

**PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE  
(Mozambique, Belgium, Chile and Italy)**

**Intersessional Meetings 22-24 May 2019**

**Observations of the Committee on the information submitted by Colombia**

1. The Committee welcomes the submission by Colombia of its Article 7 report for the calendar year 2018 containing updated information on its victim assistance activities. Based on the information provided, the Committee presents the following preliminary observations.

**Mine casualties**

2. The Committee observed that Colombia did not report on casualties in 2018, and would welcome disaggregated information in this regard, as well as information concerning the entire number of mine victims that have been registered in the country.

**Assessment of needs, the availability and gaps in services (Action #12)**

3. The Committee observed that Colombia reported on holding two meetings of the Victim Assistance Intersectoral Technical Subcommittee in May and December 2018 to assess the overall victim assistance programmes and services provided to mine/UXO victims.
4. The Committee would welcome further information on results of the initiatives relating to surveillance, health, social security, and elimination of discrimination reported by Colombia last year, with the purpose of filling in service gaps.

**Time-bound and measurable objectives (Action #13)**

5. The Committee observed that Colombia reported that the Victim Assistance Intersectoral Technical Subcommittee had discussed the need to establish an action plan to ensure a more coordinated effort in 2019. The report also stated that in accordance with Law 1448, the DIGNITY AND MEMORY (DIME) strategy was designed and adapted in support of the mines/ERW/UXO victims.
6. The Committee would welcome further information on the status of the said action plan and the DIME strategy including their links to the implementation of the actions 12 to 18 of the Maputo Action Plan along with an electronic copy of the plan of action, if possible.

**Enhancement in the integration of victim assistance into broader frameworks, including the allocation of budgets for their implementations (Action #14)**

7. The Committee observed that Colombia did not report on progress in the integration of victim assistance into broader frameworks neither provided information on allocation of budgets for victim assistance programme and it would welcome information in this regard.

**Increase availability of and accessibility to rehabilitation services, economic inclusion opportunities and social protection measures for all mine victims, regardless of their gender and age (Action #15)**

8. The Committee observed that Colombia continue to implement requirements outlined under action 15 to increase the availability of and accessibility to services, by undertaking the following activities in 2018:
  - a. In coordination with the IOM, a project was developed to provide psychological support to communities affected by mines/UXOs through which direct and indirect victims from the affected communities have been hired as community liaisons in the departments of Cauca, Nariño, Caquetá and Antioquia;
  - b. With the purpose of enhancing inclusion and participation of indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities, several activities were assumed, including but not limited to the followings:
    - i. Efforts were made to increase participation in mine action programmes and enhance local capacities, especially the communities represented through 1. Organización Indígena de Antioquia –OIA. 2. Resguardo Indígena Awá la Turbia 3. Consejo Comunitario Unión del Río Chagüi 4. Consejo Comunitario Alto Mira y Frontera;
    - ii. Efforts to assist women and victims including by facilitating their participation in several occasions in the Technical Subcommittee addressing relevant issues for assistance to victims (action plan and gender-sensitive approach, intersectoral efforts);
    - iii. Efforts were made to increase engagement of affected communities such as Afro-descendant and Black Community Councils in mine action activities including planning and priority settings;
    - iv. Mine action authorities continue to enhance efforts to address remaining challenges in affected communities.
9. The Committee would welcome more information - disaggregated by sex and age - on mine victims that have benefited from services such as rehabilitation, social, economic inclusion, education, health, and other mainstream and specialised services in 2018.

#### **Strengthen local capacities and enhance coordination (Action #15)**

10. The Committee observed that Colombia was acting upon its commitments under action 15 by reporting activities to strengthen local capacities in mine-affected communities and on a continued effort by the Intersectoral Technical Subcommittee to ensure coordination in victim assistance.

#### **Inclusion and participation of mine victims (Action #16)**

11. The Committee observed that Colombia reported on efforts in improving inclusion and participation including in mines/UXO affected communities, including the first National Meeting of Representatives of the Victims, in 2018. The Committee encourages Colombia to increase efforts in ensuring more effective participation and inclusion of mine victims in all matters that affect them.

#### **Removing barriers and raising awareness (Actions #15 and #17)**

12. The Committee observed that Colombia did not report on progress in implementing aspects of action 15 and action 17 and would welcome information in this regard including on progress made to remove physical, attitudinal and communication barriers as concerned mine victims/persons with disabilities in the country.

**Measurable improvements, challenges and priorities for assistance in advance of the next Review Conference (Action #18)**

13. The Committee observed in the information submitted by Colombia including its report submitted last year that the country was demonstrating measurable improvements in meeting the needs of mine victims, and that a number of challenges have been also identified including in areas of participation, socio-economic stabilisation, access to services in affected rural areas and the need to strengthen psychosocial support to mines and UXOs victims, for which international cooperation would be required, the report indicated.
14. The Committee would welcome more information on efforts made to enhance the integration of victim assistance into broader policies and programmes and encourages Colombia to step up efforts to achieve the objectives of actions 12 to 18 of the Maputo Action Plan, by the Oslo Review Conference this year.