



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Statement

by

Dr. (Ms.) Nadera Hayat BURHANI

Deputy Minister (RHMCH) Ministry of Public Health

Government of the I. R. of Afghanistan

**Consideration of the General Status and Operations of People with Disabilities and
Victim Assistance**

**7th Meeting of the State Parties to the Convention
on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Antipersonnel Mines and their Destruction**

Geneva

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63, Rue de Lausanne - 1202 Genève Tél.: +41 22 731 16 16 Fax: +41 22 731 45 10

mission.afghanistan@bluewin.ch

www.mission-afghanistan.ch

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Madame President,

Excellencies Co-Chairs, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In all components of the mine action programme for Afghanistan great progress has been made. The number of new landmine and unexploded ordnance victims has decreased by more than half from an estimated 138 new casualties a month in 2001 to around 62 new casualties a month in 2006.

While this progress is encouraging, we must not lose sight of the fact that even though new landmine casualties are dropping, Afghanistan still has huge numbers of mine survivors and people with disabilities from other causes that are not receiving the assistance that many desperately need.

In Afghanistan, the complexities of victim assistance are exacerbated by the paucity or low quality of services within all areas of assistance including health care, social services, education and human rights.

Lack of access to emergency services and health facilities in remote areas together with the lack of equipment, medicines, and adequately trained health and rehabilitation personnel, and insufficient levels of funding often prevent mine victims and other people with disabilities from receiving the care and rehabilitation services they need to survive and reintegrate into Afghan society.

While developing the plan of action for landmine victim assistance serves to address our obligations under the Ottawa Convention, it also serves to address our much broader responsibility to all people with disabilities in Afghanistan. The First Review

Conference of the Ottawa Convention made clear that assistance to mine victims should not exclude people with disabilities from other causes.

Afghanistan's victim assistance action plan will be fully integrated into long term public health and development strategies, taking into account elements of already developed plans for healthcare, rehabilitation, social services and the disability sector.

Building on the findings of the First National Victim Assistance Workshop, held in Kabul in June, the Ministry of Public Health will implement a strategy to specifically target for the needs of the people with disabilities. In this strategy essential and specialist services for people with disabilities will remain our focus for the next 20 years. In the National Health Policy for the period 2005-2009 issues relating to disability have been given prominence. Disability being the fourth pillar of this strategy which provides essential services including disability awareness and prevention; physiotherapy; orthopedic services; training; and facilitating prosthesis limbs.

The Ministry of Public Health implements its basic services through the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and Essential Package of Hospital Services (EPHS). Under the BPHS, which is intended to reach 80 percent of the population, we provide services like physiotherapy and under the EPHS we provide urgent surgery and orthopedic services.

At present more than 50 percent of services for people with disabilities are still provided by NGO's, and International Organizations: the government with the support of donor community aims to integrate these services into its national health strategy, this will facilitate capacity building and ensure sustainability. However, capacity building especially targeted at women, proper equipping of clinics and hospitals with relevant treatment and rehabilitation equipment remain a huge challenge.

By setting a planning process and establishing achievable benchmarks for a national disability program and engaging the disability sector in this process, thus addressing our obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty, Afghanistan can ensure that in a near future, landmine survivors and other people with disabilities are fully integrated into Afghan society.

Thank you for your attention.

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