

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE
AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION**

Closing remarks by the Co-Chairs

27 April 2007

As we stated at the outset of this Standing Committee meeting, our primary aim as Co-Chairs is to support further progress in the fulfilment of the commitment that all States Parties made in the *Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009* to enhance our efforts in regard to the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of landmine survivors.

Through the interventions and discussions this week it is clear that progress is being made but more needs to be done to ensure that what we discuss in Geneva is translated into actions on the ground that will improve the quality of daily life of survivors. We have greater clarity on efforts in the majority of the 24 States Parties that have reported responsibility for significant numbers of mine survivors and we thank all the representatives for their updates. I would also like to commend the representative of Burundi, one of the States Parties that did not provide a response to questionnaire, for his very detailed presentation on Tuesday on the situation in Burundi and the steps that are being taken to address the rights and needs of mine survivors in the country.

We heard from those in a position to provide assistance and appreciate their efforts in providing greater clarity on their policies in regards to funding victim assistance activities.

It is clear that **ALL** States Parties are in a position to “provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims” be that through the provision of services within the healthcare and social services systems in countries with significant numbers of mine survivors or through the resources provided by the international community.

The situation for every State is different. In some countries strategies already exist for the health care or disability sector or for poverty reduction more generally. When plans exist we need to ensure that mine survivors have access to the services and benefits enshrined within those plans and that the relevant ministries are aware of their State’s obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

In other countries, particularly those emerging from conflict, there is a need to engage all relevant ministries in the process of developing a comprehensive plan to address the rights and needs of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Meeting the rights and needs of persons with disabilities requires a holistic approach that can only be achieved through collaboration and coordination between all relevant ministries and actors in the disabilities, and persons with disabilities themselves.

The needs in some States are immense and several challenges remain. In order to achieve real progress between now and the Second Review Conference in 2009, States may need to prioritize their priorities. While it may look good on paper to be ambitious, real progress will more likely be made by focusing on what is actually achievable within the time frame. More needs to be done to engage Ministries of Finance to ensure that the costs of services for persons with disabilities are taken into account in budget allocations. And donor States need to be strategic in ensuring that their funding is building national capacities in the areas that are priorities for the recipient State.

On behalf of both co-chairs, I thank delegations, and especially the victim assistance experts, for their active participation and involvement in the work of this Committee. Thanks also to the secretariat, Co-Rapporteurs, ISU and interpreters.