will continue to provide support for mine victim assistance, as required under Article 6, and we will do so in a variety of ways. Convinced that the development of better and more inclusive health and social services in affected countries is a critical element in an effective approach to victim assistance, we will provide substantial bilateral and multilateral support to such ends. We will continue to provide support to organisations working specifically on victim assistance – on the condition that these organisations continue to work in an inclusive and non-discriminatory way. And finally, we will endeavour to ensuring that our overall humanitarian and development assistance is inclusive of persons with disabilities.

Thank you.