

The 2013 Intersessional Meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Statement on Victim Assistance by Norway

Thank you, Chair,

Please also allow me to thank the Coordinators for their updates.

The legally binding obligation for States parties to provide for the medical, psychological, economic and social wellbeing of victims of cluster munitions, is a fundamental and ground-breaking part of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The comprehensive definition of victims contained in Article 2, and the clear set of obligations enumerated in Article 5, have contributed to strengthening international practice on the issue of victim assistance, and have helped raise the visibility of survivors.

These are achievements for which the CCM should be duly credited. However, while the Convention has given direction to this important work, it cannot itself deliver the full realisation of victims' rights. As we continue our efforts to operationalize and implement our obligations towards victims, it is becoming increasingly evident that the breadth of this agenda necessitates extensive involvement and coordination with institutions, legal instruments and experts that are far beyond the traditional disarmament community.

We must dare ask ourselves whether our plenary discussions about victim assistance are sufficiently connected to discussions taking place in those fora that influence disability policy, human rights, as well as public health and labour market standards. And we must identify which fora are relevant, and how to engage with them.

Recognising that the CCM, as well as the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, commits us to never discriminate between victims of cluster munitions and persons who have suffered injuries and disabilities from other causes, Norway intends to make better use of the frameworks that promotes the rights of all persons with disabilities.

For that reason, Norway raised the experience of cluster munition victims and mine victims in the thematic debate on persons with disabilities and employment in the Human Rights Council in March this year. In addition, we are considering supporting the development of a Model Disability Survey by the World Health Organisation, the World Bank and a broad range of stakeholders. An important objective for us would be to ensure that the survey is inclusive and attentive to the situation of mine and cluster munition victims.

In order to work in a more integrated manner, we strive to cooperate more closely with other sections in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to identify opportunities and ensure the inclusion of mine and cluster munition victims in our own human rights and development work.

As States Parties, our focus should be on effectively realising the rights of victims. Norway would therefore like to challenge other States parties and friends of the Convention to think about how we better can harness the right expertise and the political influence of other fora in our efforts to advance the situation for victims of cluster munitions.

Chair,

We look forward to continuing this discussion on how we can adjust our approach and strengthen our ability to fulfil our legal obligations with both implementing partners, states affected by cluster munitions and others.

Thank you.