

VA EXPERTS MEETING 2022

Opening remarks and introduction

Algeria, Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance

1. Welcome to all participants.
2. The Committee on Victim Assistance, which is composed of Algeria, Ecuador, Italy and Uganda - is mandated to provide “advice to the States Parties in the fulfilment of their commitments under the Oslo Action Plan” and to “facilitate discussion on ways and means of enhancing victim assistance and to ensure the wellbeing of mine victim.” To achieve this mandate the Committee hosts this Victim Assistance (VA) Experts Meeting. As you know, the VA Experts Meeting provides an opportunity for exchanges of lessons learned and best practices in realising the rights and needs of mine survivors and other persons with disabilities. In line with our 2022’s theme, we decided to dedicate this year’s VA Experts Meeting to discuss matters related to rehabilitation a key commitment under the Oslo Action Plan (OAP)’s Action #38. I invite those of you not familiar with the Oslo Action Plan, take a look at the it – Actions #33 to #41 are dedicated to VA, and Action #38 requires the States Parties to provide comprehensive rehabilitation to mine victims.

3. The objective of the 2022 VA Experts Meeting is to enhanced understandings on various aspects of rehabilitation including challenges, gaps and shortcomings faced in delivering quality rehabilitation services in an efficient, affordable and sustainable manner. The meeting will build on the panel *“Thematic Panel and Discussion: Fostering Cooperation for Rehabilitation”* hosted by the Committee at the 2022 Intersessional Meetings of the Convention.

4. The Committee is delighted to have you all participating in this important meeting today and tomorrow. We know that every one of you bring wealth of expertise and information on various aspects of Victim Assistance, disability rights, health and other relevant topics. We are pleased to see a strong participation by our friends have first-hand experience of survivorship and living with disabilities; who is better placed than you to speak about rehabilitation!

5. As you can appreciate from the programme, we have also experts joining us from the international organizations such as the ICRC, WHO, HI, the ICBL and the regional network of survivors from Latin America. And I warmly welcome everyone of you, and value your presence and participation here.

6. Dear colleagues, I hope you are as excited as we are. I, and I am sure my colleagues from Ecuador, Italy and Uganda very much look forward to hearing from all of you. This is an informal gathering, and this is where you can share the best practices you have experienced in your country, your organization or project. It is a place where you can pose tough and technical questions and concerns with the intention to address areas in rehabilitation that we need to improve on. This is your forum, and I would like to encourage you to not shy away from taking part in the discussion.