

**Updates on ICBL's post Cartagena Victim Assistance Activities**  
**Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings**  
**24 June 2010**

At the Cartagena Summit, States Parties reaffirmed their commitment to promote and protect the rights of mine survivors, and address the needs of mine victims by providing enhanced quality services to all victims based on their needs and priorities.

On the part of the ICBL's victim assistance focal points (VAFPs), work to ensure implementation of the CAP started at the summit itself and has been ongoing since then. The VAFPs are campaign members, survivors, practitioners and representatives of people with disabilities' organizations, who volunteered to take up a responsibility at the national level, in partnership with the ICBL, to advocate for victim assistance in countries with significant numbers of survivors. The ultimate goal of the VAFPs is to help other survivor and persons with disabilities in affected communities and villages in their countries. The VAFP network currently has 37 members in 30 countries, including 25 States Parties.

At the Cartagena Summit, in the Survivors' Call to Action, survivors and other persons with disabilities committed to continue sharing their knowledge and participating in the planning, implementation and monitoring of victim assistance efforts under the Mine Ban Treaty.

Putting this promise into practice early in 2010, VAFPs in over 15 countries developed advocacy plans with measurable objectives, aiming at concrete changes in the lives of victims. Objectives and activities include, for example, the integration of peer support into the Ministry of Public Health's package of services in Afghanistan, through technical support and training provided by the Afghan Landmine Survivors Organization, or the empowerment and inclusion of women survivors into community life through awareness-raising sessions on human rights organized by the Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions.

Several VAFPs already reached some of their goals in the first half of the year, as Ethiopia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Senegal adopted a national law on the rights of persons with disabilities, Croatia established a VA coordination group to develop the first VA plan with broad inter-ministerial support and D.R. Congo established a committee jointly with civil society, tasked with developing a national action plan.

Since getting back home from the Cartagena Summit, VAFPs also helped raise awareness on the CAP with their local partners to foster broad adherence to and understanding of its content.

Civil society members including mine survivors took active part in a meeting conveyed in Vienna on 8 April 2010, on the initiative of Austria, to exchange views on CAP implementation.

As the Middle East is a region that is heavily affected by mines, cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war and as such counts many related casualties, Handicap International organized two workshops in Amman on 25 and 26 May, for civil society and service providers, including survivors and disability advocates, as well as for government representatives, donors and embassy staff. Participants reviewed the components of victim assistance and specific objectives that could guide efforts in Jordan, Algeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen and the Palestinian Territories. The presentations, combined with the interactive format, brought increased clarity on the need for national action plans and on items to be taken forward once back at home.

On the margins of the Santiago International Conference on the Convention on Cluster Munitions, on 13 June, VAFPs and other campaigners from the ICBL and Cluster Munition Coalition spent a day building their capacity and exchanging good practices on subjects including synergies between the Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Cluster Munitions and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities inclusive development, opportunities for raising awareness and working with the media, and fundraising tips.

The ICBL has been increasing its support and partnerships with the VAFPs to promote national capacities and to enable the VAFPs to work on implementation of Cartagena Action Plan hand in hand with their Government counterparts. The VAFPs remain committed and offer their technical support to States Parties to promote victim assistance on the ground.

I would like to highlight one issue. We have been talking a lot this week about the inclusion of survivors, and indeed, this is a key part of the Cartagena Action Plan. So we were disappointed with the decision this year to close half of the first day of the victim assistance parallel programme to civil society where issues of interest to survivors and other VA experts were discussed. We very much hope that the next parallel program will be open to all in its entirety.

In conclusion, I call on all States Parties to increase financial support to victim assistance, as we all know the funds on victim assistance are very limited and in some countries the funds on VA have been drastically decreasing. We have to bear in mind that without adequate resources we will fail to achieve the objectives of the CAP. Therefore, it is essential for States Parties and in particular for States with significant number of victims to take every possible action to ensure the groundbreaking VA objectives of the CAP are effectively achieved by 2014.

Thank you co-chair