

Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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MEETING REPORT

Co-Chairs:

Mexico: Ambassador Antonio de Icaza,
Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva

Switzerland: Ambassador Erwin H. Hofer, *Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament, Geneva*

Rapporteurs

Japan: M. Y. Morino, *Deputy Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Japan*

Nicaragua: Ambassador L. Mejia Solis, *Director General for International Organisations, Nicaragua*

I. Introduction

1. The Standing Committee of Experts on Victim Assistance, Socio-Economic Reintegration and Mine Awareness (SCE-VA), established in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the 3-7 May 1999 First Meeting of States Parties (FMSP), met in Geneva from 15 th to 17 th September 1999 and from 29 th to 31 st March 2000.

2. At the First Meeting of States Parties, it was agreed in accordance with paragraph 25 of the final report of the FMSP and its Annex IV that Ambassador Antonio De Icaza (Mexico) and Ambassador Erwin Hofer (Switzerland) would serve as Co-Chairs of the SCE-VA, with M. Kimura (Japan) and Miss Cecilia Sanchez (Nicaragua) serving as Co-Rapporteurs.

3. Representatives of 43 States Parties, 9 States that signed but have not ratified the Convention, 9 other States, UNMAS, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDDA, UNIDIR, WHO, OAS, the ICRC, the ICBL, the GICHD and from numerous other relevant organizations were registered as participants in the SCE-VA meetings.

4. The meetings of the SCE-VA received administrative support from the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).

II. Matters reviewed by the SCE-VA

General

5. At the first SCE-VA meeting it was decided to establish six Network Groupswith the objective of addressing specific issues coordinated by facilitators. These were:

- > Collection and Dissemination of Guidelines
- > Information and Data Collection
- > Victim Assistance Reporting
- > Mine/Uxo Awareness
- > Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs
- > Donor Coordination

The deliberations and outcomes of the Network Groups were discussed during the second session of the SCE-VA.

6. The SCE-VA carried forward, in its six networking groups, an in-depth analysis of Victim Assistance, as well as its conceptual definition, based on the reality of mine-affected countries. Article 6 of the Mine Ban Treaty, international laws and recognized principles of humanitarian and development cooperation

have guided the work of the SCE-VA. Different institutions have simultaneously further developed their guidelines and methodologies.

7. Based on a spirit of partnership, shared commitment, and responsibility between civil society and Governments, a comprehensive and integrated approach is being promoted by the SCE-VA. The SCE-VA approach rests upon the foundation of a three-tiered definition of "landmine victim" which includes the directly affected individuals, their families, and mine affected communities. Victim Assistance - seen at an individual, family, and national level - is multi-faceted, and requires a broad range of activities from prevention, emergency medical care, physical and psychological rehabilitation to socio-economic integration. Assistance to victims of landmines is defined as an integrated part of assistance to all victims of violence and trauma and persons with disabilities.

8. Currently, Victim Assistance takes place mainly within the framework of Humanitarian Action. In order to guarantee a long-term sustainable solution, assistance to victims must also be integrated in a broader context of post-conflict reconstruction and development strategies, without losing sight of the directly affected individuals, families and communities who are specifically targeted by the Mine Ban Treaty. Public health, community development, conflict and violence prevention, comprise the main contexts in which Victim Assistance should be integrated. It is crucial that both recognized principles of humanitarian and development cooperation and proactive inclusion of specific measures relevant to meeting the needs of this largely marginalized group are necessary.

