



Statement by
the Republic of Slovenia
at the

APMBC 5th Review Conference, Item 8. d Victim Assistance

Siem Reap, 27 November 2024

Mr President,

As this is the first time my Delegation is taking the floor, allow me to extend my congratulations and best wishes to you, Mr. President, for the successful conduct of this meeting. While I align myself with the EU statement, I would like to offer a few additional remarks in a national capacity.

Slovenia deeply appreciates the Cambodian Presidency's decision to prioritize Victim Assistance as one of its three main themes. It has been an honour for Slovenia to chair the Committee on Victim Assistance and to work alongside Burkina Faso, the Netherlands, and Zambia during this crucial year, marked by the preparation of the new Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan. In collaboration with the Presidency and with support from the ISU, Slovenia hosted a regional conference of victim assistance experts in August. This gathering not only provided valuable input for the Action Plan but also revitalized cooperation among Victim Assistance stakeholders from the region and beyond.

In striving to meet the Convention's objectives, States Parties remain committed to addressing the needs of mine victims. Slovenia, having fulfilled its obligations under the Convention in 2003, has since dedicated itself to supporting other states, primarily through the work of the International Trust Fund for Enhancing Human Security (ITF), headquartered in Slovenia.

We commend the significant progress achieved over the past 25 years in reducing the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. However, the humanitarian and developmental challenges these devices continue to pose are stark. Anti-personnel mines still claim lives, impede the safe return of refugees and displaced persons, obstruct humanitarian operations and reconstruction, and hinder economic development, leaving affected communities grappling with profound and long-lasting social and economic impacts.

Assistance to victims is often long-term effort, because fortunately due to effective medical care victims live longer. Mine victims deserve their second chance, above all a real possibility to fully reintegrate to their societies, mainly by getting opportunity to work in order to support themselves. This can give hope and new meaning to their lives. In our experience, sport activities and competitions may serve as stimulus on their way to reintegration and well-being. To that end, States Parties should devote more attention and resources to victims.

I would also like to highlight two critical aspects of Victim Assistance: gender considerations and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) – both of which are key priorities of Slovenia's foreign policy. Gender-disaggregated data reveal that while most direct

mine victims are men and boys, the indirect impact on women is immense, as they often become primary caregivers and bear the financial burdens of lost family income. Furthermore, physical assistance alone is not sufficient; addressing the socio-economic and psychological consequences of mine accidents is equally essential.

It is important to emphasize that even as we work toward the Convention's goal of a mine-free world, mine victims will continue to require our unwavering support. While contaminated land can be cleared and restored, the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines – such as the loss of limbs, sight, and livelihoods – remains a lifelong reality.

Let me conclude by expressing Slovenia's hope that the new Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan will serve as a robust and practical guide for States Parties in implementing all provisions of the Convention, particularly in ensuring comprehensive and sustained support for Victim Assistance. Together, let us remain steadfast in our commitment to those affected by anti-personnel mines and work towards a future where no one is left behind.

Thank you.