

**Standing Committee on Victim Assistance
and Socio-Economic Reintegration**

Update on Activities of the Victim Assistance Experts

29 May 2009

Co-Chairs, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this brief update on behalf of my colleagues who participated in the parallel programme for victim assistance experts organised by the Co-Chairs.

Since this Standing Committee adjourned on Tuesday afternoon, more than 40 people including 18 health, rehabilitation, social services and disability rights professionals representing 14 of the 26 relevant States Parties, and other experts with disability, service providers and other experts, have been actively engaged in a workshop to discuss some the victim assistance issue and to identify challenges and priorities for the period 2010-2014.

The programme focused on 3 key themes: inclusive development, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and priorities and challenges for the period after the Second Review Conference.

Inclusive development was discussed for the first time in the parallel programme and generated a very interesting discussion. For those who are not familiar with this subject, inclusive development is the process of ensuring that all marginalized/excluded groups, including persons with disabilities are included in the development process.

The session on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities included an update on activities within the framework of the CRPD and aspects that may be particularly useful in ensuring coherence in implementation and monitoring of the CRPD and the Mine Ban Convention. The International Disability Alliance, a network of NGOs, participated in the parallel programme for the first time. It was interesting to hear about their work with disabled persons organisations and the challenges in implementing the CRPD. States also reported on their processes of ratification and implementation at the national level.

Yesterday, we spent the whole day discussing challenges and priorities for victim assistance in the period after the Second Review Conference. We are confident that the President-Designate will find the output from those discussions very useful in preparations for the Cartagena Summit and beyond.

The victim assistance experts would like to thank Hervé Bernard from the Inclusion Unit of Handicap International, Silvia Lavagnoli from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Stefan Tromel from the International Disability Alliance.

We also thank the Co-Chairs, Cedric from Belgium and Netty from Thailand for their very active involvement in the programme and their interest in what the experts had to say.

I have been involved in the work of the Mine Ban Convention for more than 10 years now. If the energy and enthusiasm that was shown during the past two days is any indication of the potential of the convention to promote the full and effective participation and inclusion of mine survivors, the next five year's holds much promise.

Thank you