

## LANDMINE FACTS

- There are tens of millions of landmines buried in as many as 80 countries
- 80% of landmine victims are civilians
- 25% of landmine victims are children
- Fewer than 10% of landmine victims have access to proper healthcare
- Someone steps on a landmine nearly every 22 minutes
- About 230 million landmines are stockpiled around the world
- LSN directs 84% of every donated dollar towards programs designed to assist people recovering from landmine injuries. To help, please go to [www.landminesurvivors.org](http://www.landminesurvivors.org), or send a check to Landmine Survivors Network, 1420 K St., NW, Suite 650, Washington, DC 20005.

The next **Survivor Report** will be a summer issue in August on “Friendships and Partnerships.”

## One Step Closer to a Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

*For two weeks in May, LSN staff and country directors participated in shaping the new U.N. Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. The LSN team, including co-founders Ken Rutherford and Jerry White, sat in on caucus meetings with other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and participated with government representatives to review and revise draft language and content for this new and important human rights convention. Survivor Report spoke with Janet Lord and Kathy Guernsey, two of LSN's Advocacy Attorneys, who were instrumental in LSN's participation.*

**Survivor Report:** What is the purpose of this treaty? How will it benefit survivors around the world?

**Janet Lord (JL):** The purpose of the treaty is to provide a broad international framework for the rights of people with disabilities that will usher in a new phase of legislation on the national level (within the signatories own countries.) It means that, given that fewer than 45 countries around the world have any type of disability legislation to protect the rights of people with disabilities, this treaty will prompt states to undertake comprehensive disability legislation and policy. The really

*continued on page 6*

## MESSAGE FROM JERRY WHITE

*Jerry White, who lost a leg to a landmine in 1984, is LSN's Co-founder and Executive Director.*



**Jerry White**

I just returned from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnia was where we launched our first amputee peer-support network in 1997 during our historic visit with Diana, Princess of Wales. What a difference seven years make. Brick by brick, Bosnia is re-building. And step by step, LSN-Bosnia is reconstructing the lives of survivors. From a staff of one in 1997, LSN-Bosnia has grown to include three social workers, 12 amputee outreach workers and other support staff trained to reach thousands of survivors in need. As Plamenko Priganica, LSN-Bosnia's Director, keeps reminding me, there is still much work to do to promote health, economic opportunity, and rights for survivors.

Mostar is nested in beautiful mountains, but was devastated and divided by

*continued on page 7*

---

# LSN Country Directors Campaign at U.N.

*Four LSN Country Directors participated in the U.N. meetings on the Convention on the Human Rights of People with Disabilities. Anne Hayes and Nerina Cevra, two LSN program staff, spoke with Survivor Report about the participation of each country director.*

## **Survivor Report: Why did LSN have the Network Directors come to the treaty negotiations in New York?**

**Anne Hayes (AH):** Having the country directors there was very important.

**Nerina Cevra (NC):** It was a huge learning experience for them. Now they have an inside knowledge that positions them more as leaders of disability rights issues in each of their countries. They can go back to their ministries and say, “Well, did you know, actually what it says is THIS...” A lot of the countries don’t have the funds to send a delegation to the U.N., so the people representing a country may be not as invested in the outcome as a person with a disability. Back in their countries the government is waiting for someone who has first-hand knowledge, and it’s great to put the directors in that kind of position.

## **SR: Tell me about the role of Adnan Al Aboudi, the LSN Director from Jordan.**

**AH:** This time Mr. Aboudi served as a government representative at the negotiations, on behalf of the government of Jordan. Officially, only governments have a say in the convention process. Everything a government says is put up on a big white board on a computer. Everyone else can comment on what is on the board, but an NGO is not usually going to change what’s been put up on the board by a government. That is why it was so important for LSN to have a regional representative. Mr. Aboudi can go out and say, for instance, to the government of South Africa, “This is my view on rehabilitation,” as someone who has lived through it. Where else are these governments going to get that kind of perspective? Mr. Aboudi was there officially as part of the Jordanian delegation, so whatever he had to say was typed up and put on the board for consideration.

## **SR: What was the role of Manuel Chauque, the LSN Director from Mozambique?**

**NC:** This was Mr. Chauque’s first time at the U.N. meetings. He did a really good job of lobbying. Someone can explain and explain how this process works, but until you really get in there and experience it,

and sit in on these meetings, you can’t really understand. Chauque developed a great relationship with the representative from Namibia, as well as other African delegates. He intervened a number of times on LSN’s behalf, recommending the language LSN had drafted for consideration, so that was really great.

