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Republic of Zambia

**STATEMENT ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE AT THE 14TH MEETING OF STATES
PARTIES HELD IN GENEVA, SWITZERLAND FROM 30TH NOVEMBER TO 4TH
DECEMBER 2015**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
LUSAKA

1st December, 2015

Thank you Mr. President for giving me the floor,

Since my delegation is taking the floor for the first time, I wish to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Zambia, to commend you and your team for the good work towards the 14th Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. I also wish to commend the Implementation Support Unit of its support to member states in implementing the convention in an effort to meeting their obligations in line with both the Convention and the Maputo Action Plan. You can be assured of our support in discharging your mandate.

Mr. President,

My delegation has already submitted to the ISU secretariat its national statement covering many areas of the issues discussed but has a few comments to make on the subject of victim assistance.

However, before I go into details, wish to join other delegations in congratulating the Government of Mozambique for the successful completion of the clearance of Landmines in line with Article five (5) of the Convention. I am confident that Mozambique's completion given the high contamination that it suffered will encourage other States grappling with the same to move quickly towards completion. My congratulations also go to Finland for fulfilling their obligation of stock pile destruction. All this progress so far recorded in the last year speaks to States Parties' willingness to maintain the momentum generated at the Third Review Conference in renewing their political commitments.

Mr. President,

My delegation attaches great importance to the subject of Victim Assistance because of the inherent nature of improving people's lives. Victim Assistance is fast becoming a topical issue and taking a Centre stage in our meetings as

more and more countries are becoming mine free. The interest in Victim Assistance displayed by Her Royal Highness Princess Astrid yesterday and all the presentations by mine victims has given further impetus to the subject. It is my delegations hope that going forward developed countries will cooperate and work closely with developing countries in dealing with victim assistance.

Mr. President,

It is a well-known fact that victim assistance for most of our countries is a priority competing on the national budget with other equally important national issues and therefore, is very often placed at the bottom of the priorities. It is for this reason that there is urgent need for cooperating partners to assist in this exercise.

In the case of Zambia, the government has continued to show commitment to victim assistance against all odds. Most recently the president of the Republic of Zambia His Excellency the President Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu paid a rare visit to the victims of land mines and other ERWs in North Western Province of Zambia, a province which has a considerable high number of victims. This visit, no doubt raised the profile of the victims of landmines and other ERWs.

Mr. President

In the last year, great efforts have been made to come up with a sustainable national strategy for victim assistance in line with the provisions of the Maputo Action Plan. The creation of a database is underway and we have also begun to conduct a needs assessment exercise for those already on our database. Efforts have also been made to ensure the well -being of victims by availing those in need of medical attention the necessary assistance. Arising from the visit of the His Excellency the President in May this year, a house will be built for a victim in North Western province and is expected to be

replicated for other Victims that have already indicated the need for decent shelter elsewhere.

Mr. President,

The challenges, in meeting our obligations towards mine victims and their families, however continue. We are, therefore, happy to share with other states that are facing similar challenges which include funding to traverse the country and develop a reliable database and providing the needs of the victims in line with their requirements. Otherwise we are committed to taking a multi-dimensional approach to the problem of victim assistance.

I thank you