

**PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS
COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE
(Belgium, Croatia, Ecuador and Mozambique)**

Intersessional Meetings 7-8 June 2018

Observations of the Committee on the information submitted by Colombia

1. The Committee welcomes the submission by Colombia of its Article 7 report for the calendar year 2017, containing updated information on its victim assistance activities. Based on the information provided, the Committee presents the following preliminary observations.

Mine casualties

2. The Committee observed that Colombia reported 56 mine victims in 2017, including 50 male, 6 female, and 10 children. The reported indicated that by the end of 2017, 3,440 persons with disabilities registered had been caused by mines/explosive remnants of war or unexploded ordinance, and welcomes additional information, disaggregated by sex and age.

Assessment of needs, the availability and gaps in services (Action #12)

3. The Committee observed Colombia was acting upon requirements of Action 12 by reporting on efforts to collect comprehensive data and improving mechanisms for the implementation of victim assistance, by reporting as follows:
 - a. A functional data collection mechanism, such as a surveillance system in public health is in place and it is operated by the National Institute of Health. The surveillance system collects comprehensive data including on characteristics and causes of injuries such as anti-personnel mines;
 - b. Based on the data collected, the reported stated that in 2017, 12.5% of all injuries registered in the surveillance system were caused by anti-personnel mines, along with more details on age groups and location of accidents;
 - c. An information service on survivors of anti-personal mines (SISMAP) was created in 2017, to strengthen and improve data collection, information analysis, monitoring and follow up among other activities;
 - d. Since SISMAP was launched, the system has helped to identify 1,691 victims, providing a better understanding of the victims' situation which has contributed to better formulate policies and programmes, and;
 - e. With the aim of filling service gaps, several initiatives relating to surveillance, health, social security, and the elimination of discrimination and marginalization were reported.

Time-bound and measurable objectives (Action #13)

4. The Committee observed that Colombia reported having a plan on victim assistance developed by the Technical Subcommittee on Victim Assistance in the framework of the National Inter-Sectoral Committee for Action against Mines (CINAMAP) with the participation of stakeholders, including survivors and their representative organizations. The Committee observed that Colombia was acting upon its commitment under Action 13 through continued efforts to identify victims' needs, increased efforts to strengthen implementation and monitoring mechanisms, including for inclusion and participation of mine victims throughout the country. The Committee welcomes an electronic copy of Colombia's plan on victim assistance.

Enhancement in the integration of victim assistance into broader frameworks, including allocation of budgets for their implementations (Actions #14)

5. The Committee observed that Colombia was acting upon its commitments under Action 14, including through engaging health service providers, health surveillance, social protection, recreation and sports sectors, education, municipalities, organisations of persons with disabilities in strengthening, developing, delivery, monitoring and follow up of assistance to mine victims and other persons with disabilities, and by the followings:
 - a. Six circulars, decrees and resolutions were issued by the government in bringing improvements in assistance provided to mine victims including in areas of administrative processes, health and rehabilitation, sexual and reproductive rights, inclusive education and provision of education in a non-discriminatory approach, and the right to employment and work in public entities;
 - b. A total of COP \$ 1.8 billion was allocated to victims in 2017, with COP \$ 16,000,000,000 to health sector with a focus to increase access to health services for victims of armed conflict, including COP \$ 6,370,000,000 for psychological support of mines/explosive remnants of war victims, and;
 - c. The Ministry of Labour had started bringing adjustments to labour policies to ensure persons with disabilities have access to reasonable and decent employment and work.

Increase availability of and accessibility to rehabilitation services, economic inclusion opportunities and social protection measures for all mine victims, regardless of their gender and age (Action #15)

6. The Committee observed that Colombia was implementing requirements outlined under Action 15 to increase availability of and accessibility to services, by reporting as follows:
 - d. Improved policies, service delivery procedures, coordination and the overall rights of persons with disabilities including mine victims ;
 - e. In accordance with the transformative reparation approach of Law 1448 (Victims and Land Restitution Law) efforts continued to improve the quality of life of victims of conflict, including mine victims;
 - f. In response to a request made by the District Association of Survivors of Anti-Personnel Mines (ANT), the Government awarded 22 families, victims of conflict including seven mine victims, with rural properties in the Armero Guayabal municipality, Department of Tolima;
 - g. While access to comprehensive care has improved, the report indicated the need for further efforts to enhance access to health care, including by undertaking awareness-raising activities on the rights of persons with disabilities, and;
 - h. Targeted efforts to increase attention in support of children and adolescents victims of armed conflicts, including mine victims.
7. The Committee would welcome on information on mine victims that have benefited from these services disaggregated by sex and age.

Strengthen local capacities and enhance coordination (Action #15)

8. The Committee observed that Colombia was acting upon its commitments by developing survivors' and their organisations' capacities through various means, including comprehensive post-conflict training – the latter provided to affected populations in Colombia. Colombia reported on well-established mechanisms such as the technical committee on victim assistance, General System of Social Security in Health, and comprehensive support including capacity building provided by the mine action centre, in coordination with stakeholders.

Inclusion and participation of mine victims (Actions #16)

9. The Committee observed that Colombia was implementing Action 16 by providing opportunities for inclusion and participation of mine victims and persons with disabilities through coordination mechanisms in place, including supporting organizations representing persons with disabilities, regular meetings with victims, and promoting peer support through their respective networks.

Removing barriers and raising awareness (Actions #15 and #17)

10. The Committee observed that Colombia was acting upon its commitments under Actions 15 and 17 by reporting on awareness raising and enhancing implementation support mechanisms to expand services and increase the reach of mine victims to services they need.

Measurable improvements, challenges and priorities for assistance in advance of the next Review Conference (Action #18)

11. The Committee observed that Colombia has undertaken a comprehensive programme and indicated significant improvement in policies, plans, and service delivery. This included mapping out some remaining challenges including in access to services, provision of comprehensive care and victim reparation, access to rights and overall empowerment of victims. The Committee encourages Colombia to continue its efforts to achieve Actions 12-18 of *the Maputo Action Plan* by the upcoming Review Conference.