Collection and Dissemination of Victim Assistance Guidelines

9. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, Nicaragua and Mexico were entrusted to facilitate the work of the Network Group on collection and dissemination of guidelines. The main objective of the Network Group was to try to make the existing victim assistance, including socio-economic reintegration and mine awareness, guidelines available to the actors who deal directly with victims assistance programs. This objective was identified in the informal meeting and the informal consultations with interested parties conducted by the Group Facilitators. To achieve this objective, the Network Group pursued the following tasks:

- > Called upon all interested actors to contribute in the collection of existing guidelines;
- > Collected all existing victim assistance guidelines received;
- > Discussed how to disseminate the received existing guidelines; and
- > Discussed the need to disseminate a list with the collected guidelines and relevant information to interested parties. This list, which should be updated regularly, was distributed during the Second Meeting of the SCE-VA. It contains all relevant information for interested parties and is available on the website of the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining: www.gichd.ch

Information and Data Collection

10. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, Switzerland was entrusted to facilitate the work of the Network Group on information and data collection. After consultation with some interested parties, both governmental and non-governmental, the Network Group discussed a more systematic and reliable data collection, along with the sharing of information aimed at facilitating humanitarian and development programs and Mine Action. In its effort it focused on delivering base line data and quantifying the impact on public health and reintegration systems, on human and socio-economic development and on the daily life of people and communities. The Network Group emphasized that surveillance and data collection on victims are not an objective per se, but should be part of an integrated national policy to prevent injuries and assist victims and to facilitate better allocation of resources.

11. National ownership, capacity building and institutional development are principles that could be followed, allowing the adaptation of methodologies to reality in the mine-affected countries. The countries could receive methodological support rather than solutions. Data collection should be handled sensitively, duly taking into consideration the often precarious circumstances of the victims and taking care to avoid causing further psychological damage by posing intrusive questions and by raising victims hope when, oftentimes, no actions directly beneficial to them will follow.

Victim Assistance Reporting

12. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, ICBL and Handicap International were entrusted to facilitate the work of the Network Group on victim assistance reporting. The mandate of the Network Group was to propose a voluntary reporting mechanism. Intensive consultations resulted in a draft proposal to the the second meeting of the SCE-VA.

13. There is no explicit requirement in the Mine Ban Treaty for countries to report on their contributions to Victim Assistance and Mine Awareness. However, the Treaty does require, in Article 6 Section 3, that **"Each State in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and the rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programs."**

As stated in the report of the Standing Committee of Experts on Victim Assistance of September 1999: **"Strategies for measuring progress in victim assistance (indicators of success) need to be developed on several levels: the program level, on the impact of national coordination bodies, and on progress made towards objectives of the SCE process, ie implementation of the Treaty provision for Victim Assistance"**.

14. After consultation with some interested parties, both governmental and non-governmental, a number of ideas were identified for further consideration and a victim assistance reporting form developed.

Mine/Uxo Awareness

15. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, ICBL and ICRC was entrusted to facilitate the work of the Network Group on Mine/UXO awareness. Appropriate Mine/UXO awareness can save lives. The problems faced differ in each situation, but some common elements can be found. The Network Group was able to identify a number of common elements to make recommendations in this respect.

Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs

16. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, the ICBL Working Group on Victim Assistance was entrusted to facilitate the work of the Network Group on portfolio of victim assistance programs. The inclusion of a Victim Assistance provision in the Mine Ban Treaty has led to a global upsurge of interest in programs to assist those whose lives have been affected by landmines. To date there is no overview which groups together information about Victim Assistance programs from around the world. In an attempt to fill this gap the Network Group developed a preliminary version of a Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs.

Donor Coordination

17. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, Sweden was entrusted to facilitate the work of the Network Group on donor coordination. After consultation with some interested parties, both governmental and non-governmental, a number of ideas were identified for further consideration. Some of these ideas and concerns are listed below:

