



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

INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME 2001-2002

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

**Meeting Report
May 27 – 28, 2002**

I. Introduction

Pursuant to the decisions of the Third Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention, the meeting of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration (SCVA) was convened by its Co-Chairs, Ms Gracibel Bu-Figueroa of Honduras and Ms. C. Mélanie Régimbal of Canada, with the support of its Co-Rapporteurs, Mr. Thomas Wagner of France and Ms. Fulvia Benavides-Cotes of Colombia. The meeting was held in Geneva with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

The Co-Chairs opened the meeting by indicating their wish that the SCVA explore how best it could contribute to progress and live up to its mandate. The Co-Chairs expressed their desire that the SCVA identify practical means to assist States in meeting their obligations under article 6.3 of the Convention in view of achieving progress by 2004 and beyond.

II. Overview of Status of Implementation

The SCVA received a presentation from the Landmine Monitor Victim Assistance Thematic Coordinator who provided a global overview on the status implementation, trends and methodologies used to measure progress. It was reported that there is a positive increase in States Parties' use of the Article 7 reporting format's optional "Form J", in particular from mine affected States Parties. The need for more comprehensive data was again raised in order to obtain a more effective assessment of needs that remain and resources required to meet these needs. Mine affected States Parties were referred to a questionnaire prepared and distributed to all participants in advance of the meeting as an important tool in assisting in communicating needs. Participants were encouraged to respond the questionnaire available on the GICHD web site.

At the request of the Co-Chairs, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) informed the SCVA of the first findings of the consultative process and outlined the way toward the completion of the process. It was reiterated that the consultative process emerged in response to the need that greater focus and direction should be brought to bear on the work of the SCVA, especially given the expectation that a difference will be made by certain junctures like the 2004 Review Conference.

It was reported that although it is too early to identify priorities, the trend indicates that States Parties and experts have identified the following four items as desired areas of focus for the SCVA: national planning by States Parties; prosthetics services; emergency medical care; and, economic reintegration. The SCVA urged States Parties to contribute to the consultative process in order for the results to truly reflect the intentions of the group and priorities and targets that the mine action community could strive towards over time.

Handicap International presented an overview of the methodology used in Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Thailand to build national planning capacity for victim assistance projects. It was stressed that national ownership of these plans is key to the development and effective implementation of projects pertaining victim assistance.

III. Update on implementation plans and progress:

A. Prosthetics and orthotics

Thailand, in cooperation with the ICBL, outlined for the SCVA the main areas of progress and challenges posed in development of prosthetic and orthotic programs in Thailand, highlighting that Thailand has developed proposals aimed at strengthening the participation of people with disability at local and provincial level.

Colombia demonstrated that despite challenging situations facing the country, it is possible to provide holistic rehabilitation services to survivors and to assist them in reintegration into their communities. Extensive data collected by CIREC has permitted it to develop programs and technology that are appropriate for the needs of mine survivors, in particular needs that relate directly to prosthetic and orthotic services.

B. Psycho-social rehabilitation

Landmine Survivors Network (LSN) presented to the Standing Committee its findings from a qualitative field study in six mine-affected countries and in the United States on survivors' recovery process. LSN reiterated the importance of treating simultaneously both physical and psychological needs of mine survivors and their families and communities. To ensure complete rehabilitation LSN highlighted the needs: to ensure the economic necessities; to provide comprehensive and coordinated care; to create opportunities to be a productive member of society; and, to assist in re-establishing social relationships with family, community and society.

Croatia extrapolated on the creation of a Regional Recreational Centre for children affected by the devastating effects of landmine. It reminded participants that rehabilitation of survivors cannot be complete without addressing the psychosocial needs of survivors and their families. The recreational workshops held at the Centre allow children to overcome trauma with the aid of music and sports. The purpose of the Centre is to provide a place where for a few weeks every year, children can be children, young adults can experiment with being young adults, and older mine victims are allowed to be vulnerable. The initiative provides an atmosphere where peers can understand each other intrinsically, where professionals with the requisite knowledge and skills can be found, where survivors can begin to heal the emotional and psychological damage, and where it is possible to take the necessary steps to rehabilitation from mine victim to mine survivor, living a full life and contributing to society at large.

C. Human rights of persons with disabilities: the economic reintegration of persons with disabilities

Rehabilitation experts and survivors from Uganda, Ecuador and Nicaragua added their voices to the topic of economic reintegration as being a priority issue. All three experts stressed that the right to gainful employment is a basic fundamental human right and is key to complete reintegration. The Ecuadorian expert described newly created legislation that modified the employment rights for soldiers with disabilities – allowing soldiers to remain active members of the armed forces. The expert from

Uganda advocated for the inclusion of mine survivor issues in community development and for equal opportunities and rights of women with disabilities. Nicaragua's expert addressed the importance of including mine survivors in the planning and development of mine action programs.

D. An opportunity for interventions on other matters

Cambodia and Honduras provided participants with their general overview of their current national victim assistance programs.

IV. Update on assistance and cooperation

Donors were given an opportunity to update the Standing Committee on their plans and priorities for programming in victim assistance. Norway and Switzerland elaborated on their current policies. Norway explained that 22% of total Norwegian contribution to humanitarian mine action was channeled directly to victim assistance projects. Switzerland mentioned it integrated landmine victim assistance to its human security agenda.

Participants called on donors to provide further information on assistance and cooperation plans and policies in future meetings.

V. An assessment of priority areas in meeting the needs of landmine survivors

The SCVA was enlightened by the participation of the "Raising the Voices" participants from Africa, who eloquently outlined the priorities of their group as well as past participants. Priorities such as accessibility to medical and rehabilitation services – including access to prosthesis and orthotics and facilities and to local infrastructure, the importance of training, access to education and learning new skills and literacy, and economic reintegration were outlined as being the most important to them. Survivors were given leadership training and human rights advocacy in order to enhance their leadership skills and to educate their communities and improve their quality of life.

VI. An assessment of needs that remain

Given that the issue of socio-economic reintegration has been identified as a key priority in ensuring complete rehabilitation of mine survivors, participants requested that the Standing Committee give due thought to inviting the International Labor Organization to participate actively in the intersessional process. The participation of ILO and other international or regional organizations whose focus is socio-economic reintegration would enhance the committees' ability to address this theme.

Finally, it was recalled that according to Landmine Monitor approximately 43 States Parties may require assistance in helping to meet the care, rehabilitation and reintegration needs of landmine survivors. And it was highlighted that the challenge of meeting these needs is compounded by the fact that some of the countries with the greatest numbers of victims of mines are also some of the world's poorest countries. To ensure that the Intersessional Work Programme can be maximized as a vehicle for assistance and cooperation, the Co-Chairs urged participation in processes designed to provide greater direction to the Standing Committee, encouraged affected States Parties to use the Standing Committee as a venue for sharing needs, plans and progress, and encouraged donors to be open with information on steps they are taking to provide assistance in accordance with Article 6.3.