

**Second Review Conference of the States Parties  
to the  
Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel  
Mines**

**Cartagena, Colombia  
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**Statement by Mrs Christine Beerli, Vice-President  
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)  
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For nearly two decades the suffering and courage of landmine survivors has motivated our work to create and then implement this historic Convention of international humanitarian law. We have much to be encouraged by after this week's review. The stigmatization of anti-personnel mine use established by the 156 States Parties has saved countless lives and limbs by preventing the use of hundreds of thousands of mines and ensuring the destruction of tens of millions of these weapons. Vast areas of previously contaminated land are now feeding some of the poorest communities on earth instead of sowing fear within them. Just 15 years ago such achievements seemed like an impossible dream.

At the same time, the challenges that remain are also now clearer than ever before. Among the greatest challenges is ensuring that the lives of more landmine victims are saved following their injuries and that landmine survivors in all of the most affected countries see real improvements in their daily lives. Thanks to the vision of our Norwegian President and the painful experience of our host country, Colombia, we have been challenged to place victim assistance at the centre of this Summit and of plans for the next five years.

In response to the challenge of the Presidency and Colombia, the ICRC and Norwegian Red Cross convened an international meeting of survivors and victim assistance practitioners in June of this year. It ended its work with an Appeal to this Review Conference. The Appeal concludes that while the overall number of new landmine casualties has gone down globally, and has been dramatically reduced in countries that are party to the Convention, far too many people still die at the site of their injury or while being transported long distances for emergency medical care. It tells us that most survivors have yet to see a substantial improvement in their lives and in access to medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological support, social services, education and employment.

After ten years of implementation, and despite the many real improvements in specific countries or communities, it is still difficult to measure significant progress globally or in many affected countries. In short, despite our efforts, the hopes that most landmine survivors had for this Convention have not yet been fulfilled. This Summit can and must be the turning point at which this reality begins to change.

The Cartagena Action Plan you are adopting here this week contains a roadmap for change in the field of victim assistance. It commits States Parties to provide accessible, affordable and sustainable assistance to victims to ensure their full and effective participation and inclusion in society. The Action Plan and Cartagena Declaration commit us all to do more, to invest more and to achieve more for individual victims, their families and communities in the next five years.

The ICRC welcomes the strong commitments made to victims. Yet the more difficult task of turning words into tangible results remains. In the next five years, our action, or inaction, in this field will determine whether the Convention makes a real difference to the life of survivors. The ICRC is

committed to supporting States Parties in ensuring that it does, including through our assistance to medical and physical rehabilitation services in affected areas.

The Cartagena Action Plan also contains strong messages about compliance with the Convention's mine clearance and stockpile destruction requirements. These are among the fundamental obligations of the Convention. Delays in fulfilling them, even while sometimes explicable in practical terms, undermine this Convention's humanitarian goals and can call into question our collective commitment. We urge all States with clearance responsibilities to fulfill them urgently and within their original or extended deadlines. And we urge States that have not met their stockpile destruction deadlines to complete this obligation without delay.

The common thread among the current challenges faced in the fields of victim assistance, clearance and stockpile destruction is resources – both national and international. Success in each of these fields will require more resources, as well better use of the resources made available. It will require collective reflection on how, in the face of current financial challenges, resources can be mobilized at national and international levels, including evaluation of the implications of the current trend away from dedicated mine-action funding. A future Standing Committee on resources could contribute to addressing this crucial challenge and to strengthening the partnership between affected States and donors in the years ahead.

The success of the Mine Ban Convention has always been measured in the lives of children and families whose lives have not been devastated by mine incidents, in the food harvested from previously mine-infested areas by farmers no longer afraid to plant their crops and in the hope and opportunities reclaimed by landmine survivors. The success of the Cartagena Summit, most notably the commitments adopted in the Cartagena Action Plan, will also be measured in these terms.

Our common challenges in the next five years are great. Overcoming them will require a high level of continued personal commitment from all of us and more resources than have been available to date. It is particularly important for States Parties to maintain their high levels of commitment now that a world free of anti-personnel mines is becoming an achievable goal. The results, for human lives and communities around the world, merit the investment. This is how impossible dreams are realized.