

Statement by Austria, incoming Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance

Twenty-Second Meeting of the States Parties (22MSP)

agenda item: 9. a), Tuesday 2 December

Mr. President, excellencies, dear colleagues,

Before I begin, I would like to extend my thanks to Burkina Faso (Pambary) and to the Netherlands (Henriette) for your work and dedication to the work of the Committee in 2025.

Austria looks forward to working together with Sri Lanka, and the two incoming Committee Members (El Salvador and Mozambique) as well as the Committee observers (ICBL and ICRC) to assist the States Parties in advancing the rights and wellbeing of mine victims in 2026 and beyond through the implementation, in part, of the priorities we identified this year.

As was mentioned in the Chair's opening statement, in 2025, the Committee undertook a range of initiatives to strengthen victim assistance implementation, including raising awareness of Victim Assistance in other relevant fora, including the Human Right Council and CRPD, the Global Disability Summit, amongst others. The Committee also engaged with VA focal point to strengthen reporting, including through disseminating a VA Checklist.

Looking ahead to 2026, the Committee will prioritise improved reporting, by encouraging and assisting the States Parties that have not submitted Article 7 Report or have not included victim assistance information in their Reports. We will encourage the use of the Guide to Reporting and the VA Checklist to enhance quality and consistency.

As 2025 coincides with the first year of the implementation of the SRAAP, we look forward to your forthcoming Article 7 Reports and take this opportunity to reemphasize the importance of comprehensive reporting, considering in particular areas that are currently underreported in relation to victim assistance, including:

- Development of inclusive service directories (Action 34);
- Increased resources to and accessibility of assistive technologies (Action 35);
- Peer-to-peer support provision and its integration into health systems (Action 36);

- Access to social and economic services (Action 37); and
- Inclusion in humanitarian assistance programmes (Action 38).

In line with the commitments of the SRAAP, the Committee remains committed to fostering synergies across disarmament, human rights, health, and disability sectors, and to promoting gender and diversity considerations in victim assistance. We look forward to continuing hosting a VA Retreat early next year to assist with harmonising VA efforts across our sister-Conventions in Geneva and with relevant stakeholders.

Finally, recognising the persistent challenge of insufficient resources, highlighted by assisted States Parties, the Committee will encourage development of national resource mobilisation plans and taking advantage of all opportunity including through, for example, the individualised approach, in collaboration with the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance.

Before I close, I like to thank the Victim Assistance Experts and other colleagues who attended our informal expert meeting on Monday. We appreciate learning about your national efforts towards achieving the objectives of the SRAAP. We have taken note of your invaluable suggestions and inputs for Committee's 2026 work.

Dear colleagues, tomorrow [or this afternoon, *if we don't get to VA on Tuesday*] the Committee will host a side event on *Strengthening Reporting on Victim Assistance*, where experts from El Salvador and Zimbabwe will share their experience and the Committee will present relevant tools and guidance. Please join us in Room Concordia 4 at 13:00 tomorrow.

Thank you.