

## **Notes for ICRC intervention on "Victim assistance"**

### **Review of the status and operation of the Convention, Cartagena Summit, Monday 30 November 2009**

Ten years after entry into force of the Mine Ban Convention, the work on victim assistance under the treaty has come a long way. States Parties now have a clearer understanding of what it means to implement their victim assistance obligations, and national objectives and strategies are being developed for this purpose. So far, however, too few mine victims have seen the concrete benefits of this work. Just one-quarter of those interviewed in Handicap International's recent survey of "Voices from the ground" said that they were receiving more services in 2009 than in 2005 and only 28% thought that services were better in 2009 compared to 2005. This tells us that in the coming years, achieving a measurable improvement in the lives of most survivors remains the paramount challenge for the majority of affected countries.

Five years ago, in the Nairobi Action Plan, States Parties reached important conclusions regarding what the requirement to assist victims entails and they identified the six key components of victim assistance – data collection, emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological support and social reintegration, economic reintegration and laws and public policies.

Since 2004, much of the progress made has been in the establishment of the structures, processes and tools necessary to support national implementation of victim assistance. Most of the 26 States with the most significant numbers of survivors have developed national strategic plans, using the six key components, to respond to the needs and rights of survivors and other people with disabilities. Several guidelines and other tools related to the different components of victim assistance have been developed and a growing number of victim assistance experts and practitioners are now included in the work of the Convention.

These have been important and necessary first step, but the unfortunate reality is that their transformation into tangible improvements in the quality and quantity of services has yet to occur in most mine-affected areas.

The Cartagena Action Plan now takes us an important step further by outlining the key steps that each State party should undertake to implement its commitment to ensure care, assistance and socio-economic reintegration for mine victims. This includes essential elements in the process, such as the identification of needs, development of national plans, allocation of resources, monitoring and evaluation. We also welcome that there is a clear commitment by States Parties to increase the availability and accessibility of services to mine victims in affected areas.

We believe the Cartagena Action Plan provides a clear and measurable framework for implementation of victim assistance in the next five-year period.

It will be up to each State Party to ensure that the expectations raised by putting victim assistance at the centre of this Summit— in particular those of mine victims and their families—are fulfilled through concrete implementation of these actions.

The ICRC will continue its global work of providing direct support to survivors and their families to ensure that they have access to appropriate services and will continue supporting the development of national capacities in the provision of services for survivors and other people with disabilities.

We can also commit ourselves to working closely with the affected States, the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration, with the ISU, and with other supporting organizations to promote the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan.

We urge all States Parties, both those responsible for significant numbers of victims and those in a position to assist, to give much greater priority to this issue and to work together to mobilize additional resources to ensure that the situation of mine survivors in all affected countries improves over the next five years. Now that all the necessary tools are available, we must, in the coming period, focus almost entirely on increasing the resources provided for victim assistance and on concrete actions that will make a difference for individual victims and their families.