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In Cartagena last year, Peru and Turkey were honoured to have been nominated as co-chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance. Indeed, the two countries served as co-rapporteurs in 2009. Throughout our co-rapporteurship, we participated in various meetings and workshops, and had the opportunity to listen to and learn from experts coming from the affected states. Such in-depth exchanges contributed to our perspective of various issues related to victim assistance.

As co-chairs, we attempted to build on the efforts of all past Co-Chairs, to facilitate progress in applying these principles and understandings at the national level. The principles and understandings on victim assistance adopted at the Cartagena Summit further contributed to the endeavours of 2010.

The focus of our work was with the States Parties that have reported responsibility for significant numbers of mine survivors.

In this context, we reaffirmed the principles of national ownership, equality, non-discrimination and full inclusion. We also established the need for an integrated and a comprehensive approach, as victim assistance is one of the most complex and challenging issues for States Parties. Several challenges remain to be addressed in that regard.

It is obvious that guaranteeing the rights and addressing the needs of mine victims is contingent on political will, as well as the necessary financial, human, and technical resources. We believe that commitments by both the affected States and by the international community in accordance with Article 6 will make a difference on the ground.

In a nutshell, our experience has been the simple formula that victim assistance, in essence, is a national ownership issue, into which, enhanced international cooperation and assistance may contribute.

Finally, we should like to wish good luck to Australia and Uganda, who will carry the flag after us.