
Fifth Meeting
Bangkok, 15-19 September 2003
Item 15 of the provisional agenda

STANDING COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION

Final Report¹ 2002-2003

I. Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration, established in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of Meetings of the States Parties, met in Geneva on 4 February 2003 and 13 May 2003. These meetings were convened by its Co-Chairs, Ambassador Gérard Chesnel of France and Ms. Fulvia Benavides-Cotes of Columbia, with the support of its Co-Rapporteurs, Mr. Peter Truswell of Australia and Ms. Dijana Plestina of Croatia.
2. Representatives of more than 90 States Parties, 30 States not Parties, the United Nations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and numerous other international and non-governmental organizations participated in the work of the Standing Committee. Landmine survivors, through the Raising the Voices initiative, were active participants. The meetings were held in Geneva with the support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. Interpretation was provided thanks to the support of the European Commission.
3. The Co-Chairs emphasised that in 2002-2003 the Standing Committee could best build upon past achievements by placing an increased emphasis on hearing concrete plans of action and problem areas from the mine-affected States Parties.

II. Overview of Status of Implementation

4. The Co-Chairs noted that approximately 40 States parties may require assistance in meeting the needs of landmine survivors within their countries. It was reported by **Handicap International** that there were 7,728 new casualties recorded in 2002, with three-quarters of the countries with new casualties being countries with insufficient infrastructure and services to provide for the care and rehabilitation of landmine survivors. The **ICBL** highlighted, however,

¹ This report has been submitted by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee, Colombia and France. This report is the Co-Chairs' summary of the breadth of work undertaken by the Standing Committee during the 2002-2003 Intersessional period. It remains the responsibility of the Co-Chairs and is not a negotiated document.

that the recorded number of new mine casualties in 2002 does not take into account possible large numbers of the mine casualties that are not recorded and that the number of new casualties, therefore, is believed to be much higher. In addition, the ICBL provided an update on its study to measure progress in victim assistance, noting that 21 countries have been examined so far and that by the time of the Review Conference of 2004 the ICBL will be able to produce a comprehensive and detailed report of the progress made in victim assistance.

III. Update on implementation: plans and progress

5. The Co-Chairs emphasized that since the responsibility to assist landmine survivors rests with individual States parties, it is essential that they use the Standing Committee as a forum to communicate their problems, plans, progress and priorities for assistance. To assist, in advance of both meetings of the Standing Committee, the Co-Chairs distributed a suggested framework for States Parties to use in preparing presentations on the extent of their challenges and plans to address the priorities identified in 2002: emergency and continuing medical care; physical rehabilitation / prosthetics; psychological and social support; economic reintegration; national planning; and, laws and public policies.

6. Fifteen States Parties took advantage of the opportunities presented by the Standing Committee to share information: **Afghanistan, Albania, Cambodia, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, El Salvador, Namibia, Nicaragua, Rwanda, Senegal, Tajikistan and Zambia**. In addition, **Turkey**, a State not Party, shared information.

- **Emergency and continuing medical care:** Updates on emergency and continuing medical care identified challenges as being: that countries with large numbers of victims are often some of the world's poorest; and, that a lack of qualified medical personnel and trauma treatment – especially in areas where most victims can be found – are often persistent problems.
- **Physical rehabilitation / prosthetics:** While many reported that progress had been made, some problems identified were shortages of prosthetic technicians, a lack of other qualified staff, a lack of funds, and long distances that some individuals must travel to access services.
- **Psychological and social support:** Some reported on specific initiatives, like Croatia which highlighted a project designed to support the needs of young people. Others, like Afghanistan, noted that while a number of services may exist in a country they are often inadequate in addressing the total need.
- **Economic reintegration:** While some successes in the area of economic reintegration were noted, others highlighted that this remains a profound problem especially in countries experiencing broader economic problems.
- **Laws, public policies and national planning:** Several mentioned legislation that had been established and that progress is being made in institutional development in a number of countries. The capacity to implement legislation remains a problem, though, in many cases.

IV. Update on assistance and cooperation

7. The Co-Chairs noted that all States Parties and relevant organizations have an important role to play in supporting the efforts of mine-affected States Parties. Several States Parties, including **Australia, Austria, Canada, France, Hungary, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway** and **Sweden** provided updates on assistance and cooperation activities. Several reported on specific victim assistance initiatives whereas others noted that they are fulfilling their obligations to assist mine-affected States with their responsibility to victims by providing support to broader health care programmes or to the ICRC. Numerous organizations also contributed to this discussion, including the ICBL which expressed concern that only limited funding was being directed to victim assistance.

