

CLUSTER MUNITION COALITION (CMC)
Intervention on Victim Assistance
Meeting of Experts of the States Parties to CCW-Protocol V
Geneva, 3 July 2008 *p.m.*
Delivered by Susan B. Walker, Humanitarian Affairs Advisor, ICBL

Thank you Mr. Coordinator,

At the start we would like to thank Austria and you personally, Markus, for your far-reaching and inspired work on victim assistance in all three instruments that have provisions for victim assistance – the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, CCW-Protocol V and, most recently, during the Dublin Diplomatic Negotiations which ended with the adoption of a new Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The fact that there are victim assistance provisions in all three of these international Conventions makes it clear that victim assistance is not about a particular type of weapon, but is intended to respond to the needs of people suffering from wars and the devastating effects of weapons on human beings and the communities they live in. Therefore, victim assistance should be based on the needs of all survivors and victims of conflict, as well as on their rights, as outlined in the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Having work in the field for 15 years with persons with disabilities, including victims of explosive remnants of war, landmines and cluster munitions in Southeast Asia, I can assure you that when a patient came to our hospital ward or Prosthetics and Rehabilitation Workshops, we did not treat them differently based on their type of injury – whether it was from a weapon, an accident, an illness or a snakebite!

With regard to the Dublin Diplomatic negotiations, the CMC and the ICBL were very pleased with the ground-breaking and even historic work done by States on victim assistance. We would urge that the far-reaching and standard-setting approach to victim assistance set the standard, not only for discussions on victim assistance within Protocol V, but in implementing victim assistance programs at the national level and in addressing victim assistance needs on a regional or international basis.

In this regard, we find the Coordinator's paper on *Possible Elements and Common Approaches to Victim Assistance under Protocol V* to be an excellent basis for further action. As mentioned by Landmine Action UK yesterday, this integrated approach builds on the ten years experience of the AP Mine Ban Treaty and is fully coherent with victim assistance and other discussions within the context of CCM-Protocol V and the CCM.

In closing, we again urge that the new standards on victim assistance established by the CCM be the basis for discussions on victim assistance within Protocol V or anything else that might be agreed upon on post-conflict measures within the CCW. Thank you.