1. There is no common view among donors, be they governments or others, of the needs for assistance to victims of landmines. Needs are very different, countries are affected differently and needs shift from emergency or humanitarian to developmental. More recently, victim assistance is regarded as part of post-conflict reconstruction and conflict prevention.
2. Present levels of resource mobilization for victim assistance still do not meet the needs on the ground, even when taking into account the substantial medical, technical and in-kind contributions that have been generated.
3. There is an understanding among actors in victim assistance that a comprehensive, integrated and development approach should be adopted when providing victim assistance. Victim assistance is an integral part of the public health, medical and social responsibility to meet the needs of violence and trauma victims. Non-discrimination, country ownership, participation of those affected and national capacity building are the guiding principles.
4. Taking into consideration the guiding principle of the importance of national ownership and shared responsibility of mine-affected countries, coordination of victim assistance should primarily take place in the affected country. For example, the Strategic Framework, elaborated in some countries in cooperation with States, has proved to be a useful tool.
5. Global coordination is also needed. The Mine Action Support Group can play a vital role in donor coordination and resource mobilization. It should be encouraged to convene special meetings on victim assistance, enhanced by representatives from capitals.
6. NGOs, who are both operators on the ground and applicants for financial resources, are in need of transparent and clear structures. More information about the donors and where to seek financial resources should be made available to them.
7. Despite the desire to adopt a more developmental approach, victims should not have to wait until macro-level problems are solved before they begin to enjoy a better quality of life. Victims' expectations, based on commitments of signatories of the Treaty, must be met both on short and longer terms.

III. Actions taken or in process on the development of specific tools and instruments in order to assist the implementation of the Convention

General

18. Achievements of the SCE-VA thus far include the identification that a strategic, comprehensive and integrated approach to Victim Assistance is needed. Some very specific progress has occurred in the following areas:

- > Work towards efficient and effective means to monitor the implementation of the Victim Assistance provision of the Mine Ban Treaty.
- > Further development and rapid implementation of various programmatic and coordination tools including, inter alia, the Strategic Framework, the Portfolio and the Mine Investment Data Base.
- > Promotion of information exchange and discussion of various tools for data collection and mine awareness.
- > Promotion of various sets of Victim Assistance and Mine Awareness Guidelines.
- > A comprehensive and integrated approach to victim assistance has been promoted through the SCE-VA and has begun to be implemented in some mine-affected countries.

Information and Data Collection

19. Data collection should produce timely and reliable quantitative, as well as qualitative information, which could be translated rapidly into action. Community surveys are of equal importance as regular monitoring within national institutions. These types of data collection need to complement one another.

- > Quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the services of rehabilitation centers through surveys allows tracing most of the victims over a long time period.
- > Family and community, socio-economic and mine awareness aspects as well as information about those excluded by public and private services could be addressed through surveys.

Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs

20. The SCE-VA has developed a Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs, which will be made available at the Second Meeting of States Parties. The purposes of the Portfolio are:

- > To raise awareness among governments, donors, and program implementers on the range of activities that constitute Victim Assistance.
- > To promote transparency among all actors in Victim Assistance.
- > To highlight needs which have not been addressed because of lack of resources.
- > To facilitate contact and information sharing among actors in Victim Assistance.

However, the Portfolio also has some limits. They are:

- > Programs included in the Portfolio have not been judged or evaluated by the SCE-VA. Users are advised to make their own inquiries and judgments of the programs.
- > The present edition is far from complete. Entries will be added on a continuous basis. Active recruitment of entries from local NGOs, international organizations and government programs will be undertaken.
- > The Portfolio is not a substitute for in-depth investigation into a country's national priorities and plans. It is a tool to use in the early stages of a full needs assessment.
- > The SCE-VA supports the principle that national level assessments, long-term strategic planning, and government ownership of issues are crucial for the development of sustainable responses to the problems created by landmines. Programs included in the Portfolio do not necessarily contribute to operationalization of this principle.

Donor Coordination

21. The March SCE-VA meeting provided many useful tools for donors, including reporting systems, dissemination of information, methodologies and a portfolio of country and regional projects. This work facilitates donor coordination.

IV. Actions taken or in process to assist in the implementation of the Convention

Victim Assistance Reporting

22. Victim Assistance is an important part of the implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty. States Parties, by signing the Treaty, have indicated their will to bring concrete help to the victims of landmines. Reporting of actual assistance by States Parties will provide practical information that may assist others in contributing to and improving victim assistance programs, give insight into the overall evolution of victim assistance and enable assessment of where and how victims are being assisted, thus measuring progress.

23. One proposed reporting form, submitted to the SCE-VA meeting for its consideration, has a total of eleven open questions which could help States Parties to assess their financial and in-kind contributions to victim assistance. The exact method of reporting will continue to be elaborated.