## **SR: How was the role of Plamenko Priganica, the LSN Director from Bosnia, different this time?**

**NC:** Mr. Priganica was there last year, so he’d gotten into the groove of how things work. He is more involved in the Balkan issues now, and more people know him. So when he’s talking to people from those countries, he can bring up certain people from the foreign ministry that they all know. He has that part of it down. He is very good at lobbying, which is, frankly, a lot of conversation and dialogue. He did a presentation on the right to health, peer support, and the right to rehabilitation. He also did a public intervention specifically on Article 18 (Participation in Political and Public Life). He read it in English, which he was really proud of. The group of NGOs participating in the convention process has a coordinating body called a Steering Committee, where Priganica did a great job representing LSN on this steering committee.

## **SR: What was Bekele Gonfa’s role, as the LSN Director from Ethiopia?**

**AH:** Ethiopia’s government delegation was not really present, as Ethiopia has a very small office at the U.N. This was Bekele’s first experience at the U.N. He did a really good job of connecting with the Kenyan delegation, which is very large. It was really good to know what the Kenyans were thinking and to have that close relationship. Bekele also gave an intervention, even though English is not his first language. He speaks some English, and he recognizes that public speaking is something he needs to work on. So, for him to get up in front of a huge group at the U.N. and speak, knowing it was one of his personal weaknesses, was huge personal growth for him. And he did a great job. ■

## Perspectives from Abroad

*LSN's six country Network Directors assembled in Washington, DC, during May for training. Survivor Report asked each of them to share perspectives on their work back home.*

**Survivor Report:** What have been some of your successes since running a network office for LSN?

**Manuel Chauque, Mozambique Network Director:** We have helped survivors acquire mobility devices through the local rehabilitation center, and many houses have been built for survivors who need them. On an economic level, many groups have been established to run businesses and generate income. In addition, LSN, in cooperation with various institutions, have helped insure that existing laws such as those requiring wheelchair ramps in municipal buildings like airports, hospitals, and schools.

**Bekele Gonfa, Ethiopia Network Director:** On March 1st, we had a meeting with many disability groups about the Mine Ban Treaty (on the anniversary of the Treaty becoming international law). Many groups came to show support. We filmed interviews that are still running on TV. We had radio and newspaper coverage as well, so many people were educated about the issue. Ethiopia has not yet ratified the Mine Ban Treaty.

**Plamenko Priganica, Bosnia Herzegovina Network Director:** We have successfully worked with survivors from many ethnic backgrounds, and that has been very gratifying. We have also had a lot of success lobbying for a change in construction laws, and now all new buildings have to be wheelchair accessible. LSN Bosnia has been very active in helping the government create its new national victim assistance strategy.



**Manuel Chauque, Mozambique Network Director, listening to a translation of the debate at the U.N. in May.**

have received support and graduated from LSN assistance to depend on themselves.

**Nguyen Hoa Hoc, Vietnam Network Director:** In a short period of time, we have been able to improve life



**Left: Adnan Al Aboudi, Jordan Network Director, and Plamenko Priganica, Bosnia Herzegovina Network Director**

for survivors, and to increase awareness of LSN to survivors and other partners in the country.

**Jesus Martinez, El Salvador Network Director:** LSN has given assistance to many survivors who now live happily and independently. LSN has helped open doors with the Ministry of Health in El Salvador, including training programs in the health sector and hospitals for people who deal directly with survivors and other people with disabilities.

**SR: What has been your biggest challenge?**

**Vietnam:** The needs of survivors are high, and it's hard to provide all of the assistance they need in each sector. We still have a small staff, so we can't assist all of the survivors who need us. There is pressure from our government partners to help more survivors even faster.

**El Salvador:** One challenge is expanding to additional regions of El Salvador. We just don't have the human resource base to do the research or adequately staff an expansion. Another challenge is that there are a lot of disability laws in El Salvador that aren't being enforced, due mainly to a lack of political will. We are working to implement these laws by being involved in a council that advises the government.

