

Victim Assistance Experts Meeting

Wednesday 18 June,

15:30 – 18:00

Opening Remarks, Burkina Faso, Chair

Good afternoon, dear colleagues,

On behalf of the Committee on Victim Assistance of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, representing Austria, the Netherlands, Sri Lanka and my country Burkina Faso, I warmly welcome to you to the Victim Assistance Experts Meeting of 2025.

In accordance with its mandate, which is, in part, to “... facilitate discussion on ways and means of enhancing victim assistance and to ensure the wellbeing of mine victims” to assist the States Parties in fulfilling their victim assistance obligations, the Committee on Victim Assistance is pleased to host today’s VA Experts Meeting providing you, the experts, a platform to exchange on good practices.

Building on important work you carry out in your respective countries and communities; the Committee has been working hard in Geneva to sensitise disability rights community on victim assistance obligations. The Committee has been taking part and delivering statements on victim assistance at the annual Human Rights Council’s session on disabilities, at the Conference of States Parties to CRPD in New York, at the annual World Health Assembly and we continuously interact with the committee on the rights of persons with disabilities and the UN special rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities to raise awareness and reinforce synergies between victim assistance and broader disability rights .

With 2025 marking the first year of implementation of the Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan 2025-2029 (SRAAP), this gathering today provides us with a timely opportunity take stock of progress and challenges in establishing/strengthening national implementation mechanisms, including the assignment of a national focal point, the development of an inclusive national action plan, and efforts related to monitoring, reporting, and engaging relevant ministries.

To make most out of today’s meeting, the Committee decided to focus on two Actions of the SRAAP, Actions 30 and 31. My colleague from the Netherlands will tell you more about it in a moment.

We observe that most of the 39 States Parties with mine victims in areas under their jurisdiction or control reported having national implementation support mechanisms in place. However, the effectiveness, inclusiveness, and continuity of these mechanisms vary significantly across contexts.

To further guide today’s discussion, we suggested some question, as you will find them in the agenda in front of you and I invite you to consider them in your updates.

Dear colleagues,

Following a brief presentation by my colleague from the Netherlands, we will open the floor to hear from you. I would like to ask you to please focus on Actions 30 and 31 and to keep your interventions short to a maximum of five minutes, each.

With that, I am pleased to invite Ms. Henriette-van Gulik, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Conference on Disarmament and Member of the Committee to explain the breadth of Actions 30 and 31

- **Ms. Henriette-van Gulik speaks and** pass on the floor to Julia.
- **Ms. Julia Eberl, Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN, Member of the Committee:**

Thank you so much Henriette for demystifying the two actions. A lot is squeezed in those two actions, and I am really pleased that we have a chance to discuss them today.

Now I like to open the floor and invite the representative of the States Parties that implement victim assistance and other colleagues to share update on their work, including challenges faced in implementing Actions 30 and 31.

- XXX
- XXX
- XXX

[end of national updates]

I would like to thank everyone for taking part in this conversation. We are encouraged by so many activities and achievements in relation to building national implementation mechanisms. Certainly, as it was mentioned by many speakers, there are challenges to be addressed, one of which is associated to national capacity. The SRAAP stresses upon building national capacity and strengthening national ownerships and the Committee will do its best to assist you in its capacity.

With that, I like to invite the ISU to tell us a little more about reporting and monitoring.

- **ISU shares a brief presentation**

[Julia will continue to facilitate the session and then invite Saritha to close the meeting.]

- **Ms. Saritha Ranatunga, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka and a Member of the Committee closes the meeting**