V. Regional approaches

8. In keeping with the call made by the President of the Fourth Meeting of the States Parties to place an emphasis on regional implementation initiatives, the Co-Chairs provided an opportunity for updates on significant relevant activities, noting that comprehensive initiatives are underway in Europe and Asia: **Handicap International Belgium** is undertaking research in South Eastern Europe on behalf of the **International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance**. In addition, **Handicap International France** highlighted its ongoing Regional Assistance Project in South East Asia, noting the importance of partnership between mine-affected and donor States. The Co-Chairs indicated their appreciation for these initiatives and encouraged international and non-governmental organizations to pursue similar efforts in other regions.

VI. Maximising the Standing Committee as a vehicle for cooperation and assistance

9. The Standing Committee received updates on various initiatives being undertaken in other forums: Efforts to establish a new international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities were highlighted. An update was provided on discussions facilitated by the **ICBL Working Group on Victim Assistance** which are aimed at producing, in time for the Review Conference, enhanced cooperation between non-governmental organizations which are involved in prosthetic and orthopaedic services. As well, it was reported that the **United Nations** has engaged in a consultative process to establish a policy to assist mine action programmes in better defining their role in victim assistance.

VII. An assessment of needs that remain

10. The work of the Standing Committee in 2002-2003 succeeded in placing a greater emphasis on the voices of the mine-affected States parties in the work of the Committee. However, with only one year before the Convention's First Review Conference, much more needs to be done.

11. In order for the States Parties at the Review Conference to assess progress in the pursuit of their wish "to do their utmost in providing assistance for the care and rehabilitation, including the social and economic reintegration of mine victims," it is essential that the mine-affected States Parties themselves communicate how they define their challenges and hence how they will measure progress. Therefore:

- The Co-Chairs recommend that the Standing Committee in 2003-2004 increase efforts to promote the participation by mine-affected States Parties in the meetings of the Standing Committee.
- The Co-Chairs furthermore recommend that mine-affected States Parties make use of the suggested framework that has been developed to assist them in preparing presentations on their problems, plans, progress and priorities for assistance. (See the appendix to this report.)

12. The Standing Committee also made it clear in 2002-2003 that the Convention implies that international cooperation and assistance will play a leading role in assisting the States Parties in fulfilling their obligations. Many States Parties “in a position to do so”, as well as numerous international and non-governmental organisations, have communicated that they are indeed providing necessary assistance and support – either through targeted victim assistance programs or through broader programming to support the health care and rehabilitation services or human rights frameworks in mine-affected States. However:

- The Co-Chairs recommend that States parties “in a position to do so” continue to make use of the Standing Committee in 2003-2004 to share information on their particular approaches to ensuring that resources are provided to support those States that need assistance.

13. It was apparent at the Standing Committee meetings in 2002-2003 that regional initiatives can play an extremely valuable role in assisting individual States Parties in meeting their obligations. To build upon this:

- The Co-Chairs recommend that additional regional efforts be undertaken in 2003-2004 with a view to enabling States Parties with similar challenges to share ideas and experiences, and develop joint strategies and initiatives.

Annex

Framework to assist mine-affected States Parties in preparing for meetings of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration

Introduction:

1. One of the enhancements made during the May 2002 meetings of the Standing Committees established by the States Parties to the Convention banning anti-personnel mines was to increase the number of opportunities for participation by States Parties. Mine affected States Parties may wish to maximize these opportunities during meetings of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration by preparing presentations on the challenges they face and efforts that are being taken to overcome these challenges. In order to assist these States Parties in preparing written and oral presentations (maximum: 10-12 minutes) on these matters, the following framework has been developed.

I. The extent of the challenge:

Provide an overview of the information that is available on landmine survivors, including information on their demographics and the types of injuries that they have suffered, and areas in the country where survivors are most prevalent. Is there an ongoing data collection mechanism to track new mine victims?

II. Addressing the challenge:

In each of the following four areas, provide a brief overview of:

- The current situation with respect to services and facilities required to meet the needs of landmine survivors;
- What you desire the situation to be;
- Your plan to achieve the desired results; and,
- Your priorities for outside assistance.

II.1. Emergency and Continuing Medical Care

(e.g., first aid and transportation to respond effectively to landmine and other traumatic injuries, surgery, pain management, and additional medical care to assist in the rehabilitation of survivors)

II.2. Physical Rehabilitation / Prosthetics

(e.g., physiotherapy, production and fitting of prostheses, pre and post-prosthetic care, repair and adjustment of prostheses, provision and maintenance of assistive devices and wheelchairs, and rehabilitative assistance for the deaf and blind)

II.3. Psychological and Social Support

(e.g., peer support groups, professional counselling, sports and associations for the disabled)

II.4. Economic Reintegration

(e.g., skills and vocational training, literacy training, income-generating projects, small business loans, and job placement)

III. Laws and public policies:

Provide an overview of any laws and policies that are in place to promote and enhance the effective treatment, care and protection for all disabled citizens, including landmine survivors. In addition, what laws or policies are in place with respect to accessibility to the built-up environment? What mechanisms and / organizations exist to promote the rights of persons with disabilities? What programs exist to raise public awareness on disability issues?
