



STATEMENT

*Of Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on Victims' Assistance
CCW Meeting of Experts on Protocol V and Amended Protocol II*

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At the outset, allow me to thank Mr. Julio Mercado of Argentina and Mr. Fernando Guzman of Chile, as well as the CCW ISU for preparing this session on Victims Assistance.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, as one of the affected State Parties to the Protocol V of the CCW, does not have the institutions, database, nor social services that deal with the victims of explosive remnants of war apart from all the other victims of explosive devices, i.e. anti-personal mines and cluster munitions. In the following statement, the delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will elaborate the situation in the country pertaining to the Victims Assistance in general, hoping that the statement will respond to all six questions put forth to the State Parties in preparation for this session.

(Q1) Database: In the year 2014, there were 8 incidents involving explosive devices and one involving deminers. There were 16 casualties, 6 of which were fatal. Since 1992 there has been 8.350 victims of mines-explosive devices. During the war (1992-1995) there were 6.346 victims, and since the end of the war in 1996 to date there were 1.732 victims, 603 of which were fatalities. There were 272 victims for which the exact time of injury could not be established. Since 1996, during the ongoing process of humanitarian demining 116 deminers were injured, 47 of which fatally.

In order to undertake any activity in the area of VA, it was essential to establish a reliable and accurate database. That task was entrusted to the Department for Registration of Victims at the BiH Mine Action Centre (BIHMAC). The database was completed and uploaded in 2009, it has been regularly updated since, and the information on victims is accessible upon written request. As the result of the field missions of the BIHMAC teams and NGOs, this database was expanded in the past year with the data for 229 victims from the rural areas that have not been initially registered. The process of completing the Register of the victims is ongoing, and the data gathered so far is incomplete, containing mainly basic whereabouts of the victims. The data on social profile of the victims and of the assistance received in the past is still missing, therefore this database can hardly be used for the planning and analytical purposes.

(Q2) Medical care and rehabilitation: The existing infra-structure of medical institutions, from local ambulances to big clinics, proved as adequate, serving the community with high social sensitivity and without any trace of discrimination against the affected groups or

individuals. There is a good cooperation between government institutions and NGOs, expressed to the joint participation in education of the personnel that is professionally engaged in rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. However, the austerity measures imposed by the government and the shortfall of budgetary funds allocated for medical care does not allow any expansion of the investments into infrastructure that serves the needs of persons with disabilities, a predicament that is not likely to change in the near future.

(Q3) Funds for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of BiH are the main State actors in the field of VA. They exist at the entity level (RS and Federation BiH), they operate independently, and there are differences in how they are financed, how they disperse the funds, how they cooperate with the Associations of Victims etc.

In RS, the activities of the Fund include professional rehabilitation, financing of the employers that employ PwD and financing of self-employment of the PwD.

In FBiH, the Fund is established in 2011, and its activities include, in addition to those in RS, the disbursement of monthly allowances, financing of the projects for professional rehabilitation, creating the network of companies that employ PwD etc. Since the activities of the two Funds are pretty much the same, it is evident that they should cooperate more closely.

(Q4) Implementation of the CRPD: Bosnia and Herzegovina has ratified the CRPD in 2010. As part of the implementation activities, the Council of Persons with Disabilities has been established as an advisory body of the Council of Ministers, with the primary role to coordinate all the activities regarding the CRPD. Part of the activities in implementation of the CRPD goes through the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of BiH. Other activities are directed through the Governments of Republika Srpska and Federation BiH. Since it is comprised of associations of PwD that existed before the war of 1992-1995, the Council does not include the victims of mines and other ordinances, but it includes the representatives of War Veteran Associations and Civilian Victims of War. The capacity of the Council has been largely defined in the past two years through the project of the NGO specialized in VA. The project introduced the initiative to switch from ordering limb prosthetics bulk, based on the best price per unit, to making customized orders based on individual needs. In addition, as part of the same project, the Council, in collaboration with associations of victims, prepared the Report on implementation of the CRPD that was submitted to the UNHQ. The report emphasised the need to apply the Law on Prohibition of Discrimination of Persons with

Disabilities regardless of the type and cause of the disability, which is adopted as common practice worldwide.

(Q5 & Q6) Institutional framework: The main institution for implementation of the VA at the State level is the State Coordinating Body for Victims' Assistance that exists within BIHMAC. It has its regular meetings of the Working Group in order to discuss all the relevant issues pertaining to the legal framework, programs and problems related to the VA. Since the achieved results have been declared insufficient, this body, in cooperation with NGO's representing victims, has completed the revision of the National Sub-strategy for VA for the period 2014-2019. The revised Sub-strategy has significantly improved the general approach to the problem of VA, proposed activities and programs that affect the victims of mines in particular, but also the persons with disabilities in general.

The government network of the institutions dealing with VA has been up-and-running for some time now, but the unfortunate fact is that, due to the complicated structure of the State, this network is largely fragmented and operates partially and mostly locally. The coordination, oversight and planning on the State level is still inadequate, which bears its consequences to the general strategy, future plans and the estimated efficiency of the program for VA in general. In addition, the NGOs that deal with VA tend to cooperate with the donors directly, and they haven't seen fit to present reports to the government sector on their activities, hence that information is sometimes not recorded. All this leads to conclusion that there is a need for improvement of the legislative framework that would harmonize and unify the efforts of all the stakeholders in the field of VA at the State level.

Activities of the NGOs representing victims: The NGO representing victims of mines and ERWs have made a great impact on rehabilitation and reintegration of victims into society. The number of projects realized through NGO is in steady decline, partly due to a decline in number of victims since the end of the war, partly due to a diminishing interest of the donor community. In the past year, only two NGO's were engaged in implementation of the reintegration projects, where the projects were financed by international donors.

Thank you for your attention.