



ICRC

Appeal on Victim Assistance to States participating in the Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World

For nearly two decades the suffering, courage and commitment of landmine survivors has inspired and motivated the successful national and international effort to forever ban these horrific weapons. The plight of victims of cluster munitions has led to a similar international process. We welcome and are proud to have been a part of these historic efforts.

Those who have suffered life-long injuries caused by landmines, the families of those who have died, affected communities and professionals who assist the victims had reason to hope that the clear commitment to victim assistance in the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines would lead to a substantial improvement in the lives of survivors. For most, these hopes have not yet been fulfilled.

Although 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 die at the site of their injuries and while being transported long distances for emergency medical care. Concrete implementation of the Convention's victim assistance goals has been a major challenge for all States. 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. Despite the many real improvements in specific countries or communities, it is still difficult to measure significant progress globally or in many affected countries. A decade after the birth of the Convention too many landmine survivors are still unable to support their families and fully participate in their societies. The Cartagena Summit on a Mine Free World, the Convention's Second Review Conference, can and must be the turning point at which this reality begins to change.

Change can happen when all States Parties prioritize victim assistance in affected areas within the context of enhanced health, social, physical rehabilitation and psychological support systems and services. Change will come when education and employment opportunities become more accessible and affordable for all in need. Change will come when respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities becomes a universal norm, reflected in national laws and policies, and when all States adhere to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Change will come from increased national ownership, adequate financial allocations, long-term commitment, the establishment and effective implementation of measurable and time-bound national objectives and increased international support for relevant structures in affected communities. Change will come when landmine victims and persons with disabilities participate in the development and operation of programmes affecting their lives.

Norway, as President-Designate, and Colombia, as host, of the Cartagena Summit have called for a special focus on victim assistance at the Review Conference. This has again raised the hopes of survivors, the families of those killed and injured, affected communities and those who assist them that the promises of this historic Convention will be fully realized. We appeal to all States Parties to assume their responsibility to fulfill the promise of this Convention to landmine victims. We urge States to adopt an action oriented set of commitments for 2010-2014 and a political declaration that responds to these concerns. The courage of landmine survivors that inspired this Convention must move States participating in the Cartagena Summit to do more, to invest more and to achieve more for individual victims, their families and communities in the next five years.

**Signed as participants, in their personal capacities, in "Delivering on the promises:
A meeting of victim assistance practitioners, survivors and other experts"
Oslo, 23-25 June 2009**

Hosted by the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross

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