

I would like to thank all of those delegations which have contributed to this morning's discussion. [*Possibility to make some observations on the discussion.*]

I now have the pleasure of handing over to Caroline Wöergötter, who will lead the discussions on the remaining issues for this morning's discussions.

[Caroline to take the floor]

Thank you very much, Fernando.

I would like to continue by referring briefly to the **amended reporting form F (a)** adopted by the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference establishing a separate reporting item for states that have victims to report on their steps taken to implement the VA-relevant provisions of Art 8 (2). As the Coordinator for National Reporting has already presented during his session, for the reporting year 2012 not many states that have victims have yet submitted their report, four affected states so far have submitted their report including information on the new form F(a). Further, several more HCPs who don't have victims have applied the new reporting form and we thank all these HCPs for their acknowledgment of the new form and for their efforts and encourage in particular states that have victims to apply the new reporting form in their upcoming national reporting and provide information under form F(a). This information is crucial in order for the HCPs to get a better picture of the situation of victims on the ground and the needs that should be addressed by the Prot V community in this regard.

And now we would like to address the remaining recommendations that the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference tasked the meeting of experts to focus on this year. We had invited all participants to join us for an informal discussion on these recommendations. This informal meeting took place yesterday during lunchtime and I would like to thank all delegations that were present in the meeting and shared their views and comments with us. I would like in the following to present the recommendations and add the observations made and discussions held in the informal group on how to best implement these recommendations.

- **Promotion of the Plan of Action to the wider CCW community:** During the last two years, the co-coordinator for improvised explosive devices under Amended Protocol II of the Convention invited the Coordinator for Victim Assistance under Protocol V to his session in order for her to present the Plan of Action to the AP II community and highlighted the potential benefits of the Plan as a toolbox to guide the work of HCPs in implementing policies and measures related to victim assistance. In this context, I would also like to mention the

recommendation that HCPs of Amended Protocol II adopted at the 14<sup>th</sup> Conference last year on victim assistance and look forward to working together with fellow coordinators under AP II for this issue. It was planned also this year for the Coordinator on VA under Protocol V to address the MoE of AP II and present the Plan of Action, but this couldn't happen due to time constraints. The Coordinator and Friend of the Coordinator will nevertheless continue to work towards implementing this recommendation to promote the Plan of Action among the wider CCW community. During the informal session we invited delegations to share their views and suggestions on how to address this recommendation further. Participants encouraged the Protocol V Conference to further explore possibilities to promote the Plan of Action on Victim Assistance among the wider CCW community. One participant encouraged for HCPs of the CCW to take the issue up and look into ways on how to promote the Protocol V Plan of Action on Victim Assistance among the CCW community.

- I would now like to turn to **Recommendation (f) For High Contracting Parties to informally exchange, if appropriate, experiences and practices of Protocol V with regard to victim assistance with relevant international legal instruments, which is referring to Action 4 (c, e and g) of the PoA on VA:** This recommendation received particular attention during the informal meeting. While fully respecting and acknowledging the different legal obligations of various international legal instruments including obligations for their contracting parties to assist victims of mines or other ERWs as well as persons with disabilities, including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, experts from States that have victims emphasized the need for and benefit of a closer coordination with regard to exchange of information and practices. These experts reminded the group of the situation on the ground, where responsible stakeholders have to apply comprehensive non-discriminatory legislative frameworks and policy measures to address the needs and rights of victims as well as persons with disabilities, embedded in the broader health and social and economic development plans. A closer practical coordination and exchange on victim assistance across different international legal instruments at international level would therefore be of benefit for the affected states and help them implement their obligations more efficiently. Participants

also reminded of the need to strengthen national coordination mechanisms created to coordinate national policies related to victim assistance and assistance to PwD, as reflected in Action 23 of the Action Plan on Victim Assistance. Affected States also reminded of the challenges they are facing when confronted with limited financial and technical resources to carry out effective assistance. Here, a strengthened regional cooperation and exchange could be useful.

- Finally, I would like to address a **core issue of our work, reflected in recommendations (c) and (d): How to strengthen and establish a culture of implementation:** In order to effectively implement Art 8 (2) and for victims of ERWs to benefit from the implementation of a comprehensive VA approach,

- first of all the HCPs that have victims have to self-identify to be responsible for victims,
- second to report on the situation of victims and the state of implementation of VA measures in accordance with their obligations; a number of states with responsibilities for victims have acknowledged not to have a comprehensive picture of the needs of victims yet. It was emphasized that more needed to be done in terms of data collection and analysis;
- third to make their challenges and needs known for which they seek cooperation and assistance in accordance with the Convention.
- The Coordinator and Friend of the Coordinator will continue to work in this direction and will continue to approach states that have self-identified as having victims and invite them to share information and experiences on their situation and implementation of victim assistance measures, but will rely on the cooperation of all HCPs and particularly those that have victims to join efforts and work towards fulfilling this obligation.

- I would now like to open the floor for updates of states that have victims for implementation updates as well as to all states and other stakeholder to share their views and comment on the recommendations that we have been mandated to address in the area of victim assistance this year. The floor is open.

I would like to thank all delegations for their contributions to the discussion. I would now like to hand back to the Coordinator.

[Fernando to take the floor]