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United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action
Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
(17-20 June 2025)

Statement under agenda item 3. Victim Assistance

Delivered by Ms. Lucia Elmi, UNICEF

Geneva, 17 June 2025

Ms. President¹,

This statement is delivered on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA)².

Excellencies,

Tragically, there are hundreds of new casualties of explosive accidents reported since the Review Conference in Siem Reap. In Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ethiopia, Gaza, or Syria and many other countries, Victim Assistance is essential to address survivors' basic needs and rights.

The harms caused by mine injuries and the ability of victims to access services and recover, are deeply gendered. Men and boys are more likely to be direct victims³. Women and girls are

¹ H.E. Ms. Tomiko Ichikawa, Ambassador of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, President of the Twenty-Second Meeting of the States Parties.

² The United Nations Departments and Offices of the Secretariat, specialized agencies, funds and programmes are: the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peace Operations, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the World Bank are observers.

³ As defined in the [International Mine Action Standard 13.10 Victim Assistance in Mine Action](#)



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more likely to be indirect victims as family members of those injured or killed. They often become caregivers for their injured brother, father or husband and take on new responsibilities.

Many indirect victims are often missed in data collection and struggle to find appropriate support in fulfilling their new roles. Social norms not only influence risk exposure, but also further shape access to assistance, with stigma and exclusion preventing many survivors and their caregivers from receiving the support they need.

Direct and indirect victims require tailored victim assistance and humanitarian interventions that fully integrate age, gender, disability and other diversity considerations throughout their life, and ones that adapt and change as they do. States Parties to the Mine Ban Convention have recognized these impacts and must now act to provide non-discriminatory victim assistance.

For example, a new UNIDIR report - *From Casualties to Care: Implementing Age- and Gender-Sensitive Victim Assistance*⁴ demonstrates that if women victims are underrepresented in vocational programmes due to childcare and gender norms, it is possible to add on-site childcare to enable participation. Data also shows that men are less likely to seek mental health and psychosocial support but can access these services in general healthcare, a less stigmatized setting.

Ms. President,

Antipersonnel landmines threaten children in places where they should feel safe, such as in their current and future homes, schools, and public spaces. Beyond physical harm, their presence violates many of the rights guaranteed by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the rights to safety, health, education, and development.

⁴ Anna de Courcy Wheeler and Delphine Valette. *From Casualties to Care: Implementing Age- and Gender-Sensitive Victim Assistance*. Geneva, Switzerland: UNIDIR, 2025. Available at <https://unidir.org/publication/from-casualties-to-care-implementing-age-and-gender-sensitive-victim-assistance/>.



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Between 2019 and 2023 the United Nations verified 7,528 children killed and maimed by landmines and ERW in 26 situations globally.

Child survivors endure devastating physical injuries – some lose their sight, hearing or limbs, while others lose the ability to speak. Child survivors require more care and attention than adults with the same injuries. If physical injuries to children are not treated quickly and appropriately, there is a greater risk of death or permanent injury. The loss of limbs, witnessing death, and a sense of guilt - as the weapon is activated by the victim themselves - leave deep emotional scars that can last a lifetime. The victim assistance community needs continued support to assist child survivors and their caregivers, in particular in countries where the social protection system has collapsed.

The Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan highlights the importance of victim assistance to the realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the Women, Peace, and Security agendas. We commend the Japanese Presidency for hosting a thematic plenary exploring the relevance of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda to the APMBC – a timely discussion in view of the 25th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325.

Such is the interest and recognition of the importance of getting Victim's Assistance right, that in April 2015, here in this Conference Center, at the NDM-UN28, several hundred mine action partners attended an event focusing on Victim Assistance. This event explored how casualty reporting supports Siem Reap actions 27, 32, and 44. Panellists argued that standardized casualty reporting empowers actors to target and design mine action interventions based on evidence. This further strengthens the protection of human rights and security in high violence settings, and directly supports progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Data is key and continuous analysis of the patterns, causes, and effects of explosive accidents must be the cornerstone of Mine Action – including Victim Assistance. All stakeholders, including national authorities, require consistent and transparent information management that



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drives prioritization and enables collaboration. With generous support from Canada, European Union, Germany, Italy and other donors, the UN is designing such interventions in partnership with local NGOs on the ground. The UN remains available to support more projects funding permitting.

Thank you.

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