*continued on page 4*

## Perspectives *continued from page 3*

**Mozambique:** The main challenge is the recovery process for the survivors. It is the center of everything for us at the health level. We have tremendous difficulty in getting adequate mobility devices for survivors and medical assistance for the elderly. **Bosnia:** The biggest challenge is that there are too many levels of government throughout the country, making it difficult to function fully and to effectively help survivors receive government services. Also, trying to resolve post-conflict issues will take years.



**Jesus Martinez, El Salvador Network Director**

**Jordan:** My biggest challenge is to develop a strong economic opportunity program. We need to build the basic road to economic rehabilitation, to make our work easier, and that includes vocational training, awareness, raising the capacities of people with disabilities and funding micro-enterprise.

**Ethiopia:** Partnerships with government organizations are very challenging. For our March 1st event on the Mine Ban Treaty, government officials promised to show up, but then didn't. Things like that are very frustrating.

### **SR: What would you like to see happen for survivors in your country?**

**Mozambique:** In health, we would like to see the quality of mobility devices improved. We want adequate crutches and good prostheses. Also, we would like to see free medical assistance and medicine for survivors. Economically, we would like to see the government support sustainable businesses that survivors run in teams like a small mill or welding shop.

**El Salvador:** I would like for survivors to live more dignified lives, and for people to have respect for their rights. I would like to change the perspective



**Nguyen Hoa Hoc, Vietnam Network Director**

that people with disabilities have to be excluded. This is a long-term challenge because you have to educate society and change attitudes.

**Jordan:** I wish to see Jordan as a mine-free country, and to not hear about landmine accidents anymore, ever. I would like for landmine survivors and people with disabilities to have the same opportunities as others and enjoy their rights without any struggle.

**Ethiopia:** I would like to see all survivors become self-sustaining individuals, to be integrated into society, live their lives and enjoy their families. Not just survivors, but all people with disabilities.

**Bosnia:** I would like to see survivors claim their rights, and we would like to help as many people as possible through LSN.

**Vietnam:** I'd like to see better living conditions for survivors, and better opportunities for job training.

### **SR: What is your message to survivors?**

**Mozambique:** It's each survivor's prerogative to do what they wish with his or her life, but I would encourage them to think about life and the future – don't just stay where you are, but think about what you can do. It's up to you. No one can do it for you.

**El Salvador:** I would like to say to other survivors that the fact that you have lost a limb, an arm, a leg, does not make you less important. You have a place in society and the same rights as any other person and you have to fight for those rights.

**Bosnia:** Even with your injury, you will be able to live a full life again. LSN will assist you.

**Jordan:** I know that losing a limb is one of the most difficult phases in our lives, but it was a means to keep us alive, that is why we need to enjoy life to its



**Bekele Gonfa, Ethiopia Network Director**

*continued on page 5*

---

## Landmine Kills New Hampshire Soldier in Afghanistan

*Over 50% of people who step on a landmine die. While Survivor Report usually profiles survivors of landmines, this month we profile a landmine victim who did not survive.*

Army Captain Daniel W. Eggers, 28, a soldier in the First Battalion, Third Special Forces Group (Airborne) serving in Afghanistan, was killed when his vehicle struck a land mine in Kandahar, on May 28, 2004. Eggers, 28, died along with Staff Sergeant Robert J. Mogensen, 26, of Leesville, La., Private First Class Joseph A. Jeffries, 21, who was assigned to the Army Reserve's 329th Psychological Operations Company, and Petty Officer First Class Brian J. Ouellette, 37, a 15-year Navy veteran. All four were killed when the Humvee they were riding in ran over a mine. Eggers, was born in New Hampshire and was a Citadel graduate fluent in Arabic. The eldest of seven children, Eggers was a role model to his brothers and sisters, his father said. "Everything (his brothers and sisters) did that they thought was important, they sought his approval,"

William Eggers said. This was particularly true of Billy Eggers, 22, who was deployed to Iraq last year at around the same time his older brother went to Afghanistan.

