



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

INTERSESSIONAL PROGRAMME 2002-2003

**Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration
Summary Report of the 4 February 2003 Meeting**

Introduction

The Standing Committee concentrated on strategies to assist States Parties in meeting their obligations under Article 6.3 of the Convention, particularly on measuring progress over the next 18 months, by the 2004 Review Conference. The Co-Chairs encouraged States Parties to report on national implementation plans using the reporting framework circulated. The Co-Chairs requested all 43 States Parties that may require assistance to report using this framework during the 2003 and 2004 Standing Committee meetings. It is envisaged that about ¼ will report at each meeting.

1. Overview on status of implementation

The Co-Chairs noted that new victims officially recorded numbered over 7,000, but the true figure was likely to be much higher. Becky Jordan (ICBL Working Group on Victim Assistance) said that data collection on victims was improving but funding appeared to be declining. It was important to accurately measure progress. The Victim Assistance Working Group would be using indicators developed by Canada in 1999.

2. National updates on implementation

The following 14 States Parties gave updates on their plans, progress and priorities for assistance: Angola, Cambodia, Afghanistan, Croatia, Albania, Tajikistan, Rwanda, Nicaragua, Thailand, Zambia, Namibia, Colombia, El Salvador, Chad (full summaries will be provided in the final report of the Standing Committee).

3. Exchange of views on regional efforts

Handicap International gave an update on the HI Regional Victim Assistance program for South-East Asia now operating for over a year which assists local actors to define their own priorities. The International Trust Fund of Slovenia reported on progress in South Eastern Europe, over 700 victims in the region had been assisted over the past year and over 250 occupational health and physiotherapy experts trained. The Omega Initiative, a fund for prosthetics and orthotics in Africa, was also mentioned. The Co-Chairs concluded that better coordination between donors and countries affected is needed.

4. Reflections on funding sustainability

About 12% of funding in 2002 was for victim assistance, but according to Landmine Monitor funds from donors and funds as a proportion of all mine funding for victim assistance had remained stable since 1999. All agreed that local capacity needed to be developed to ensure programs were sustainable and that victim assistance was a long-term issue that needed long-term solutions. It was crucial to see victim assistance as a national health issue and vital for mine affected states themselves to show leadership. UNMAS provided an update: It is taking over the responsibility for the portfolio of victim assistance projects from ICBL. The EU is conducting impact inquiries with UNDP, it particularly stressed the importance of transferring the appropriate tools - equipment and technology - to enable local authorities to deal with the victim assistance challenge.

5. Raising the Voices

The survivors attending the meeting under the "Raising the Voices" initiative from Thailand and Laos were introduced, as were members of the Russian Amputee Hockey team, many of whom are landmine survivors.

6. Conclusions

The Co-Chairs concluded that work must be adapted to fit the diversity of situations, and that NGOs and other actors have an important role in helping the Standing Committee and mine affected states in the evaluation of local situations. The victim assistance problem is aggravated by the fact that most countries with such problems are developing countries. Those countries need development assistance which is stagnating overall, so it is important to get the best possible picture of actual needs to assist with consideration of appropriate aid for victims. The ambition of the Standing Committee is to reach a complete understanding of existing needs to enable an action plan to be prepared by 2004. The Co-Chairs would appreciate countries that intend to provide updates at the May meeting (whether mine affected or donor) to inform them or Kerry Brinkert (ISU).