



Kingdom of the Netherlands

Statement of the Netherlands
on
Victim Assistance

Intersessionals, June 2022
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Thank you Mr. Chair.

In addition to the statement delivered by the EU, The Netherlands would like to add the following in its national capacity.

Victim assistance is and will stay an essential part of Mine Action, now and in the future. In a people centred approach to Mine Action, the needs of mine survivors, their families and communities should be at the centre of our attention. They are the ones who suffered most and must be given a chance to rebuild their lives after the atrocities they have gone through, as a result of landmines, Explosive Remnants of War and Improvised Explosive Devices.

Victim Assistance not only requires sustained and long-term commitment from each and every one of us - state parties, international and national organisations and NGOs. Victim Assistance also requires a holistic and inclusive approach beyond physical rehabilitation.

The Netherlands has always been an advocate of inclusive approaches, ensuring that assistance of mine victims and survivors is integrated adequately into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to the rights of persons with disabilities, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction. Successful Victim Assistance goes beyond Mine Action. The Netherlands appreciates and fully supports the growing number of States that

put their efforts towards this ambition. We also commend the steps that are being taken by the VA Committee to underscore the importance of inclusion in broader frameworks, including in situations of crises, emergency and risks.

In a holistic approach, we cannot emphasize enough the importance of mental health and psychosocial support, not only to direct survivors, but also to their communities, living with the constant risk and restrictions caused by the presence of landmines, Explosive Remnants of War and Improvised Explosive Devices in their immediate surroundings, as well as to first hand responders and aid workers. We realize more and more that war and conflict not only leave physical wounds but also cause mental scars - such as chronic stress, anxiety, depression, trauma - that have to be addressed if victims have to successfully rebuild their lives. We welcome the growing realization of its importance, including in action 38 of the Oslo Action Plan, and increasing implementation by several partners, such as the UN and ICRC. Mental health is an essential part to overall well-being and health and must not be neglected. Through its Mine Action programme, the Netherlands supports States Parties and non-States Parties to adopt Mental Health and Psychosocial support into their broader victim assistance priorities within Mine Action and beyond, including in its support to Ukraine.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.