After a brief leave, Billy Eggers will return to Iraq June 17. "Some of the brothers and sisters aren't too happy about that, but we don't want to discourage him because Danny was his role model, and he doesn't want to let Danny down," William Eggers said. "He was very smart. He was studious. Oh, he was caring. He didn't have a mean streak. He loved his family." Eggers leaves behind a wife, Rebecca, and two sons, 3 and 5, who live in North Carolina. Rebecca Eggers, an Army captain, was supposed to be deployed three times, but the military never sent her, William Eggers said. William Eggers said he knew little about his son's mission in Afghanistan. The only information he has of his son's death came in a letter an Army major handed the family on Saturday. It said Eggers's vehicle averted one land mine, only to hit another. "The Secretary of the Army extends his deepest sympathy to you and your family for your loss," William Eggers said, quoting from the letter. "That's the only thing I know." ■

---

### Perspectives *continued from page 4*

maximum. We should use any opportunity to also help others. Remember there are a lot of people around you that love you and want you to stay with them.

**Ethiopia:** Disability doesn't mean inability. You can do anything anyone else can, LSN is behind you. Be courageous and don't give up.

#### **SR: What would you like to say to donors and friends of LSN?**

**El Salvador:** LSN is making good use of your resources and support, and these resources are making many survivors around the world very happy. Keep it coming!

**Jordan:** There are many survivors around the world who are injured and in pain. Losing a limb can result in making one live with the least possible means. Where a person might have had it all before, in a moment, he has nothing. In that moment, where a person loses

happiness and hope, the support that a survivor gets from LSN helps him recover and draw his path to happiness and hope. Thank you.

**Bosnia:** We have made a great deal of difference for the lives of many landmine survivors, but the work is not done, and we are just starting.

**Vietnam:** LSN's work and principles are effectively being applied in my country. LSN is really helping survivors.

**Mozambique:** I would like to draw their attention to the difficulties and limitations our team faces in the field and that I would like the donors to do their utmost to help LSN overcome all these problems and to help LSN implement our dreams for survivors.

**Ethiopia:** Thank you for the collaboration and cooperation. LSN's vision is very broad, not short-sighted in scope. Share that with others. There is still so much more to be done. ■

---

## One Step Closer *continued from page 1*

dramatic barriers that people face, from employment to education, to access to court or political and public life, will be addressed. The treaty will help wipe away laws that actually discriminate against people with disabilities and policies that create barriers to employment or education. If countries sign and ratify, they would be obliged to set in motion legislative reform to bring their own domestic law within the range of obligations set forth in this treaty.

### **SR: How will it change life for individuals on the ground, so to speak?**

**Kathy Guernsey (KG):** Nobody would argue that the treaty is a panacea. The benefits of The Treaty will not be immediate. However, when states become parties to the treaty, under international law, they are obliged to be in compliance with the treaty. The treaty will set forth minimum standards. In those instances where governments have policies, regulations, or legislation that contravene the treaty, they will have to change it. They will no longer be permitted to have laws that discriminate against people with disabilities. The treaty will provide governments with a framework for those legislative processes. Many governments have addressed people with disabilities as charity cases, or as patients needing to be fixed. However, the philosophy of this treaty really looks at society and social barriers. The problem is not the person; it's society. The treaty encourages governments to really respect the potential and capabilities of people with disabilities as contributing members of society, who not only should be involved with society, but need to be involved.

**JL:** If we develop an effective treaty, it will create international minimum standards that domestically, states must adhere to. It will also create a type of international watchdog mechanism that will pressure governments to comply over time with the obligations set forth in the treaty, via national legislation and policy making. The treaty will require governments to report on progress they're making, obstacles they're confronting, and create a healthier link between national and international practices and policies--perhaps through a coordinating body at the national level. What we see in most countries around the world, even in the United States, is a very fragmented approach to disability laws. You've got legislation over here dealing with employment; somewhere else dealing with education; pieces of legislation relating to rehabilitation and health issues, transportation, etc., elsewhere. These issues are typically overseen by several different ministries or

departments. Rarely do you have a body that coordinates communication among the different ministries in a coherent way, and therefore you rarely have a coherent disability policy. Even in the United States, you have the National Council on Disability, but it doesn't really possess the resources or authority to coordinate effectively. What successful international treaties do is create and mobilize networks of grassroots groups across the world, who are able to link not only into what is going on at the international level, as far as what's going on with the monitoring body, but also nationally, providing pressure within their country. We're hoping this treaty, like others, will have both a top-down and a bottom-up effect.

