



## United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action

### Meeting of Experts on **Protocol V** to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons

#### Statement on Victim Assistance

Geneva, 7 April 2016

*Delivered by Mr. Bruno Donat, Chief, Geneva office, UNMAS*

Mr. Coordinator,

The following statement is delivered on behalf of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action (IACG-MA), comprising United Nations<sup>1</sup> entities involved in mine action.

The United Nations takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment and support for victims of explosive weapons, who have proven consistently to result from ERW contamination: artillery shells, air-dropped and air-launched explosive ordnance, cluster munitions or improvised explosive devices. Victim assistance remains a core component of United Nations mine action, both at the global level, and via its interventions in affected countries including through support to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As mentioned on several occasions, applicable International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, as well as the resolution on Assistance in Mine Action<sup>2</sup> adopted by the General Assembly last December, reinforce the importance of providing support to victim assistance. In turn, the United Nations urges High Contracting Parties to provide humanitarian assistance for victims of mines and explosive remnants of war, and to take measures to spare civilian populations that are consistent with international law.

According to the Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism of the United Nations Strategy for Mine Action 2013 – 2018, eighteen out of the twenty-two countries that had responded to this mechanism have a national disability policy framework or strategy in place, three-quarters of which having made explicit provisions for the survivors and victims of mines/ERW.

The United Nations takes this opportunity to acknowledge the “Cooperation and assistance for victim assistance” food-for-thought paper from the Coordinator on Victim Assistance. The United Nations also encourages High Contracting Parties to support victims’

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<sup>1</sup> The Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) / United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) (Chair), UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Programme (UNDP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS), Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) (Observer status), and the World Bank (Observer status).

<sup>2</sup>A/RES/70/80.



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access to adequate medical care, physical and sensory rehabilitation, psychosocial support, education, skills training and income-generating opportunities as well as to provide those services to all regardless of gender, age, socioeconomic or other status.

Mr. Coordinator,

In order to strengthen its assistance in mine action, the United Nations is in the process of updating its victim assistance policy of 2003. Since then, the normative framework for addressing victim assistance has significantly changed. This update is being conducted in response to the commitment made in the Strategy of the United Nations on Mine Action 2013-2018. It aims to ensure greater coherence, effectiveness and impact of the work of the United Nations in support of victims of mines and ERW. The updated Policy has now reached the final stages of endorsement at the Principals level of the IACG-MA.

Thank you.