



Statement by
**The Republic of Slovenia on behalf of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban
Convention's Committee on Victim Assistance**
at the

Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
30th Session

Geneva, 4 March 2024

I have the pleasure to address you in my capacity as the Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which also includes representatives of Burkina Faso, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Zambia.

Madam Chair,

Most of the CRPD Committee will be familiar with work of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. However, for the sake of new Members, allow me to start by offering a brief introduction on the Convention and why your work is important to ours.

To date, 164 States are party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention – also known as the Ottawa Convention. Article 6.3 of the Convention requires a State Party to assist mine survivors and affected families and communities – which are collectively referred to as ‘mine victims’. This was the first disarmament Convention back in 1997 to include provisions on providing assistance, for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic inclusion of people affected by the weapons in question, anti-personnel mines. This provision has set a positive and enabling precedent in the field of humanitarian disarmament and now multiple disarmament regimes include provisions to address the rights and needs of affected people.

The States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention have long embraced a rights-based, non-discriminatory approach ensuring no efforts carried out under victim assistance, exclude persons with disabilities that have acquired impairments by other causes. The role of our Committee is to advance such understanding and to support States Parties with victim assistance responsibilities ¹ in their national efforts towards fulfilling their obligation.

The Oslo Action Plan 2020-2024, our current road map for implementation, reiterates States Parties’ commitments to respond to the needs of mine victims and to protect their rights. Action #34 of the Oslo Action Plan, explicitly calls on States Parties to align victim assistance efforts with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Further, Action #40 of the Oslo Action Plan requires States Parties to ensure the safety and protection of mine survivors in emergency situations, a commitment reinforcing the obligations

¹ *The following States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention reported mine victims in areas under their territory or control: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea-Bissau, Iraq, Jordan, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Niger, Palestine (State of), Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, Yemen and Zimbabwe.*

under Article 11 of the CRPD. The Committee on Victim Assistance is very pleased that the CRPD Committee positively responded to the recommendation, which we supported, to develop a General Comment on Article 11 of the CRPD.

The provisions under Article 11 of the CRPD is a significant shift towards how protection and safety of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors, used to be seen in humanitarian spheres. It has helped us to evolve our understandings from looking at persons with disabilities and survivors as “wounded, sick” or “vulnerable”² to approaching the matter from a human rights-based approach. A General Comment to substantially elaborate the provision, will enhance our understandings and our approaches in ensuring the “protection and safety of persons with disabilities (including mine survivors) in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters”.

Madam Chair,

With the financial assistance of the European Union Council and with technical facilitation of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, last year, Cambodia hosted the “*Third Global Conference on Assistance to Victims in a Disability Rights Context: For Greater Inclusion*”. The *Global Conference* sought to reinforce the resolve of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to meet its victim assistance obligations in line with the CRPD provisions. The Conference provided an opportunity for policy makers, experts and practitioners to come together to reflect, inspire, learn, and empower. Over 200 delegates, experts and representatives of persons with disabilities and mine survivors from 39 countries and several organizations participated in the conference. In taking this opportunity, the Committee extends its gratitude to Ms. Thongkuay SAOWALAK, Committee Member and member of the Article 11 General Comment Task Force for her participation and contribution to the discussion.

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention this year is preparing for its Fifth Review Conference which is scheduled to take place in November and to be hosted by the Government of Cambodia. State Parties will adopt a new Action Plan for the next five years of the implementation of the Convention, including to facilitate the implementation of Victim Assistance provisions. In this regard, we welcome the CRPD Committee’s inputs to ensure the New Action Plan will build on progress achieved so far, in ensuring a strong human rights-based approach to victim assistance.

In addition, with the support of the European Union Council project, we will continue to assist States Parties by supporting national and regional dialogues on victim assistance and disability rights in 2024. We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the CRPD Committee and its Secretariat, to ensure meaningful participation of the CRPD throughout these efforts.

Madam Chair,

In closing, I would like to encourage the CRPD Committee to consider inclusion of questions in the list of issues regarding the situation of mine survivors and their inclusion and participation in the CRPD frameworks. The Committee on Victim Assistance and our Implementation Support Unit (ISU) will be available for further engagement in this regard.

Thank you.

² *The Geneva Convention.*