

WGVA intervention to SC-VA  
Feb 2004  
Intersessional Work Programme

This morning we heard an amazing number of interventions by mine-affected States Parties on their problems, plans, progress, and priorities in Victim Assistance.

On a purely physical plane, the room was packed! And participation was from every region and from a multitude of different kinds of States Parties, as the Co-chair this morning so aptly described.

It was particularly striking to me, Margaret, that at least two ministries of health presented their countries' contributions. My own country's presentation, according to my colleagues in the WGVA, was excellent. (And I am not being biased!) Serbia-Montenegro also presented in this manner.

20 States Parties spoke—the majority with a focus and level of specificity that is very useful when one wants to get a clear picture of what is happening in one country.

Of course, there is always something to suggest in terms of finding different approaches to convey the messages that need to be heard in this room, and of implementing our own recommendations on the ground in mine-affected countries.

When it happens that what States Parties say is surprising to someone else in the room, we would point out, this is natural, isn't it? People often come running to the WGVA co-chairs to say..."I see something different. My experience is different. I work with survivors in country x and I have a completely different view." Again, this is natural and this is what the SC is good for. We have to ask the hard questions and vent different perspectives, in constructive ways, and mostly not with these microphones, but we hope you consider, as we do, that the process is still productive.

When we consider how MUCH information was conveyed this morning it strikes us that the most beneficial aspects of certain States Parties interventions were two specific points:

- 1- There are our priorities
- And
- 2- For these priorities, resources are lacking.

I would guess that for many NGOs in this room and for the donor countries looking for direction for their VA spending, these phrases are musical.

We are looking ahead to hearing from more States Parties in June, but we also feel pressure to think ahead to this Committee's role in the lead up to the Nairobi Summit and beyond. Just as States Parties are giving more focused information and following the "four P's" framework, perhaps this Standing Committee should also try to frame its

short-term future by focusing more narrowly than usual. The dilemma is, when one focuses or narrows, somebody is bound to say “but, but... what about...” referring to whatever or whomever has been omitted from the focus.

Global attempts to see where we’ve come from and where we’re going have not, so far, worked. The big broad picture is too vague, too fuzzy. Therefore, we suggest that from now until Nairobi, the Standing Committee—all of us together, NGOs, States Parties of mine-affected countries and countries not mine-affected, UN agencies, and survivor advocates—that we focus on analysis of a narrow list of 20 very victim assistance needy mine-affected States parties.

To be sure this has risks. The main caveat is that many very victim assistance needy countries are NOT States parties—Vietnam, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and more. This is a truth no one can ignore. This gives us clear directions for universalization work... but in this SC, we propose that analysis of VA problems, plans, progress, and priorities be focused on the following 20 States Parties: Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, DRC, Eritrea, Mozambique, Sudan, Yemen, Albania, Burundi, Nicaragua, Serbia and Montenegro, Senegal, Thailand, and Uganda.

Let’s take the rest of this week to debate this list, not in this meeting, but in the corridors. Then the day after we leave here, we can begin focusing on the work.

Thank you.