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Chairperson's Summary

Bridges between worlds

3-4 April 2014, Medellín, Colombia



Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction

www.apminebanconvention.org



The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
is a short reference to the:

**CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION
AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

...also known as the Ottawa Convention

The Convention was the first multilateral arms control or disarmament treaty to make provisions for the victims of a particular weapon system. In doing so, the Convention has made a promise that efforts will be made to ensure that landmine victims may become survivors able to participate in all spheres of their societies on a basis equal to others.

In the fulfilment of their promise to landmine victims and survivors, the States Parties to the Convention have understood that what they call *victim assistance* “should be integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to the rights of persons with disabilities, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction.”

To act upon this understanding, the States Parties have acknowledged that “engagement in other domains” is necessary. That is, landmine *victim assistance* is not a world unto itself but rather is, or should be, part of other worlds.



Bridges between Worlds was an initiative to address some fundamental questions about the place of *victim assistance* in other domains, such as the worlds of disability, health care, education, employment, development, poverty reduction and human rights.

Bridges between Worlds highlighted that those who care deeply about the fulfilment of the Convention's promise to landmine victims and survivors have much in common with those concerned with the well-being and the rights of women, girls, boys and men injured and living with disabilities regardless of the cause. There is strength in pursuing this unity of purpose and working together towards the achievement of common goals.



BACKGROUND

In follow-up to the global conference *Bridges between Worlds*, an event was held in Geneva on 22 May 2014.

- 1. *Bridges between Worlds* was a global conference that aimed to advance the international community's understanding regarding the place of assistance to victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war in broader contexts. It was hosted by the Government of Colombia with the assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Implementation Support Unit. It was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Government of Colombia, various partners of the Government of Colombia, and the European Union, through the European Union's Council Decision in support of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's 2010-2014 *Cartagena Action Plan*.
- 2. *Bridges between Worlds* was held further to the understanding that assistance to victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war should be integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks related to human rights, disability, health, education, employment, development, poverty reduction, social security, transitional justice and other domains. That is, while assisting landmine victims is a specific promise made through the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban



Convention, victim assistance is not a world unto itself. Rather, it is part of – or should be part of – other worlds.

- 3. It was recalled that 15 years after the entry-into-force of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention – and on the eve of the Convention’s third five-year review – it was timely to ask some fundamental questions about the bridges between the world of landmines and broader domains such as disability, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction.
 - » a. What efforts have been made to build bridges to date and what have been the outcomes of these efforts, particularly in light of the commitments made by the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention through the *Cartagena Action Plan*?
 - » b. What practical steps can be taken to further build and strengthen *bridges between worlds*?
 - » c. How can we ensure that when bridges are built they truly enhance rather than overlook the advancement of the full and effective participation of mine victims in their societies on an equal basis with others?
- 4. The purpose of *Bridges between Worlds* was to address these questions. This was done particularly with a view to considering how victim assistance

may be pursued by the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention following their Third Review Conference. In addition, it was emphasized that the outcomes of the conference were more broadly applicable given the consistent approach taken to victim assistance by all relevant instruments of international humanitarian law.

- 5. *Bridges between Worlds* took place on 3–4 April 2014 at the Intercontinental Hotel in Medellin, Colombia. The location of the event was significant for a number of reasons, including the fact that Medellin is located in the Department of Antioquia – the most mine-affected in the country, registering, since 1990, a fifth of all landmine casualties in Colombia. Furthermore, *Bridges between Worlds* took the issue of victim assistance back to Colombia where, in 2009 at the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World, the international community adopted the *Cartagena Action Plan*, which saw States commit to promote and protect the welfare and human rights of landmine survivors and mine-affected communities.
- 6. All States were invited to *Bridges between Worlds* as it was recognized that each State can play a role in achieving the full and effective participation of women, girls, boys and men living with an impairment in their societies on an equal basis with others. In total, 37 States attended the conference, including many represented by officials with responsibilities related to the breadth of the conference’s subject matter.
- 7. The participation of relevant international and non-governmental organizations was encouraged in *Bridges between Worlds*, including organizations with a specific focus on landmine and other explosive remnants of war issues and organizations from other “worlds”, such as disability rights, health care, employment and other domains. It was understood that the participation and expertise of international and non-governmental organizations was vital to the success of the conference.



