

Press Release



Princess Astrid of Belgium calls for greater assistance to landmine survivors

Geneva, 30 November 2015 — Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid of Belgium has made a strong plea to the States Parties to the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, to fully support landmine survivors and to continue their efforts towards achieving a mine-free world.

"If tomorrow, we were to clear all mined areas, and that is one of my most cherished wishes, there would still be landmine survivors who having acquired a disability will require our attention," said Princess Astrid. "There are many direct victims: adults and children killed, survivors with or without disabilities. There are indirect mine victims as well: family members of those killed and maimed, and people living in mine-affected areas that will require our assistance."

The Princess made the statement during the first day of the Convention's Fourteenth Meeting which began today in Geneva. HRH is a long-time advocate of mine victims' rights and has participated in the work of the Convention since 1999.

During the special session chaired by Princess Astrid, and attended by Didier Reynders, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium, landmine survivors from Afghanistan, Colombia, Mozambique, Thailand and Uganda shared the challenges they face in their daily lives.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Catalina Devandas Aguilar, reiterated the importance of ensuring that assistance to landmine survivors is effectively integrated into broader efforts related to human rights, health, education, employment and poverty reduction.

"It must be ensured that their care and rehabilitation, and the guarantee of the rights of landmine survivors, is integrated into government and other programmes for persons with disabilities. Supporting this effort is paramount to ensuring the full and effective enjoyment of the human rights of mine survivors on an equal basis with others in their communities", said Devandas.

Twenty-eight States Parties to the Convention have reported responsibility for significant numbers of landmine survivors; many of these States are also some of the poorest in the world.

The Convention was the first disarmament treaty that provided measures to assist the victims of a particular weapon.

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For all communication and/or press-related questions please email the Convention's Implementation Support Unit: isu@apminebanconvention.org.

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