

**VICTIM ASSISTANCE:** **INCLUSION IN SITUATIONS OF RISKS, CRISES AND HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCIES**

CONCEPT NOTE

This side event will share experiences gained by the States Parties to the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and relevant organizations in the importance of strengthening the integration of Victim Assistance into broader national frameworks, such as health care, disability, development, poverty reduction, education and human rights.

The concept of Victim Assistance was first embraced by the 1997 Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention[[1]](#footnote-1) which was the first multilateral disarmament or arms control treaty in history to make provision for the victims of a particular weapon. Following the entry into force of the Convention, the concept evolved greatly. A critical phase in its evolution can be linked to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Today, victim assistance provisions have been included in subsequent humanitarian disarmament treaties including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and in the Cluster Munitions Convention.

Those individuals directly impacted by landmine or other types of explosive ordnances are a sub-group of larger communities of persons with disabilities. While victim assistance is seen as an integral component of mine action by humanitarian disarmament community, there are important contextual differences between humanitarian demining (landmine clearance) and activities related to empowering landmine survivors. It has long been accepted that, unlike aspects related to the destruction of munitions, victim assistance does not require the development of new fields or disciplines but rather calls for ensuring that existing healthcare and social service systems, rehabilitation programmes and legislative and policy frameworks are adjusted to accommodate the needs of all citizens – including landmine survivors. Human rights, non-discrimination, participation and inclusion, age and gender equality and inclusive development are some of the key disciplines welcomed by the States and practitioners implementing victim assistance.

Since adoption of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in 1997, a wealth of experience and good practices have been achieved at global, regional and national levels, and most importantly in and by communities suffer from protracted conflicts, instability and humanitarian emergencies. The States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention have widely utilised an integrated approach in their efforts to ensure the sustainability of assistance provided to mine survivors and persons with disabilities. A key element to this approach is the inclusion of victim assistance into the frameworks of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other broader policies and programmes.

The side event will provide an opportunity to disability rights community and other participants of the Global Disability Summit (GDS) to learn more about the work of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention on victim assistance and to exchange information in stimulating further thoughts on inclusion of persons with disabilities, including explosive ordnance survivors in situations of risks, crises including COVID-19 pandemic and humanitarian emergencies.

1. Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, adopted 18 September 1997. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)