

**Statement by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on
Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration**

(Australia and Uganda)

23 June 2011

As Co-Chairs, Australia and Uganda are continuing the work of our predecessors to ensure the successful implementation of the Convention in relation to assisting the victims.

In particular, we have sought to facilitate progress in the application of the victim assistance understandings we first adopted in 2004 and then reaffirmed at the 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World.

In the Cartagena Action Plan, we made fourteen detailed commitments to assisting the victims, including three that are found in the cooperation and assistance section of the Action Plan.

In adopting the Cartagena Action Plan, we agreed to do a lot of things:

We agreed to address issues of inclusion, coordination, data collection, legislation and policies, planning, monitoring, evaluation, expert participation, capacity building, accessibility, good practice, gender sensitivity, awareness raising and resource mobilisation.

Progress has been made and we will hear the extent to which progress has been made from relevant States Parties in the next agenda item.

In advance of that, and in order to understand the progress, we wish to recall the following fundamental understandings that have been agreed to by the States Parties concerning "victim assistance":

- We wish to recall that the States Parties have adopted a non-discriminatory approach, agreeing that "victim assistance efforts should promote the development of services, infrastructure and policies to address the rights and needs of all women, girls, boys and men with disabilities, regardless of the cause of disability".ⁱ

- We wish to recall that the States Parties have recognised that "victim assistance is a process that involves an age- and gender-sensitive, rights-based and holistic approach in which each component – emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and social and economic reintegration / inclusion – is essential (...)".ⁱⁱ
- We wish to recall that the States Parties have agreed that "victim assistance does not require the development of new fields or disciplines but rather calls for ensuring that existing health care, social service systems, rehabilitation programmes and legislative and

policy frameworks are adequate to meet the needs of all citizens – including landmine (survivors)”.ⁱⁱⁱ

- We wish to recall that the States Parties have expressed that “victim assistance is more than just a medical or rehabilitation issue – it is also a human rights issue.”^{iv}
- We wish to recall that the States Parties have recorded that “inclusive development” is “an appropriate mechanism to ensure that landmine victims and other persons with disabilities have access to the same opportunities in life — for healthcare, social services, a life-sustaining income, education and participation in the community — as every other sector of a society”.

The final point that we, the Co-Chairs, wish to highlight before we begin hearing from States is the issue of national ownership.

National ownership is fundamental to sustainability and sustainability of services is crucial to improving the quality of daily life of mine victims and other persons with disabilities.

National ownership means relevant authorities having the will, the resources, and the capacity to develop and implement plans, to coordinate activities, and to provide services.

As Co-Chairs we will continue our efforts with relevant States Parties to facilitate progress in achieving the aim of the full and effective participation and inclusion of mine victims and other persons with disabilities in the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities.

ⁱ Final Report of the 30 November – 4 December Second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, Part II, Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention 2005-2009, APLC/CONF/2009/9, 17 June 2010, paragraph 100.

ⁱⁱ Ibid, paragraph 106.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, paragraph 117.

^{iv} Final Report of the 29 November – 3 December First Review Conference, paragraph 68.