CHAIRPERSON'S CONCLUSIONS

- 8. While the international community convened in Medellin on 3–4 April 2014 to discuss *Bridges between Worlds*, it was agreed that, in fact, there are not different worlds. There is one world with physical, attitudinal and other barriers preventing the full participation of women, girls, boys and men living with a disability including landmine survivors, in all spheres of their societies on a basis equal to others.
- 9. Individuals, organizations and States concerned about the well-being and the guarantee of the rights of landmine survivors largely share the same agenda as those concerned about the well-being and the guarantee of the rights of persons with disability more generally, as well as those concerned about individuals injured and left living with disabilities as a result of other causes, such as gun violence. Clearly more and better can be done for all affected individuals and their family members by all actors who share such an agenda working together. While there are different subgroups of persons with disabilities, there is more strength in unity than in division. With unity it will be possible to have a stronger voice to advocate for the rights of all persons with disabilities including landmine survivors and those living with a disability from any other cause.

Colombian Vice-President Angelino Garzon served as the Chairperson of *Bridges between Worlds*.

Bridges between Worlds benefited greatly from the vast expertise of Facundo Chávez Penillas of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.



- 10. The world has changed since 1997 when the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention was adopted. At that time, simply ensuring that the Convention would contain provisions recognising the landmine victims was a challenge. Now, 15 years later, this is accepted as the norm.
- 11. Those involved in the anti-landmines movement, including landmine survivors, contributed greatly to the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2008. The CRPD in turn brought the human-rights approach to the world of disarmament. The adoption of the CRPD changed the perspective of persons with disabilities from objects of assistance to holders of rights. It has been recognized that all articles of the CRPD apply to victim assistance.
- 12. The CRPD has been instrumental in providing to conventional weapons instruments clarity regarding the end state of their efforts related to assisting survivors. That is, the end state is the same for both worlds: the full participation of all women, girls, boys and men, including landmine survivors, in all spheres of their societies on a basis equal to others. Working back from this end-state can assist in reinforcing the importance of measurability of efforts to assist survivors. It will only be possible to have evidence of progress as concerns affected individuals, their family members and communities if clear indicators have been established at the national level.

- 13. The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions have been instrumental in leveraging the landmines / cluster munitions issue to open up a dialogue on disability issues where one may not be at present taking place. Moreover, resources mobilised in the context of the landmines / cluster munitions issues, and initiatives undertaken, such as reinforcing survivor networks, have benefited broader populations beyond simply landmine survivors and their families.
- 14. Funding for a variety of individual issue areas is scarce. Collaboration in mobilising resources makes much more sense than competing for diminishing funds. As well, collateral damage can occur when different subsets of persons living with disabilities compete for scarce resources as a hierarchy is created which suggests that some people are higher up because of how they acquired their disability when this is fundamentally wrong and contrary to the rights based approach. No matter the sources of funds, these should be invested in a way which is in line with the CRPD's rights-based, inclusive approach.
- 15. The post-2015 development agenda stands to provide a great opportunity for enhancing the lives of persons with disabilities through putting disability on the agenda which will guide the work of States, the United Nations and non-governmental organizations for the next fifteen years. All persons with disabilities regardless of the cause, and all those whom support them, should recognise the potential benefit this could bring.
- 16. While work must continue to advance the disability rights agenda at the international policy level, at the same time efforts must continue to ensure that women, girls, boys and men living with disabilities, including landmine survivors, are actually able to realise these rights in their everyday lives. Inclusive development is a key means to help realise this as it offers a sustainable strategy to ensure the inclusion of persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors and their family members and communities, in social, economic, cultural and political spheres.
- 17. All humanitarian and development efforts, and assistance for these efforts, should be inclusive of, and accessible to, persons with disabilities, including mine and other explosive remnants of war survivors. This means a

twin-track approach of integrating disability into development programmes, supporting disability-specific programmes to address targeted needs, and promoting and enabling the active participation and contributions by persons with disabilities in these efforts.

