

Intersessional meetings

Chair Notes

Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance

17 June 2025

2. Matters related to the mandate of the Committee on Victim Assistance

Excellencies, dear Colleagues,

Burkina Faso has the honour to Chair the Committee on Victim Assistance and to work with my fellow Committee members from Austria, the Netherlands and Sri Lanka. I thank them for all their support to the implementation of the Committee's mandate.

Building on important work carried out by the Committee in 2024, and prior to that, this year the Committee focuses its efforts on continuing our engagement with human rights and disability rights such as the human rights council, the committee on the rights of persons with disabilities to raise awareness of our synergies and advance integration of victim assistance into broader frameworks. Allow me to offer three brief examples of our work in this regard.

- In April, the Committee hosted a side event, "Victim Assistance in Disability Rights Contexts," at the 3rd Global Disability Summit in Berlin—a key forum advancing disability rights, including those of mine survivors. The event highlighted the need for inclusive action and stronger collaboration between victim assistance and broader disability rights stakeholders.
- Last week, the Committee delivered a statement at the Eighteenth Conference of States Parties of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in New York, raising awareness on the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan and called for more efforts to strengthen synergies between the CRPD and victim assistance.
- We continued our efforts to strengthen cohesion in our approach to victim assistance by hosting our annual victim assistance retreat to bring together Geneva-based victim assistance and disability stakeholder.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As per the Committee's mandate to "review relevant information provided by the States Parties on implementation of the commitments contained in the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan" we have drafted observations on updates provided by the States Parties and prepared general observations highlighting trends that we observed through the different reports.

We thank all the States Parties for providing updates on their efforts to meet the needs and protect the rights of mine and other explosive ordnances victims. We appreciate the States Parties, such as *El Salvador, Mozambique, South Sudan, Yemen and Zimbabwe* for sharing information on baselines they created by using the Victim Assistance Checklist this year.

These observations are on the Convention's website, and soon we will be transmitting them to your State with a request for additional information which will help the Committee have a better and more comprehensive understanding of your State situation.

For those that have not reported, we encourage you to provide information as soon as possible with updated information on your victim assistance efforts. We also encourage you to use the VA Checklist to assist in establishing baselines for all relevant actions of the SRAAP during the first implementation of the action plan.

Some States Parties continued reporting under the Oslo Action Plan due to its relevance in 2024, while others began aligning with the SRAAP. Despite differing approaches, the similarity between the plans ensured consistency. The Committee expects full alignment with the SRAAP in next year's reports as we kick off implementation of the Siem reap Action Plan.

Dear colleagues,

Of the 39 States Parties that have reported victim assistance efforts, as of 30 May 2025, 27 States Parties have submitted reports with progress on implementation.

In this regard, we were able to draft observations on implementation by these States and we welcome the information submitted.

Allow me to highlight some of our key observations:

- 12 States Parties reported no casualties in 2024. While some reports may have omitted data, most of these States have succeeded in preventing new casualties, which the Committee commends.
- 19 States Parties reported identifying or working to identify mine and other explosive ordnance survivors. The Committee stresses the importance of collecting disaggregated data and urges States to include all mine victims—survivors, affected families, and communities—in their data efforts.
- The Committee’s 2025 theme highlights Actions 30 and 31 of the SRAAP, which call for stronger national implementation mechanisms—such as appointing focal points and enhancing coordination, planning, monitoring, and reporting. Encouragingly, 86% of reporting States Parties shared progress in this area. The Committee will continue to support States, including through the Victim Assistance Experts Meeting, which facilitates the exchange of good practices.
- 11 States Parties reported involving mine survivors or their representative organizations in national planning, and 21 in broader programmes and policies. The Committee urges all States Parties to ensure their full inclusion in all relevant initiatives.
- 72% of reporting States Parties noted the availability of emergency and ongoing medical care for victims. As emphasized in Action 33, timely healthcare is crucial to saving lives and improving outcomes, so the Committee urges prioritization of these services in policies and budgets.
- 22 States Parties reported on general rehabilitation services, 19 on assistive technology availability, but only 8 shared efforts to boost resources or improve access and affordability of such technology.

- Similarly, 22 States Parties reported some form of psychological support, but only 8 mentioned peer-to-peer support. The Committee urges greater integration of mine victims' needs into national mental health policies and peer support into health systems.
- 15 States Parties reported progress on addressing mine survivors' socio-economic needs, but only 6 provided data on beneficiaries—making it one of the least reported areas. The Committee urges better reporting on Action 37.

With this, allow me to pass on the floor to:

- Ms Saritha Ranatunga of Sri Lanka who leads the Committee's work on gender, to say a few words on gender equality in victim assistance.

Saritha, you have the floor.

[SARITHA TAKES THE FLOOR]

- Thank you, Saritha.
- Now allow me to open the floor for interventions from States Parties implementing Victim Assistance Commitment
- I will then open the floor to other States that would like to take the floor followed by organizations. I wanted also to request that you keep your interventions short, no more than 5 minutes so that all delegations can take the floor.

Starting by the first speaker on my list XXXXX.

(ISU TO PROVIDE THE LIST OF SPEAKERS)

XXXX, you have the floor.

- If there is no additional States Parties with victim assistance commitments that would like to take the floor, allow me to offer the floor to other States Parties or organization which would like to take the floor.
- I would like to start with the first speaker on my list XXXXX.

(ISU TO PROVIDE THE LIST OF SPEAKERS)

XXXX, you have the floor.

Closing remarks:

- I would like to thank all the States Parties, observers and organisations for your interventions today.
- I am pleased to learn about all the work you have invested in victim assistance and that you have already started making progress in implementing the Action Plan commitments on victim assistance. The 10 actions of the SRAAP – Actions 30 to 39, provides with an ambitious goal for the next five years and we encourage all the States Parties to increase efforts in turning those commitments into reality by 2029.
- Before I close, please note that tomorrow afternoon from 15h30 to 18h00, the Committee will hold a Victim Assistance Experts Meeting, with VA Experts from the States implementing victim assistance and experts from organisations. The expert meeting is by invitation and if anyone wish to participate and have not received an invitation, please contact the ISU this afternoon.
- We also invite you to contact the Committee and the ISU for any assistance you may need in your victim assistance efforts, including reporting.

Thank you and allow me to invite the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to come to the stage.