



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

**Statement by His Excellency Mr. Alain Girma,
Ambassador, Special Assistant to the Director of Strategic Affairs, Security and
Disarmament, Secretary General of the French National Commission for the
Elimination of Anti-Personnel Mines**

Second Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention

**Session on victim assistance
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Madam President,

I would like to set out to the States Parties to the Convention some key actions which France helped implement within its bilateral policy of victim assistance.

For a long time, France has channelled its bilateral cooperation on action against mines in three complementary directions:

1/ Firstly, France acts directly by providing expertise and training in humanitarian mine clearing and the destruction of munitions, mainly through its military cooperation programmes.

This training is mainly implemented by the Advanced School of Applied Engineering Studies (ESAG) in Angers and the Post-Conflict Mine Clearance and Decontamination Training Centre (CPADD) in Ouidah, Benin. In 2008, funds allocated to this training by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs reached a cumulative total of 1.11 million euros.

2/ Secondly, France also funds the training of military doctors and nurses with a view to assisting victims. For example, we support two regionally-oriented military schools (ENVR) in Africa: the Lomé Army Medical Corps Training School (ESSAL), Togo, and the Military Paramedical Personnel School in Niamey (EPPAN), Niger. The military doctors and nurses trained in these schools may participate, in their own countries or as part of assistance or peacekeeping operations, in missions to assist victims of landmines and other explosive remnants of war.

3/ Finally, France contributes directly to assisting mine victims as well as victims of conflict in general.

Recently, it decided to provide funding of 2 million euros over four years (2008-2012) to a programme implemented by the NGO Handicap International which helps conflict victims in 24 countries.

This programme sets out to improve the quality, coverage, and sustainability of services to assist conflict victims, in particular rehabilitation services, and is possible thanks to the mobilization of all actors concerned and the active participation of users and civil society. This programme has been organized in five regions: South-East Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East, the Balkans and Africa. With regard to Africa, the countries involved are Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal and Chad. In addition, this programme has a national dimension as it has identified six priority countries, namely Algeria, Cambodia, Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone and Somaliland.

Finally, with the entry into force of the Oslo Convention, France will put in place a comprehensive approach, including mines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war, in order to take into account possible synergies to assist victims.

These, Madam President, were the points on victim assistance which France wished to raise.

Madam President, thank you very much.