V. Recommendations made by the SCE-VA

Collection and Dissemination of Victim Assistance Guidelines

24. It is recommended that governments establish a mechanism or designate a focal point through which information on this issue can be channeled to the appropriate actors on the field and to those elaborating victim assistance, socio-economic reintegration, mine awareness policies or programs. The focal point would be responsible for the identification of the appropriate recipients for the various guidelines as well as their dissemination.

25. It is recommended that governments, international and regional organizations, and NGOs interested or involved in victim assistance, socio-economic reintegration and mine awareness, take into account the existing guidelines when developing plans for victims assistance programs and promote a common culture based on the partnership of governments, international organizations, and civil society about their usefulness in the formulation of said programs.

26. It is recommended that to find ways and means to translate these guidelines into the languages of the mine-affected countries.

Information and Data Collection

27. It is recommended that, as part of the WHO normative mandate and cooperation with Ministries of Health, the WHO give due attention to enhance and assess the quality and performance of surveillance systems for victim assistance in affected countries.

28. It is recommended that governments, international organizations, and NGOs share their information at country level with the local bodies (Intersectoral Committees, MAC, Health Authorities, etc.) as well as make the information public. Governments of affected countries and organisations are encouraged to establish Victim Assistance websites.

29. It is recommended that new incidents be covered by an adapted health information system producing simple and rapid information as well as by IMSMA. Further development of the IMSMA accident incident module by GICHD-UNMAS, WHO, ICRC, PHR and other pertinent partners could be envisaged. Currently, the extension of the field module into the development aspects of Victim Assistance is not perceived as an immediate priority.

30. It is recommended that the World Health Organization(WHO) integrated surveillance system on victim and trauma be further developed and implemented in a gender des-aggregated form.

31. It is recommended that a platform/clearinghouse for exchange, dissemination and information be established in order to promote transparency. Concretely: (i) collecting and disseminating standards, methodologies and questionnaires, (ii) supporting the establishment national platforms and linking them to the international level, (iii) promoting the exchange of research, (iv) linking existing information about victims.

32. It is recommended that the GICHD assume the task of platform/clearing house and do a test module on their current website. It is also recommended to approach WHO in order to explore the possibility of engagement in this area.

33. It is recommended to promote testing of various tools for data collection in the field of victim assistance and mine awareness (for example, the Mine Investment Data Base, portfolios and socio-economic criteria).

Victim Assistance Reporting

34. It is recommended that all interested parties continue to work towards efficient and effective means to monitor the implementation of article 6, section 3 of the Mine Ban Treaty, taking into account the significant work of the Victim Assistance Reporting Network Group on a particular reporting tool,

Mine/Uxo Awareness

35. It recommended that funding must be timely, particularly with regards to displaced and returning populations, responsive, appropriate to specific country needs and circumstances, flexible, allowing for the changing reality at the field level, as well as geographically appropriate and coordinated at the donor level.

36. It is recommended that, with respect to methods and standards at the outset of programming, all agencies take into account the UNICEF International Guidelines. When developing programming, stake holders should define, together with the Mine Action coordination body in the country, the national standards and methodology for mine action.

37. It is recommended that guidelines be developed for monitoring and evaluation for mine/UXO awareness programming; training programs for Mine Awareness; and the integration of Mine/UXO Awareness training into existing national integrated mine action framework.

38. It is recommended that UNICEF continue to provide an open and transparent process ensuring wider participation among Mine/UXO Awareness actors.

39. It is recommended that UNMAS ensure the integration of the various mine action guidelines into the framework for the development of international standards for mine action.

40. It is recommended that coordination must occur whenever possible under the government umbrella, on various levels between:

- Different implementing agencies involved in Mine/UXO Awareness programs in order to define common messages, strategies and methodologies.

- Mine/UXO Awareness bodies and the wider mine action community including victim assistance organizations. Mine/UXO Awareness must be linked with clearance activities to prevent undermining of Mine/UXO Awareness messages and to respond to the communities' needs.

