

Regional Stakeholder Dialogue's Concept Note and Provisional Programme | 5 – 7 May 2026, Hilton Hotel, San Salvador, El Salvador

## Sustainable Capacities to Address Residual Contamination and Strengthen Victim Assistance in the Americas

The Americas is home to the first region in the world —Central America— to declare itself free from the threat posed by anti-personnel mines. This occurred in accordance with Article 5 of the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Production, Stockpiling, and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction* (hereafter referred to as the Convention). In total, eight States Parties have declared their territory cleared of all known mine contamination: Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Suriname, and Venezuela – plus El Salvador which declared completion prior to acceding to the Convention. Three States Parties—Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru—are currently implementing obligations under Article 5, two of which may be in a position to declare completion in the next few years. Argentina has reported suspected mined areas under its jurisdiction or control.

The Americas context is unique. Most States Parties in the region conducted or continue to conduct demining activities primarily through their armed forces. Given this significant progress and context-specific scenario, the Latin American region is well suited for a regional approach to discuss the need for, and best practices related to, sustaining national capacities beyond completion. In particular, for fostering understandings of the pivotal importance of institutional, technical, and financial components required for long term national mine action capacity to address previously unknown or new contamination—including from improvised anti-personnel mines by non-state armed actors.

Mine contamination has resulted in significant loss of life and left tens of thousands of victims in the Americas. Many have acquired disabilities as a result of explosions; their families and communities have also been affected. The term 'victim' therefore, refers to persons, individually or collectively, who have suffered physical, emotional, or psychological injury, economic loss, or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights through acts or omissions related to the use of anti-personnel mines and other explosive ordnance. The Convention calls on States Parties "to do their utmost in providing assistance for the care and rehabilitation, including the social and economic reintegration of mine victims." This aspiration has been translated into a legal obligation and a human rights-based approach known as "victim assistance" (VA).

The concept, first introduced in 1997 in the text of the Convention, has since served as the basis for how disarmament instruments address this obligation. This Convention together with the Convention on Cluster Munitions have been instrumental in leveraging VA to open dialogue on disability. Therefore, the States Parties have agreed to ensure the full, equal, and effective participation of victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination. The Parties have been encouraged to undertake VA efforts alongside those made to fulfil obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Providing support to mine victims is key, especially beyond clearance as the resources mobilised and initiatives undertaken such as reinforcing survivor networks, benefit broader populations. Other actors—including from cluster munitions, gun violence, and armed violence—are key to this movement with their collective efforts contributing significantly to the global disability rights agenda.

The Regional Stakeholder Dialogue (RSD) therefore, seeks to determine how these obligations are being implemented in the hemisphere. **The RSD is held thanks to support of the European Union's global project<sup>1</sup> to support implementation of the Convention and its Siem Reap-Angkor Action Plan 2025–2029 (SRAAP). It is hosted by the Veterans and Ex-Combatants Benefits Administration Institute (INABVE) and has the technical backing of the Convention's Implementation Support Unit (ISU).** El Salvador, as host country, is a strong example of commitment to victim assistance as it has a solid VA programme, it is member of the Committee on Victim Assistance, and when it comes to Article 5, it successfully finalised its mine clearance activities contributing to a Central America free of these weapons.

<sup>1</sup> COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2025/781 of 14 April 2025

## Sustainable Capacities to Address Residual Contamination and Strengthen VA in the Americas

Regional Stakeholder Dialogue | Day One | Tuesday 5 May 2026 | 09:00 – 17:00 | Room Suramérica

08:30-09:00 Registration

### **A1 | Special Opening Session | 09:00-09:30 | Room Suramérica**

The Convention enjoys near-universal adherence in the Americas and the Caribbean; with Central America being declared *mine-free*, the hemisphere is inching closer to this ambition. As one of the birthplaces of the landmine movement, Central America has long been a stronghold of support for eliminating anti-personnel mines and assistance to victims. In this special session, the following representatives are to open the conference,

**Keynote speaker: Vice-President of the Republic of El Salvador, H.E. Dr. Félix Ulloa Jr.**

- President of the Veterans and Ex-Combatants Benefits Administration Institute, Dr Daniel Eduardo Platero Martínez
- Ambassador of the European Union and Head of Delegation of the European Union to El Salvador, H.E. Duccio Bandini
- President of the Convention, H.E. Eunice M. Tembo Luambia, Permanent Representative of Zambia to the UN Geneva
- Founder of the Association of Survivors of Santander North, Colombia as a Representative of civil society and survivors of anti-personnel mines, the Distinguished Mrs Mileiny Ramirez.

