



United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

Ninth Meeting of States parties to the **Convention on Cluster Munitions**

(2 – 4 September 2019)

Statement on Victim Assistance

Mr. President,⁹

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising the United Nations entities¹⁰ involved in mine action.

Excellencies,

The significant drop of the number of cluster munitions casualties from 951 in 2016, to 149 in 2018 is a major achievement of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.¹¹ However, the United Nations is only cautiously optimistic as a number of casualties may be unreported due to lack of access, imperfect data collection, or lack of disaggregated data in affected territories.

⁹ H.E. Aliyar Lebbe Abdul Azeed, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Sri Lanka to the United Nations Office at Geneva.

¹⁰ The 12 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 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.

¹¹ International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition; *Cluster Munition Monitor 2019*; August 2019.



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Progress in clearance and risk education activities to reach communities affected by cluster munitions is critical in maintaining the downward trend in casualties.

Excellencies,

The United Nations welcomes the efforts of States parties to comply with obligations under **Article 5 Victim Assistance** to improve the quality and quantity of health and physical rehabilitation programmes for the victims of cluster munitions. Over the decade since the adoption of the Convention, an increasing number of States parties have designated national focal points, adopted national action plans relating to survivors and persons with disabilities which include them in decision- and policy-making processes, and have integrated their victim assistance efforts into the broader disability sector.

Complementarity between this treaty and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) should be a priority for States that have ratified both instruments. Otherwise, policies aiming at ensuring the enjoyment of the human rights of survivors with disabilities are likely to fall short.



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Unfortunately, the efforts remain under-resourced for the 56,000 all-time victims of cluster munitions¹², their families and communities. The lack of support makes it difficult to maintain survivor networks alive including in Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, and Somalia¹³. The United Nations urges States parties to provide dedicated support through earmarked funding to Victim Assistance.

The United Nations calls States parties to fulfil their commitments under the **Dubrovnik Action Plan** and increase the financial support for Victim Assistance since for the last two years in a row nearly all cluster munitions casualties reported are civilians¹⁴.

To further mobilize international attention and support for Victim Assistance, the United Nations has launched a five-year global campaign called “Safe Ground” and calls on affected States, donor States, and civil society to join the efforts to mobilize support for victims and survivors of all explosive ordnance, including cluster munitions.

Thank you.

¹² International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition; *Cluster Munition Monitor 2019*; August 2019.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.