- Mine action actors and the "non mine action" humanitarian and development sector, which can bring alternative solutions to mine problems encountered by the communities.

41. It is recommended that, with respect to planning, Mine Awareness programs be implemented in partnership with national mine awareness institutions and actors at the community, regional, and national level, from program identification and assessment, to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. UNMAS should encourage the development of a mine/UXO Awareness function within IMSMA to ensure the development of an integrated effective mine action plan. Mine/UXO Awareness must be inclusive to all mine action programming, both emergency and long term.

42. It is recommended that for the successful implementation of mine action programming donors/NGOs and all relevant stakeholders ensure that monitoring and evaluation are integral and meaningful parts of all programming.

43. It is recommended that key stakeholders ensure that agencies undertaking Mine/UXO Awareness activities have a knowledge of and commitment to the existing UNICEF International Guidelines and have ideally a proven capacity and track record of successful programming. Existing Mine/UXO Awareness agencies should ensure that key documentation is widely available and accessible as learning tools for other agencies.

Portfolio of Victim Assistance Projects

44. It is recommended that government officials involved in victim assistance receive a copy of the Portfolio as a tool to facilitate contact with other Victim Assistance actors.

45. It is recommended that each States Party provide resources for the creation and maintenance of a national coordination body, under whose aegis would fall the development of a national Portfolio of Victim Programs. As this happens, parts of the present Portfolio will be subsumed into, replaced by, or linked to national portfolios.

Donor Coordination

46. It is recommended that interested parties continue to work together towards the development of suggestions and recommendations on methods pertaining to more effective donor coordination and long term resource mobilization with the aim of effectively meeting the immediate and ongoing needs of victims. ***The focus of this process should be to identify gaps and available resources.***

Continuation of the Work of the SCE-VA

47. It is recommended that, in its future work, the SCE-VA pay due attention to the issues of:

1. ***Coordination*** : Concerted efforts should be focused on clear and precise rationalization of the roles of the major interlocutors in victim assistance including, inter alia, governments, United Nations and other International Organizations (e.g. WHO, OAS), ICRC, Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g. ICBL/WGVA member NGOs) and others (e.g. GICHD).
2. ***Identifying gaps in terms of financial, technical and other resources needed for victim assistance*** : Financial, programmatic and coordination gaps must be identified at a global level in order to be able to work rationally toward filling those gaps. Although this goal has been facilitated to some degree through the SCE-VA process to date, further measures are needed.
3. ***Measuring progress toward implementation of the Mine Ban Treaty:***

A specific process should be undertaken. All global level reporting mechanisms related to or including victim assistance components should be examined closely, with the goal of clarifying exactly what information is or is not needed in relation to victim assistance.

48. It is recommended that, in order to increase the efficiency of the intersessional SCE-VA process, the future work of the SCE-VA be divided into two types of activities: "operationalization of work already begun" and "analysis of new themes".

I. OPERATIONALIZATION

a) Follow through on implementation of the most salient recommendations and action points of the network groups. Definition of responsibilities, indicators and reporting requirements to monitor the implementation of Network Group recommendations.

b) Setting of precise and concrete goals under each topic with a vision of what can be accomplished by the Second Meeting of States Parties and in the following year.

c) Collect and disseminate all documents and tools emerging from the SCE-VA.

II. POSSIBLE THEMES

a) Inventory existing policies, surveys, studies and lessons learned on socio-economic reintegration, including community aspects.

b) Consider links between Victim Assistance and Mine Awareness and long-term strategies of sustainable development as well as humanitarian assistance.

c) Increase participation of civil society and associations of mine victims and/or persons with disabilities, and strengthened capacity of Governments in the elaboration and implementation of national policies in mine-affected countries.

VI. Reference to supporting documents

49. As a result of the work of the SCE's Network Groups, six papers were produced containing the views of these groups and the proposals put forward by them to the SCE at the March meeting. These papers can be found on the web site of the GICHD at www.gichd.ch.

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<http://www.apminebanconvention.org/intersessional-work-programme/march-may-2000/victim-assistance/meeting-report/>