- 18. While international humanitarian legal instruments refer to victims, with the term victim understood broadly to include individuals directly affected, families and communities, the terminology is dated and presents a conceptual barrier to moving forward. There is the need to move from viewing survivors as victims but rather as rights-holders who should be empowered to claim and advocate for their rights.
- 19. There is a need to move beyond an *either-or* debate, as it is unproductive to debate whether the focus should be placed on investing in immediate benefits or on investing in rights long-term. Both are important. This discussion should be rebalanced to recognise the importance of investing in both approaches, thereby emphasising that both top down (rights and policy based) and bottom up (service delivery) approaches are complimentary and together will lead to more tangible sustainable results on the ground.
- 20. Discussions on assisting survivors within conventional weapons instruments are important, must continue and will continue, as this largely is now a normal course of business for these instruments. The challenge now with respect to these discussions is two-fold. First, there is a need to make these discussions highly productive and supportive ensuring measurable progress in fulfilling the promise made to survivors of landmines and other explosive remnants of war. That is, there is a need to embrace a less talk, more action principle, and to ensure the best use of the time of those participating in those forums. Second, there is a need to balance discussing survivors within the confines of conventional weapons instruments with taking the conversation to other arenas (e.g., health, human rights, labour, disability rights, etc.) where matters are considered that are central to fulfilling the promise to survivors.
- 21. The States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention have recognised and fully embraced that victim assistance is a human rights



issue. The rights based approach suggests an end point to work towards, and that is a world in which all persons can participate in society in a basis equal with others. This provides a degree of measurability which is vital in the lead up to Maputo. The Maputo outcomes must insist on a shift in focus from inputs and activities to outputs and what is actually being achieved in relation to the end point.

- 22. A variety of practical steps can be taken to build stronger *Bridges between Worlds*, ensuring that the promise to landmine survivors is integrated but visible in other arenas:
 - » a. Interested actors can make use of the mechanisms that are in place for implementation of the CRPD, for example, the formal reporting process, the preparation of shadow reports and the dialogue of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Member States of the CRPD, the majority of which are also parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.
 - » b. International and non-governmental organizations from the world of disability rights and the world of landmines have not always worked close enough to date and there was great scope for closer collaboration, including making a tangible difference on the ground. The International

Ambassador Juan José Quintana of Colombia reported on the outcomes of *Bridges between Worlds* at the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's June 2014 Maputo Review Conference.



Campaign to Ban Landmines-Cluster Munition Coalition (ICBL-CMC) and the International Disability Alliance (IDA) could collaborate more closely through, for example, enhanced cooperation between member organisations at the national level and, at the international level, through the inclusion of an ICBL / survivor representative on the IDA Coordinating Committee.

- » c. Implementation support structures and secretariats for different international legal instruments could do more to work together on implementation of the different instruments. This is important as the same States that are responsible for the well-being of large numbers of landmine or other explosive remnants of war survivors are those that have accepted the human rights standard relating to persons with a disability in the CRPD.
- » d. In order to identify best practice, goals and indicators, a series of case studies should be undertaken looking at different contexts and the circumstances of victims through different perspectives such as the victims themselves, the family, the community, civil society, the disability rights movement, the government, the international community, and development assistance partners. This would reveal information about what is happening in society and what is important for persons living with a disability.



- » e. State Parties' representatives with leadership roles on assisting survivors in the conventional weapons instruments could take the discussion to other forums that are relevant for the issues of landmines, such as the World Health Assembly, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the International Labour Conference. The proposal of the President-Designate of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Maputo Review Conference to appoint a special envoy on victim assistance was noted.
- » f. Tools developed by international organizations, such as the WHO's Global Disability Action Plan, should be well promoted and used where relevant. In development of tools, the WHO could consider the implications of service delivery in remote and rural areas and other areas where there are large numbers of landmine survivors and other groups of vulnerable people.
- » g. Actors from a variety of worlds – be they landmines and cluster munitions, gun violence, armed violence, etc. – could create a movement that is truly non-discriminatory and one that could make a strong contribution to the global disability rights' agenda.

UNICEF, represented by Rosangela Berman Bieler (above), was one of four UN agencies that shared its expertise at *Bridges between Worlds*.



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**THE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION
IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT UNIT**

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The Implementation Support Unit (ISU) is the secretariat to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The ISU is mandated to support the States Parties to the Convention, in particular by doing the following:

- Supporting the Convention's implementation machinery and office holders,
- Providing advice and technical support to individual States Parties on the implementation and universalization of the Convention,
- Communicating and providing information about the Convention,
- Keeping records of formal and informal meetings under the Convention, and
- Liaising and coordinating with relevant international organisations that participate in the work of the Convention.

The ISU is directly accountable to the States Parties while being hosted by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The ISU is funded on a voluntary basis by States Parties to the Convention.

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