

AUSTRIA

Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration

Thank you, Madam Co-chair and first of all allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you and our distinguished colleague from Peru/Turkey for the assumption of this post. Since Austria served as one of your predecessors in 2006-2007, our delegation is well aware of the work this task involves and we would like to thank you for your efforts and the excellent preparations for our meetings.

At the outset, we would also like to thank affected States for their presentations this week as well as express our gratitude to Prof Ron McCallum, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, for his important contribution to our discussion.

Austria has ~~often~~ <sup>consistently</sup> advocated a rights-based victim assistance approach and we are glad that the important link between the CRPD and our Convention was captured in the Cartagena Action Plan, including in Action #29 which calls for involvement of disability rights experts in our work and Action #65 on synergies with other relevant instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law.

*At the same time, we continue to believe that the broad definition of a victim, including the individual survivor as well as affected families and communities, is an important achievement. We believe that this understanding is essential for providing effective victim assistance in an inclusive development framework and should be upheld.*

In line with Action #65 and speaking about synergies, I would like to inform colleagues about one Austrian initiative in support of the application of the victim assistance aspects of the Cartagena Action Plan. Many of you were present at the "Vienna Expert-Conference on Victim Assistance: From Cartagena to Laos – Responding to Voices from the Ground", which took place beginning of April in Vienna. As the title of the event indicates, the Conference addressed victim assistance in both the Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions and served as a bridge between the former's Review Conference and the latter's First Meeting of States Parties. The discussions in Vienna clearly reflected the