

**ICBL Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance - Victim Assistance**  
**Intersessional Standing Committee Meetings**  
**25 June 2010**

I would like to use this time to share with you some of the ICBL's recommendations for strengthening international cooperation and assistance in victim assistance. Recommendations will be given for three different stakeholders, namely for States in a position to assist, States with significant number of victims, and for national and international service providers and disabled people's organizations.

According to the information available, from 1999 to 2009, victim assistance constituted the smallest component of mine action funding. Hard data on victim assistance funding is not available, and so my first recommendation is to ensure greater transparency and accountability, as well as better reporting, in victim assistance funding at both the international and national level.

Let me now begin with our recommendations for States Parties in a position to assist.

**Recommendations for States Parties in a position to assist:**

- Ensure that all international cooperation is inclusive of landmine victims and persons with disabilities in a way that takes the special needs of survivors into account. In other words, ensure that disability is a cross cutting issue in cooperation and development, in a way similar to gender
- Fund broader disability initiatives while making sure survivors are amongst the beneficiaries
- Consider funding victim assistance in broad funding initiatives such as those that support the Millennium Development Goals, post-conflict reconstruction and poverty reduction strategy papers, by including a special reference to supporting victims
- When mainstreaming funding for VA, remember that there is still a responsibility to allocate specific resources to VA in order to ensure compliance with the obligation to fund victim assistance under the Mine Ban Treaty
- Increase financial and technical support for the capacity building of national service providers as a way to increase national ownership, as well as of organizations of survivors and people with disabilities
- Ensure balance between donor and recipient driven priorities
- Acknowledge that attitudes, practices and national resources will not be changed in a matter of one or two years. Therefore ensure sustainability and effectiveness of VA projects by committing to long term financial support
- Provide support to develop the capacities of survivors and Disabled Peoples Organizations for advocacy and for promoting good practices on inclusion
- Report clearly on the amount of funding provided to victim assistance, its beneficiaries and results 'on the ground', in a way that is linked to the Cartagena Action Plan
- Consult with survivors to ensure effectiveness of your financial and technical support
- Look beyond the 'mine action box' when reporting on impact of victim assistance

Last, but not least:

- Do not end your international cooperation efforts once a country has finished its clearance obligations. Instead, continue to channel mine action funds to victim assistance as victims' needs will continue over the long term.

**Recommendations for States with significant number of victims:**

- Victim assistance should be identified as a national priority, including by providing dedicated funding through national budgets, signalling it as a priority to donors and including it in national poverty reduction plans
- Ensure that all development is inclusive of people with disabilities in a way that takes the special needs of survivors into account
- Use the Mine Ban Treaty or the Convention on Cluster Munitions to leverage victim assistance funds, particularly by those states that have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- Use the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to leverage funds for victim assistance efforts, particularly by those states that have not ratified the Mine Ban Treaty or the Convention on Cluster Munitions
- Assess if current victim assistance funding mechanisms are sufficient and adapt these where necessary in order to respond to the needs of survivors and other people with disabilities
- Develop SMART action plans on victim assistance complete with a budget and national resources available so that needs for international assistance are clear
- Ensure capacity-building initiatives to increase national ownership and ensure sustainability are being carried out alongside the provision of direct services
- Organize regular awareness-raising events about the rights and needs of victims and people with disabilities for key authorities involved in the financing of government programs
- Request technical assistance on building national capacity on victim assistance, such as on the establishment of a multi-stakeholder VA coordination committee, or the development of a Terms of Reference for a VA Focal Point within the government
- Look beyond the 'mine action box' when reporting on impact of victim assistance
- Report clearly on the amount of funding provided to victim assistance, its beneficiaries and results 'on the ground' in a way that is linked to the Cartagena Action Plan (the exercise of reporting was a useful tool internally in Croatia)

**Recommendations for national and international service providers and disabled people's organizations**

- Coordinate with the national government before beginning any victim assistance work in any country in an effort to avoid duplication and gaps
- Review existing budgets to ensure maximum outcomes with current funding sources
- Organize regular awareness-raising workshops on victim assistance for key national authorities in charge of government finances like the Ministry of Finance and members of parliament in order to build their understanding that VA is not a cost, but an investment
- Ensure survivors and people with disabilities are amongst the beneficiaries of your services and report on this
- Report clearly on the amount of funding provided to victim assistance, its beneficiaries and results 'on the ground' in a way that is linked to the Cartagena Action Plan

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to speak on international cooperation as it pertains to victim assistance.