### **SR: How have most countries looked at people with disabilities, and has this been a challenge in the process?**

**KG:** We heard some Asian countries referring to the concept of independent living as an issue of institutionalization. U.N. mission staff have not necessarily been involved in domestic implementation of their own national laws, and they make statements based on their personal understandings and prejudices. They have made comments that locking people up in institutions was not only the appropriate thing to do to people with disabilities, but it would benefit them. There was a complete lack of understanding that people with disabilities would like to have some choice in the matter.

### **SR: How does this treaty compare with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?**

**KG:** The convention will not necessarily tell states that they have to implement a specific piece of legislation, like the ADA. How countries implement the treaty is up to them. If a country wants to develop an anti-discrimination piece of legislation, that would be a common approach and we would encourage that. How countries implement the treaty and make its minimum standards a reality in that country will very much depend on that countries' own situation, culture and context.

**JL:** I think the way to draw a parallel between the ADA and this treaty is to say that there are certain concepts embodied in the ADA that may make their way into this treaty. The concept of "reasonable accommodation," for instance, or modification of an environment is included in this treaty. However, the treaty is going to be much broader than the ADA. This convention is not just a civil rights issues; it is much broader than that.

*continued on page 7*

---

## One Step Closer *continued from page 6*

### **SR: What do you see as LSN's role if the treaty becomes international law?**

**JL:** Once this treaty is adopted and we move into ratification and implementation at the national level, particularly in developing countries, there will be a need for quite dramatic changes in law and policy. The formulation of national disability strategies and legislation to bring these laws into effect will require a tremendous amount of technical assistance for many developing countries. It will also require capacity building for these countries to comply with their reporting obligations. In order for all of that to happen, the disability communities within these countries will need to be mobilized and have the resources, tools, and training in order to feed into that process on the national level, and in some cases, regional or international level. LSN's role in mine-affected countries will be to continue to help support the mobilization of survivors and disability organizations and human rights groups. We also ensure that disability issues are part of development planning, and that landmine survivors and other people with disabilities are at the table when development projects are being planned. When new schools are being built, for example,

to make sure they are wheelchair accessible and include all children.

**KG:** The participation of people with disabilities in this process has been rather unusual. NGOs have had a role to play in this treaty development process that has been very different from past processes. NGOs can not only observe, but speak as well. In January, when the Working Group put together a draft text, governments and people with disabilities sat at the same table. It was very powerful. Government representatives said they had not been at the same table as People with Disabilities before. With the participation of people with disabilities, it was clearer to the government representatives why it was so important to do this. The governments acknowledged that NGO's have an important role to play, and it inspired them to get involved even more.

**JL:** To see a group that is so traditionally marginalized and left out of international and even regional decision-making, having a role – it was very inspiring and empowering. It was even nicer seeing members of disability groups from developing countries participating at such a high level. It's really a South-driven process ("South" being the developing world). They are the countries initiating this, generating tremendous participation in the process. ■

---

### **JERRY WHITE** *continued on from page 1*

war. One survivor I met there, Mustafa, told me, "I don't want anyone's pity, just work. Work gets me out of the house and changes my focus from the past and my war injury to the future and my family." Mustafa is now drawing up plans to rebuild a cherry orchard on his family's property, dormant since it was scorched in the war. Mustafa is working with Izo, LSN's community-based outreach worker, and a group of eight other survivors—mixing Croats, Muslims, and Serbs. They meet monthly to share their struggles and draw up plans to fulfill their dreams. The support group was their own idea, but they were brought together by LSN. Izo thanked me profusely (and I, in turn, thank you LSN supporters) for not disappearing after the war. Most international organizations, he explained, had come immediately after the war, but soon left for new emergencies in Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan. If there's anything we understand at LSN, it's that recovery takes time. LSN is in it for the duration.

In late July, the world community will celebrate the re-opening of the historic bridge connecting east and west Mostar. The bridge is a symbol of both the past and the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The past, because it was destroyed in a bitter conflict that pitted neighbor against neighbor; and the future because, despite 40% unemployment, long-held divisions and much destruction of property, communities are planning for the future. On my first trip with the Princess of Wales, about the only thing that all Bosnians could agree on was that landmines were their common enemy in peace time. Now, communities are working to re-build their homes and their relationships with each other. LSN is helping get survivors back on their feet. It is bringing together fragmented communities. As we've seen time and time again, when people come together, when they lean on each other and work as a team, lives are changed, and hope is restored. Here's to celebrating the "new" old bridge in Mostar and the work of survivors throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. ■