

WCPT calls on members to push for weapons ban



WCPT has set out its opposition to the use of landmines, nuclear, chemical and biological agents, and other weapons of armed violence in a new draft statement. WCPT encourages member organisations and their members to work towards the elimination of landmines, nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of armed violence.

The draft position statement, which has been put together following consultation with WCPT's member organisations, regions and subgroups, builds on an existing WCPT motion and will be subject to formal approval at the General Meeting in 2011. It points out that health service delivery systems in countries where significant violence has occurred are rarely able to respond to the demands placed on them.

Landmines, cluster munitions and remnants of weapons of war in particular pose a threat to health and continue to be triggered long after conflicts have ended. "Rehabilitation services and equipment provision are often poorly funded," says the statement. "Services are often inadequate to enable individuals to achieve the full functional recovery of which they have a right."

It says that physical therapists are instrumental to the "effective treatment, rehabilitation and social inclusion of civilian populations, refugees, evacuees, internally displaced people, returnees and wounded armed forces personnel". Where physical therapists practise in conflict zones, they have a right to be protected in carrying out their service provision.

Member organisations can work towards the elimination of weapons of armed violence by:

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- encouraging governments to comply with international declarations, conventions and treaties
- taking an active role in providing physical therapy services to survivors of conflict
- raising awareness of the consequences of armed violence and weapons of war
- adopting an active role in disaster response and preparedness plans.

“WCPT member organisations have an important role to play in giving voice to the issues, and working towards national legislation to support a ban on landmines and other weapons of war,” says WCPT Secretary General Brenda Myers. “The new statement will provide them with a tool to put their case to governments and other national bodies.”

The draft statement is on the WCPT website: www.wcpt.org/node/32578

A new section with key facts and useful resources is available at www.wcpt.org/node/32597

