



**Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities  
UNMAS Statement on Victim Assistance  
16 August 2021**

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

Madam Chair,<sup>1</sup>

Thank you for the opportunity to report on the work of the United Nations Mine Action Service, UNMAS, in promoting the rights of persons with disabilities.

Distinguished members of the Committee,

A key pillar of mine action is Victim Assistance. Victim Assistance means helping survivors and victims of explosive ordnance incidents, including their families and communities both immediately and in the long term. Assistance includes, for instance, medical and psychological help, physical rehabilitation, economic inclusion, data collection and advocacy for the rights of all persons with disabilities.

Madam Chair,

In the interest of time, please let me cite only some few and shortened recent examples of this support:

In Colombia, where unfortunately a milestone has been reached with over 12,000 officially registered victims of explosive ordnance - making Colombia the second most explosive

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<sup>1</sup> Ms. Rosemary Kayess, Chairperson, Australia, Director of the Disability Innovation Institute at the University of New South Wales. An interdisciplinary research institute promoting co-production and co-designed research with DPOs. Senior Lecturer in international human rights law and anti-discrimination law at UNSW. Visiting Professor, Centre for Disability Law and Policy at the National University of Ireland (Galway).



ordnance affected country in the world - UNMAS continued providing guidance and support to survivors and victims to guarantee their access to referral pathways of the Colombian State.

In Syria, UNMAS and humanitarian mine action partners provided Victim Assistance services to more than 13,000 people in need last year. In October 2020, UNMAS established a Victim Assistance Working Group under the Mine Action Sub-Sector umbrella in Damascus.

In Somalia, UNMAS facilitated consultative approaches to ensure the participation and involvement of women, men and children, in the development of the National Action Plan for Victims and Disability Assistance (NAPVDA), in support of the Somalia Explosive Management Authority (SEMA) and the Ministry of Women and Human Rights Development (MWHRD).

Madam Chair,

In the context of mine action, the rights of survivors and victims of explosive ordnance are also addressed by other treaties such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. UNMAS calls on all states, who have not yet done so, to accede to these treaties. Not only to allow survivors and victims the assistance they deserve. But also, to avoid that persons become victims of explosive ordnance in the first place.

Thank you.