

**Victim Assistance Experts Meeting**

**Wednesday 18 June 2025**

**15:30 – 18:00**

**Saritha Ranatunga, Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka to the UN**

**Closing remarks**

Allow me to start by expressing my sincere gratitude to all representatives of the States Parties and other experts attending this meeting.

I have listened attentively to the updates shared, and the points raised in relation to Actions 30 and 31 of the SRAAP. While I do not intend to summarise all that has been discussed allow me to reiterate a few key points:

As States Parties started implementing the SRAAP, it is timely to turn our attention to establishing strong and effective national implementation mechanism. As discussed, national implementation mechanism includes, but not limited to:

- appointing a well-sourced national focal point with clear mandate to coordinate efforts in victim assistance at national level,
- ensuring an inter-ministerial coordination is in place and regularly meet
- ensuring an inclusive national action plan is developed and implemented
- ensuring there are systems and tools in place to monitor the implementation of plans and relevant policies
- report on achievements, gaps and shortcomings
- allocating national resources to assist mine and other EO survivors – such resources should be included in the long-term frameworks of relevant ministries and agencies

As Henriette correctly elaborated, in essence, these actions help transforming victim assistance from a separate task into an integral part of national disability rights, development and social protection systems, which is key in meeting the needs of mine and other EO victims in the long run.

It is important to note that, none of the above would require creating a separate mechanism or plan, for victim assistance only but rather to include victim assistance in existing mechanisms, plans as well as in the mandate of existing focal point(s) on disability rights.

The Committee stresses the urgency of implementation of the two actions as essential enablers to attaining the victim assistance objectives of the SRAAP.

I know, I am preaching to the converted but as the Gender Focal Point of the Committee, allow me to also bring to your attention a couple of points with regards to gender equality and diversity considerations in victim assistance.

As you know all too well, gender and diversity have always been essential parts of victim assistance. Not considering gender and diversity in victim assistance risk us contributing to more disparities in affected communities. I encourage you to consider gender-, age-, and disability-sensitive approach throughout your efforts including planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Committee and the ISU for any questions you may have or any assistance you will need with regards to implementation or reporting on SRAAP's victim assistance commitments.

Thank you all again for your participation and contributions to the discussion, including those who attended via Zoom.

Allow me also to thank the interpreters for their kind assistance. And my gratitude to ISU for supporting the Committee in organising this important discussion today.

We hope to see you all at the 22MSP in December!

The meeting is closed.