

Committee on Victim Assistance

Thank you very much Mr. President.

The Oslo Action Plan provided us with a framework to further our victim assistance objectives. The Committee has interacted with most States Parties reporting on the Victim Assistance implementation.

Algeria, as Chair of Victim assistance and a State Party with victims of mines under its jurisdiction knows very well the challenges in implementing these aspects of the Oslo Action Plan.

We have seen progress in the implementation of the Victim Assistance commitments of the Convention and increased engagement by victim assistance experts, including through the annual meeting on the margins of the meeting of the States Parties which provide an opportunity for experts to share experiences.

One matter we have seen improve over the years is an understanding of the importance of sustainability. As indicated in the Oslo Action Plan, to ensure sustainability in assistance provided to mine victims, the States Parties agreed to integrate Victim Assistance “into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks relating to the rights of persons with disabilities, and to health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction”

During the past three years, the Committee on Victim Assistance observed from the information provided by States Parties, that an inclusive and integrated approach has been progressively embraced and applied both at policy and practice levels. National frameworks related to health, disability and social protection and social development have been among the most common areas in which Victim Assistance have been included. It is also worth to note that a bottom-up approach including efforts made by grass-root advocacy organizations of mine survivors, have been great complement to the national policy work undertaken by Ministries, mine action authorities and other agencies.

What continues to be critical is that victim assistance is to have a focal point to ensure that the integration of victim assistance into these broader frameworks does in fact continue to benefit mine victims and survivors. And that there is a plan in place to ensure integration and continuous follow up. This is our challenge.

In meeting this challenge we are happy to see that an average of 22 States Parties have reported on having designation of an entity to coordinate victim assistance integration activities. This indicator is comparatively the highest reported among all indicators of Victim Assistance.

Unfortunately, only 16 States Parties have reported during the past 3 years, having developed a national plan for implementation. We will therefore have to step up efforts in this regard. We welcome further engagement from States on the challenges in implementing these critical aspects of the Oslo Action Plan.

The Oslo Action Plan requires specific efforts to expand and strength multi-stakeholder efforts, which is instrumental in integrating Victim Assistance into broader frameworks in an effective and sustainable

manner. In this regard, over the past three reporting years of the Oslo Action Plan, an average of 17 States Parties have reported developments in engaging different national stakeholders.

Concerning the Strengthening national implementation mechanisms, we have come a long way in understanding Victim Assistance and its place in our policies and programmes.

Information submitted by the States Parties over the course of three years, and before that, show that in places where casualties continue to occur, mine action centres have a system in place to collect data and to share the data on mine casualties with relevant authorities and stakeholders. However, the Committee observe a key challenge concerning the quality of data collected, and most important the lack of a system to unify the data of mine survivors with those of persons with disabilities. The lack of a centralized mechanism affects the process of integration of Victim Assistance into broader domains, and the ability of decision makers to plan accordingly.

Approximately, half of the States Parties with Victim Assistance obligations have reported taking or planning to act in this regard. We note that increased collective work among national stakeholders needs to be done to set up a functioning centralized database with capacity to store and maintain all relevant data on mine victims and persons with disabilities.

Of the 9 Victim Assistance actions in the Oslo Action Plan, 5 of them are concerned with approaches, methods and strengthening of national mechanisms to ensure tangible services are delivered to mine victims on an equal basis with others. Actions #36, #38, #39 and #41 include commitments for provision of essential services such as health, rehabilitation, social and economic inclusion, psychosocial and psychological support and inclusion and participation of mine survivors and affected families. Of these, nearly all the States Parties that report on their Victim Assistance efforts, have shared information on availability of some forms of physical rehabilitation services. On the other hand, the provision of peer-to-peer support remains the most under-reported of all indicators, with 6 States Parties reporting in this regard in 2020, 7 in 2021 and only 3 in 2022. We should work towards improving on this important aspect.

As you note, we will have to increase our efforts both at policy, coordination and planning level as well as at provision of tangible and essential services including in rural areas.

One key area which we are falling behind severely is in reporting on the creation and establishment of referral services and directory of services to improve smooth and effective access to services. These are the least reported of the indicators with only 11 States Parties reporting on referral mechanisms and only 5 States Parties referring to the establishment of directories of services.

This is one area in which we need to focus on and expand our efforts towards full implementation of this action.

Finally, concerning ensuring the social and economic inclusion of mine victims, given the importance of this issue we are happy to see an increased reporting in this regard.

Another area in which we are falling behind on is on ensuring the safety and protection of mine victims in situations of risks and emergency. While more efforts will need to be invested in this area, the Committee understands that this is the first time State have been requested to report on this effort. We do welcome the 7 States Parties reporting in this regard in 2020, 16 in 2021 and 12 in 2022.

Thank you