**STANDING COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES, COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE**

**CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY OF THE SMALL GROUP SESSION ON DEVELOPING A PLATFORM FOR PARTNERSHIPS**

**24 MAY 2012**

At the 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance, Thailand stated that, while financial assistance is very much needed and appreciated, other types of non-financial assistance – such as material, equipment, expertise, et cetera – are also essential. Thailand then raised the idea of establishing a tool to exchange information on these other types of assistance, together with contact details.

At the 11MSP, Thailand again raised this matter amongst others. In the final report of the 11MSP, the States Parties agreed to encourage action on the concrete ideas, suggested by Thailand and others, to make the best possible use of this new Standing Committee.

Albania and Thailand, in preparing a programme for the Standing Committee in 2012, considered which concrete ideas in particular should be the focus of attention. One of these concrete ideas that the Co-Chairs believed warranted follow-up was the matter of an information exchange tool. On 24 May as part of the week of meetings of the Standing Committees, the Co-Chairs convened a small group session to seek input from interested delegations on this matter.

In opening the meeting, the Co-Chairs stated that they had no preconceived notion of where this discussion should lead. They did add, however, that they felt that the unmet information need concerns non-financial assistance, not financial assistance. They also indicated that they believed the unmet information need concerns assistance available, not assistance that has been provided, which for instance is already reported in a variety of ways, such as in Landmine Monitor.

To frame the small group discussion the Co-Chairs asked participants to consider three questions:

- If an information exchange tool were to be established, what information should it contain? How should it be organized?

- What experiences have actors had in accessing information about available funding, technical support, or other forms of cooperation and assistance for implementation?

- What are the gaps in information about available assistance?

What follows is a summary of views that were expressed:

*Gaps in available information and suggestions for information to be contained in a "platform for partnerships":*

- All States Parties are potential contributors and therefore any information exchange tool should house information on the assistance that any State Party may be in a position to provide.

- Additional information on available financial assistance may be desirable, but a key aim of the information exchange tool should be to serve as place where those with needs to go to in search of the full range of possible assistance, including technical support and equipment.

- "Match-making" could be facilitated by the information tool containing information on national contact points as well as regional contact points.

- Information contained should facilitate "south-south" cooperation, including the availability of financial resources necessary to fuel such cooperation.

- While the pre-occupation with information on available resources appears to relate mainly to Article 5 implementation, victim assistance should be included in any information exchange tool.

*Ways and means of developing a "platform for partnerships":*

- While it was suggested that a newsletter could be used as the information exchange tool, the means suggested most frequently by small group participants was an internet tool, with many suggesting that it need not be complicated endeavour. It was noted that the more complex this effort was, the more expensive it may be.

- Some suggested that the ISU could house such an information tool as part of the Convention's existing website.

- Some suggested that the information tool could simply link to other sites. Others suggested that to make it more user-friendly the information tool itself should house information.

- It was highlighted that websites need to be kept up-to-date.

- It was suggested that an information exchange tool could be developed a trial basis with an evaluation made after a certain period of time, including by drawing up data related to the number of visits and types of information accessed.

*Cautionary points:*

- Some participants questioned whether a new information tool is really needed.

- It was noted that there is a wealth of existing on-line and other information sources, including Landmine Monitor and Article 7 reports.

- It was suggested that efforts would have to be made to prevent duplication, with it suggested in particular that as concerns victim assistance efforts should be made to liaise with those supporting the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

- Some suggested that the issue that really needed to be resolved was one of coordination, rather than access to information. It was suggested, for example, that national authorities could be better served by being consulted and kept informed by donors and implementing actors which are engaged in projects in their countries.