

Austria and Colombia Statement

13 Meeting of the States Parties

Thank you Mr. President for giving us the floor.

Austria and Colombia are pleased to share our work as Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance.

Mr. President

Taking into consideration the continuous increase in the number of child victims affected by anti-personnel mines in Colombia, and the devastating worldwide impact of land mines and other explosive remnants of war, we decided to focus our work in 2013 on assistance to child victims with the aim of highlighting the tools available at the various levels of implementation of victim assistance provisions.

In collaboration with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and with the support of the Implementation Support Unit, Austria and Colombia conducted an Expert Workshop in Geneva entitled "Assistance to Child Victims" on the 30th and 31st of May 2013. The aim of the workshop was to put a focus on the requirement that victim assistance be "age-sensitive" as well as "gender-sensitive", and to take a closer look at how far the specific needs and rights of children as victims are met, and at what could be done further to enhance the assistance to child victims in the framework of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, in accordance with the Cartagena Action Plan of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention 2010- 2014, and in cooperation with other relevant international legal instruments.

Various stakeholders, including Handicap International, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions (ICBL-CMC), the International Committee of the Red Cross, the United Nations' Children's Fund and the World Health Organization, provided valuable input to the preparations of the workshop. Experts received a solid basis of information on the situation of child victims in affected countries, the existing international legal framework and the available information on challenges, good practices and lessons learned in the implementation of victim assistance provisions for children.

As Co-Chair, we have prepared a draft document entitled "Strengthening the Assistance to Child Victims" for sharing with all participants of this Meeting of States Parties of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (13MSP), as a result of our exhaustive efforts to merge the rich expert inputs throughout the workshop and the consultations carried out with relevant stakeholders working on victim assistance and children-related fields, States, multilateral organizations and civil society organizations. The document was presented during a side event on 2 December 2013 and will be available on the webpage of the Convention.

Additionally, we would like to convey to you a study conducted by Colombia entitled "Guide for comprehensive assistance to boy, girl and adolescent landmine victims", which has been constructed on a broadly diversified basis of stakeholders, pursuant to the important task of assessing guidelines for the national policy making, and protocols to guarantee prevention, assistance and reparation for the victims. For that purpose, and based on shared experiences, four major dimensions or levels were identified as fundamental to any analysis of assistance to direct and indirect under-aged victims: boys, girls and adolescents themselves, the family, the community and the state.

We would invite delegations to provide their comments and input to both documents and help further enriching and complementing these documents. We would appreciate to receive and written comments and feedback not later than on February 2014, so that these documents may be presented during the Third Review Conference which will take place in Mozambique in June 2014.

Finally, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the ISU, UNICEF, ICBL, Handicap and the states parties which have joined us during this process, and which have contributed to enhancing our work.

Thank you Mr. President