09:30 – 10:00 Pause for high-level delegates to leave - group photo

### **A2 | Building Sustainable National Mine Action Capacities in the Hemisphere | 10:15-11:15**

Action 21 of the SRAAP calls for the establishment of a sustainable national capacity to implement the Convention and address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas or discovered following completion. This session seeks to develop on commitments made at the Twelfth Meeting of the States Parties as contained in the “Proposed rational response to States Parties discovering previously unknown mined areas after deadlines have passed”. The panel is to explore,

- Convention’s framework, Juan Carlos Ruan, Director, Convention’s Implementation Support Unit
- Framing the hemispheric context, Organization of American States (OAS)
- Importance of sustainable national capacities and key areas for consideration as States near completion.

### **A3 | Best Practices After Completion | 11:30 – 13:00**

Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Suriname, and Venezuela have contributed to increasing the number of countries around the world that have finalised mine clearance programmes. What has been their success and what are the current measures in place to address any unforeseen circumstance? These States Parties are invited to present on cross cutting elements such as,

- Residual contamination identified and manner in which it was addressed
- Practical models for sustainable national capacities, including governance, staffing, budgeting, and inter ministerial coordination.
- Database management
- Community liaison and mine risk education

Following their presentation, all States Parties and organisations attending are encouraged to actively participate in discussions regarding the following,

- Governance models, data stewardship, rapid response mechanisms, integration with national systems (civil protection, disaster risk reduction, security forces).

Lunch | 13:00 – 14:00

**Regional Stakeholder Dialogue | Day One | Tuesday 5 May 2026 | 09:00 – 17:00 (continues) | Room Suramérica**

**A4 | Preparing for a Mine-Free Hemisphere | 14:00 – 15:30 | Room Suramérica**

Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru have declared obligations under Article 5. How are they progressing toward completion and shaping their post completion institutional arrangements? These States Parties are invited to present on the following,

- Experience in identifying previously unknown/unrecorded contamination
- Planning for post completion and addressing residual contamination
- Ensuring continuity of expertise and data (avoiding loss of capacity)
- Sustainable mine risk education: Anticipating long-term community engagement needs.

coffee break

**A5 | Open Discussion | 15:45 – 17:00**

The day will conclude with engaging discussions led by the ISU Director on the following topics:

- Emerging threats, including improvised explosive devices, particularly those functioning as anti-personnel mines
- Ensuring continued engagement with the Convention following completion (political engagement and reporting)
- Declaring completion under Article 5
- Reporting on previously unknown or newly identified contamination
- Reporting in line with the Siem Reap–Angkor Action Plan

Delegates responsible for these topics are warmly invited to continue the discussions in parallel with the field visit taking place on the second day.

**End of Day**

**Special Event: An Evening of Salvadoran Hospitality**

The INABVE and the European Union warmly invite delegates to mingle informally during a two-hour reception following the first day of work.

**Hosts:** El Salvador and the European Union  
**Time:** 17:30 – 19:30  
**Place:** **Jade Terrace**

**Regional Stakeholder Dialogue | Day Two | Wednesday 6 May 2026 | 09:00 – 17:00 | Room Jade**

***B1 | Getting the Day Started | 09:00 – 09:15 | Room Jade***

To kick start the day, participants will hear a personal perspective on the lasting impact of mines and explosive ordnance on the lives of those affected, and the importance of inclusive, survivor-centred approaches to VA.

***B2 | Beyond Commitments: Integrating Victim Assistance into National Systems | 09:15 – 10:30***

SRAAP Actions 30 to 39 require VA integration into broader national systems. This session sets to explore how States Parties, international organisations, and civil society can strengthen integrated approaches, ensuring services are embedded within national frameworks. Drawing on experiences from El Salvador, Humanity & Inclusion, and survivor network RED-LAT, speakers are to share lessons learnt in integrating victim assistance into disability, health, development, human rights, and social protection policies and programmes. The session is led by ISU Expert on Victim Assistance, Firoz Alizada.

Participants are encouraged to prepare and share their own experiences in integrating victim assistance into broader national systems to enrich the discussion. These interventions should be no longer than four minutes.

