



Landmine Victim Assistance Process Support

When Afghanistan and Switzerland assumed the role of Co-Chairs of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention's Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration in December 2005 they sought to build upon the efforts of their predecessors (Nicaragua and Norway) by assisting the 24 most relevant States Parties in inter-ministerial efforts to enhance victim assistance objective setting and planning. To assist in these efforts, in January 2006, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) established the temporary position of victim assistance specialist, with project funding provided by Switzerland.

The principal role of the victim assistance specialist is to provide *process support* to the 24 States Parties that have reported responsibility for significant numbers of mine survivors. These States Parties are Afghanistan, Albania, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, and Yemen.

The principal aim of *process support* is to improve the capacity of the relevant States Parties to move forward in setting their own specific objectives and developing plans of action that would lead to a tangible improvement in the services available, and consequently, the daily lives of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Such progress would serve to fulfil the aims of the *Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009* as it relates to victim assistance.

In 2006, some level of support was provided to all 24 relevant States Parties in the form of advice to consider in their efforts to establish so-called SMART objectives – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-



bound – and develop a plan of action. In addition, intensive *process support* country visits were made to Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Guinea Bissau, Serbia, Tajikistan, and Yemen. This support included one-on-one meetings with officials from relevant ministries to raise awareness of the issue and to stimulate inter-ministerial coordination, and outreach to relevant international

and other organizations to ensure that their efforts in support of the State Party were not being duplicated but rather were both incorporated

into and incorporate mine victim assistance efforts. Mine survivors were also consulted.

Significant progress has been made in 2006 in strengthening objectives and developing or revising plans in Afghanistan, Albania, Guinea-Bissau, Tajikistan, and Yemen, with the engagement of relevant ministries and other actors. In Afghanistan and Tajikistan inter-ministerial workshops were conducted to bring together all relevant actors to discuss and consolidate improvements on objectives and the development of plans. The first National Victim Assistance Workshop in Afghanistan brought together



some 90 stakeholders, including representatives from seven ministries, the Department of Disaster Preparedness, eight international agencies, and around 20 national and international non government organizations, including several representing people with disabilities. Relevant ministries are actively engaged in the process of developing and implementing plans of action in other relevant States Parties, including in Thailand and Uganda. Engagement in the process has also increased, including through participation in the work of the Convention by relevant specialists representing several States Parties.

However, efforts to advance national planning and objective-setting through inter-ministerial coordination have shown that these are challenging tasks for States Parties due in part to a lack of capacity and other competing priorities. One of the key lessons that became apparent during the year is that if a meaningful difference is going to be made in enhancing the well-being and guaranteeing the rights of landmine victims, victim assistance must no longer be seen as an abstraction but rather as a concrete set of actions for which specific States Parties hold ultimate responsibility.

Much more needs to be done to achieve the aims of the *Nairobi Action Plan* by 2009 in relation to victim assistance. It will require committed and coordinated efforts at the national level by all relevant ministries and key actors in the disability sector to avoid duplication and to ensure a holistic approach to meeting the needs of mine victims. It will also require commitment from the international community to assist affected States Parties to address their identified needs. In this regard, the ISU appreciates the ongoing application by the UNDP of its capacity building mandate and the WHO of its aims as they relate to injury prevention and surveillance and health sector development.

In response to the priorities of the Convention's presidency and the 2006-2007 Standing Committee Co-Chairs, the ISU will continue to assist rele-

vant States Parties to reach the ultimate goal of improving the quality of daily life of mine survivors and other people with disabilities.

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For more information, please see <http://www.gichd.ch/29.0.html>
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