

**TWENTIETH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES**  
**COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE**  
**TUESDAY 22 NOVEMBER**

**10. Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention:**

**(a) Assisting the victims: Conclusions and recommendations related to the mandate of the Committee on Victim Assistance;**

1. Excellencies, dear colleagues, it is an honour to address you once again as the Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance. I would like to thank my colleagues on the Committee, Ecuador, Italy and Uganda for their valuable collaboration this year. Also, thanks to the ICRC and ICBL - observer members of the Committee - whose continued effort is appreciated for the fulfilment of our Victim Assistance goals under the Convention.
2. I would also like to extend our appreciation to the ISU for its support to the Committee. The Committee is grateful to the ISU in delivering its tasks and for the valuable technical and expert support the ISU provides to the States Parties with Victim Assistance responsibilities. Thank you.
3. Allow me to acknowledge the sad reality of the continued casualties caused by mines across the world. According to the Landmine Monitor the casualty has fortunately dropped from 7,000 in 2020 to 5,500 in 2021, while this 20% decrease is a welcome development, obviously any casualty of this terrible weapon is too many and we would like to see this number reduced to zero as soon as possible and to achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention which is to “end to the suffering and casualties caused by anti-personnel mines”.
4. Excellencies, dear colleagues, I am pleased to report that the Committee, in accordance with its mandates, has continued to provide support to the States Parties with Victim Assistance responsibilities. I will not dwell too much on our activist given that you have these in the conference documents. However, I would like to offer a few highlights.
  - a) Every year the Committee choose a thematic theme for its activities in consultation with VA Experts and partners. In 2022, the Committee’s thematic theme has been – rehabilitation, a significant pillar of Victim Assistance and a key commitment of the Action #38 of the Oslo Action Plan.
  - b) Raising awareness in relevant domains and engaging them on Victim Assistance is critical mandate of the Committee and this year we have taken the plight of mine victims to discussion with the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Human Rights Council and WHO in 2022.

Earlier this year, the Committee hosted a side event, entitled “*Victim Assistance: The Importance of Inclusion in Broader Frameworks Including in Situations of Risks, Crises*”

*and Humanitarian Emergencies”* on the margins of the Global Disability Summit 2022 (GDS). The side event provided an opportunity for over 70 persons from the disability rights community and others to learn more about the work of our Convention and to exchange information on inclusion of persons with disabilities and survivors in situations of risk and humanitarian emergencies.

- c) To better understand approaches taken by the States Parties with Victim Assistance responsibilities and the challenges they encounter in fulfilling their Victim Assistance commitments, the Committee along with other Convention’s Committees and the Presidency held bilateral meetings with *over 22 States Parties implementing victim assistance activities*. The Committee appreciated the information they shared on their implementation efforts.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

- d) One of our key mandates is to observe information provided by the States Parties on Victim Assistance. From our observation in 2022, we concluded that of the **36 States** Parties that reported mine victims in areas under their jurisdiction or control, as of 1 September 2022, 23 States Parties submitted information on victim assistance activities including updates on progress and challenges and 3 States Parties provided information on casualties only.
- e) Of the States Parties with mine victims in areas under their jurisdiction or control *11* have not provided information on their Victim Assistance efforts through Article 7 Reports in 2022. We would like to invite them to submit an update on implementation of their victim assistance commitments under the OAP as soon as possible and to include updated information in this regard, in their Article 7 Report in 2023. You will find the Committee’s complete observations and recommendations in the progress report.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

- 5. Allow me to highlight a some of the areas based on the Committee’s observations of the information provided by the States Parties with regards to Victim Assistance implementation in 2021:
  - a) All the 23 States Parties that have reported on Victim Assistance, reported on having one or more government entity(ies) designated to coordinate victim assistance related activities, although some of them reported encountering difficulties in maintaining active engagement. In some cases, the roles and responsibilities of coordinating entity may need to be clarified, reviewed and improved. 18 States Parties reported having developed or in the process of developing national action plans and 14 States Parties provided information on efforts they have undertaken to remove barriers to increase participation and inclusion of mine survivors. In this regard, in our view, the States Parties have been taking good steps towards achieving the objectives of Action #33 of the OAP.

- b) With 19 States Parties reported applying multi-sectoral approach to integrate victim assistance commitments into broader national policies and programmes, in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, where applicable, we are making progress in meeting our commitments under Action #34 of the OAP.
- c) In contrast, the States Parties would need to step up their efforts to report on and to ensure the implementation of:
- Action #35 to improve data collection, to create/strengthen centralised national database and to disaggregate data by gender, age and disability;
  - Action #36 to improve emergency assistance and pre-hospital care;
  - Action #37 to develop or improve referral mechanism and to develop or update directory of services, and;
  - Action #39 to develop and implement peer to peer support as part of psychosocial support.
- f) Ensuring the implementation of these 4 actions would put us in a better position to deliver tangible and much needed assistance to mine victims including health care, rehabilitation, psychosocial and psychological support and social and economic inclusion.

Finally dear colleagues:

6. The Committee acknowledges the support provided by the European Union Council, which is implemented by the Implementation Support Unit to assist efforts assumed by the States Parties to implement the Convention. In recent years, several States Parties have received such support to strengthen national planning, coordination and overall implementation support mechanisms by hosting national Victim Assistance and disability dialogues. In addition to national and regional dialogues, in 2023 we will hold a global conference on Victim Assistance and you will hear more about this forthcoming global conference this week.
7. To conclude, this week on Wednesday and Thursday the Committee on Victim Assistance will host a Victim Assistance Experts Meeting concurrent to the 20MSP – we will dedicate the Expert Meeting this year on our thematic focus of rehabilitation. We have received a high number of interests for the meeting, and we look forward to meeting the Experts on tomorrow at 10:00 in room XXI.