***B3 | Strengthening the Rights-Based Approach | 10:45 – 11:15***

Building on the CRPD’s central role in shaping inclusive policies — increasingly embraced by the States Parties — the former Special Envoy of the UN Secretary General on Disability and Accessibility and former CRPD Committee Chair, Professor María Soledad Cisternas Reyes, explores how the Convention’s victim assistance commitments align with CRPD obligations. The disability rights’ Expert is also to highlight gaps, complementarities, and opportunities to strengthen the rights-based approach so that mine survivors can fully benefit from broader disability developments.

coffee break

***B4 | Accessing Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology | 11:30 – 13:00***

This session centres on improving access to rehabilitation and assistive technology, drawing on achievements in Colombia, regional experiences, and global initiatives such as ATscale and PAHO. Action 35 of the SRAAP calls for “access to comprehensive rehabilitation services and assistive technology; including where necessary, through outreach and innovative services, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable.”

Presenters are to discuss practical pathways to ensure that survivors receive timely, affordable, and quality rehabilitation, and share insights and strategies to make assistive technology more accessible. Following their presentation, all States Parties attending and organisations are encouraged to share their experiences on both, access to rehabilitation services and assistive technology. These interventions should be no longer than a four minutes.

Lunch | 13:00 – 14:00

**Field Visit | 14:00**

Visit to two rehabilitation centres (the group is divided into two) to observe comprehensive assistance programmes that support mine victims and other persons with disabilities. El Salvador, which has a significant number of survivors, offers a strong example of an integrated approach to victim assistance by combining physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and socioeconomic inclusion. The visit offers practical perspectives on sustained and inclusive responses from INABVE.

**Towards a Mine-Free Hemisphere | 14:00**

Emerging threats, including from improvised explosive devices, continuity of commitments after demining concludes, regional cooperation on Article 5, reporting on previously unknown or recent contamination, and reporting in line with PASRA. Session led by the ISU Director.



**Regional Stakeholder Dialogue | Day Three | Thursday 7 May 2026 | 09:00 – 17:00 | Room Jade**

***C1 | Getting the Day Started | 09:00 – 09:15 | Room Jade***

To kick start the day, participants share their impressions of the field visit and/or the meeting on Article 5.

***C2 | Healthcare and Mental Health & Psychosocial Support | 09:15 – 10:30***

Access to both, healthcare and mental health & psychosocial support (MHPSS) is essential in the recovery and inclusion of mine survivors and affected families. It is so much so, that it is cited as an important Action (36) of the SRAAP. Experts from El Salvador and PAHO are to discuss national experiences, highlighting community based approaches, peer support, and the importance of sustained psychological care.

Participants are encouraged to prepare and share their own experiences in making MHPSS and healthcare services accessible to mine and explosive ordnance victims. These interventions should be no longer than three minutes.

***C3 | Empowering Survivor Networks | 10:45 – 12:00***

Participation and inclusion are central to victim assistance efforts. The work of survivor-led networks is key in peer support, advocacy often leading to greater collaboration with governments. The discussion seeks to reinforce Action 39 of the SRAAP, which calls for full and effective participation of survivors and their representative organisations in all matters affecting them.

Survivor networks are encouraged to prepare and share their own experiences in partnering with governments to implement victim assistance. States Parties and other organisations are invited to prepare and share their experience in collaborating with said networks. These interventions should be no longer than three minutes.

Lunch | 12:00 – 13:00

***C4 | Access to Socioeconomic Inclusion | 13:15 – 14:30***

What are some of the best practices in socio economic inclusion, access to education, employment, entrepreneurship, and social protection? Expert panellists are to explore how to strengthen long term inclusion and reduce barriers faced by survivors including in rural and remote areas in line with Action 37 of SRAAP. States Parties and organisations are encouraged to prepare and share their own experiences in meeting the socioeconomic needs of mine victims and the challenges to address, to enrich the discussion. These interventions should be no longer than three minutes.

***C5 | Impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in VA and Disability Rights Spheres | 14:45 – 16:00***

What are the opportunities and risks posed by AI in service delivery, social protection, accessibility and products. Building on global concerns raised by the Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, speakers are set to discuss how to ensure ethical, inclusive, and non-discriminatory use of AI in the region. States Parties and organisations are encouraged to prepare and share their own experiences in mitigating negative impact of AI, to enrich the discussion. These interventions should be no longer than three minutes.

break

***C6 | What Next for the Americas? | 16:15 – 17:00***

The three-day programme is to close reflecting on the discussions, lessons learnt, and best practices shared throughout. Panellists are to share recommendations, summarize and identify remaining gaps and actionable steps. Organisations may set the stage for continued collaboration with and among States Parties, civil society, and international partners to advance the implementation of the Convention across the region and make the Americas the first hemisphere free of anti-personnel mines where survivors thrive in society. Participants are encouraged to evaluate the Dialogue.