

ICRC

## 10MSP International Cooperation and Assistance

### Talking Points

#### 1. General Issues

- We would like to comment on several of the themes raised in the President's paper on International Cooperation and Assistance
- I would like to begin with **resource issues related to victim assistance**. The ICRC has received substantial resources in the past fifteen years for victim assistance, including for mine victims. This has allowed us to provide services (including medical care, physical rehabilitation, socio-economic initiatives) and to work with national partners to develop their capacities for providing and managing services to landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. This has benefited hundreds of thousands of people.
- However, the lack of national capacities to plan, coordinate, and provide services frequently hampers further improvement in the lives of those who receive initial care and impedes expanding the coverage to those without access to care. Without strong national ownership to lead efforts and without a strategy to develop and/or strengthen national capacities, assistance activities have little chance to become sustainable. ~~Finally, programs should not only focus on developing national capacities.~~ Efficient use of resources also means ensuring that those in need know about and have access to the services available.
- A particularly important element of national ownership is the functioning of a national coordinating body. Without such a structure, it is difficult to present to international donors a clear picture of the needs, the challenges and an appropriate plan to ~~answer the needs and to overcome the challenges.~~ In addition, without proper reporting and monitoring it is impossible to see the achievements, which provide incentives for further investment and to motivate ~~people~~ internally and internationally for what remains to be done.
- In relation to **resources for clearance activities**, the ICRC's work and that of National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies on incident data collection, risk reduction and victim assistance has made us acutely aware of how resource mobilization and national ownership can save lives and dramatically affect the quality of tens of thousands of lives in affected communities.
- Although tremendous work <sup>has been done</sup> in pursuit of article 5 clearance obligations by a variety of States Parties and clearance operators, the resource challenges we still face are sobering. First, 22 States Parties with clearance deadlines in the period 2009 – 2011 have had to request extensions, with most citing resources as a key factor. Secondly, many of the extensions granted to date have highlighted the need for doubling or tripling the amount of clearance resources available if the extended deadline is to be met. And thirdly, resources for clearance may become even scarcer as governments adjust to the constraints of the current financial crisis. Vigorous strategies for both mobilization and utilization of resources need to be put in place urgently.
- Among the the issues which need to be addressed as we face this challenge are the following:

*Support*

- Where the capacity for effective national planning and implementation does not exist or is inadequate, how can the development of such capacity be supported?

*it should not be*

- Should the focus on national capacity building be reduced in certain contexts and the available funds put into the rapid short-term clearance of mined areas? *In our view, although clearance can have evident development benefits, this should not be confused with the assumption that clearance itself requires the development of long-term national capacity.*

*If the scale of contamination is local or can be addressed in just a few years, it may be more efficient have clearance done by direct control of available resources*

- How can benchmarks for resource mobilization and utilization be more effectively established and monitored for States that have received extensions of article 5 deadlines so as to minimize the number of second requests?

- In light of the challenges we face, should the approach of mainstreaming clearance funding into development as a primary approach be re-evaluated? Should State and regional donors create or re-establish mechanisms for dedicated funding for clearance of mines, cluster munitions and other ERW?

- How can better use be made of safe land release methods to reduce the need for employment of relatively expensive clearance resources?
- Finally, as regards the **efficient use of resources at the international level**, the ICRC believes that efforts should be made to create a common forum for *informal multilateral discussions* of victim assistance and clearance work under the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and, if possible the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War. In the field this work is identical and is conducted by the same people, regardless of treaty framework. Formal reporting on progress made, compliance with deadlines and treaty-specific challenges would, of course, continue to occur in the Meeting of States Parties for each treaty. ~~There is a common reporting format~~

*It is important to note that each week spent by ~~experts~~ discussing clearance + VA by experts in these fields is a week not spent doing VA or supporting other programs.*

## 2. Standing Committee on International Cooperation & Assistance

- The range of resource challenges and issues we have just described should be convincing evidence of why we need to establish a Standing Committee on Assistance and Cooperation as proposed by Zambia and now also by the Coordinating Committee. We believe such a forum is essential for ensuring the continued success of the Convention.

*We also thank Norway for its work on ICA throughout the year + for the paper circulated here*

- In addition to addressing the issues mentioned above such a standing committee could address a range of other pertinent issues, including :

- successful experiences in national resource mobilisation for clearance and victim assistance
- successful work in the field of south-south cooperation
- current funding practices, contact points and funding cycles of major national, regional, international and private donors.

- We (appreciate Zambia's presentation of the Standing Committee proposal made here today) and look forward to discussing the proposal in more detail on Friday.