



Cooperation and Assistance, Fostering Partnerships!

Follow up to the 2019 Global Conference on the Rights of Victims of AP Mines and other Explosive Remnants of War
<https://bit.ly/CoopAssist-VA>

Background

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention calls on States Parties “to do their utmost in providing assistance for the care and rehabilitation, including the social and economic reintegration of mine victims.” This obligation has been defined as *victim assistance* (VA). The Parties have sought to ensure that VA is carried out “with the same precision and intensity as with other aims of the Convention”.

To achieve this goal, States have accepted that VA should be integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD); and efforts carried out in support of improving health, education, employment, development and reducing poverty in realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

At the 2019 global Fostering Partnerships conference, States with significant numbers of mine and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) survivors and other stakeholders identified technical resource shortages and lack of access to funding “as a significant challenge to the provision of services and opportunities for victims”. Participants generally agreed that *in light of the limited mine action funds dedicated to VA, it makes sense to mobilise resources, by fostering partnerships with disability rights, poverty reduction and development actors*. In one particular panel at the conference, expert presenters including from Norway, Peru, Senegal, UNDP, the EU, and Humanity and Inclusion (HI), together with the UN Secretary General on Disability and Accessibility shared lessons learnt and best practices for obtaining resources for VA.

To continue this discussion and supporting States as they seek ways to address these shortages, the Convention’s Implementation Support Unit (ISU) with financial support of the European Union will host a global discussion on VA funding with States and international and non-governmental organisations.

The online event will be held on **4 December 2020**, which also coincides with the 23rd anniversary of the signing of the Convention, from **13.30 to 15:30 GMT+1**. The event will be opened by the European Union and the Convention President Netherlands, moderated by the Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance, Thailand, with conclusions provided by the Chair of the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance, Colombia. VA and disability rights practitioners are particularly encouraged to attend. Interpretation will be provided to-from Arabic, English, French, Spanish. Sign language will be ensured. Interested participants are welcome to submit either a question or request to take the floor to share experiences upon registration, <https://bit.ly/CoopAssist-VA>.

Feedback and questions guiding the discussion

The following are some of the Conclusions presented by the Chair of the Fostering Partnerships conference, HRH Prince Mired Raad Zeid Al-Hussein which will serve to guide/continue the 4 December discussion,

1. It is clear that in many cases, available resources are insufficient to meet needs and demands. Service providers at the community level, including survivor associations are most impacted as they rarely have reserves to cover gaps in funding. There is a need for long-term sustainable funding to ensure that victims and survivors have access to services and opportunities. **How can this be done? What makes a State or organisation attractive to this funding?**

2. All States Parties and organisations seeking assistance have a role to play when it comes to identifying prospects for cooperation and assistance. **What could be the first steps for States or organisations to take?**
3. While it is a government responsibility to provide services, innovative approaches could be explored including: through partnerships with broader domains; by exploring the potential of regional funds; and by engaging the private/corporate sector to support gaps in service provision and other opportunities including to promote social responsibility and respect for human rights. **What are some good examples? How can integration into broader domains contribute to ensuring the continued provision of the necessary resources needed by mine affected communities?**
4. No matter the sources of funding, these should be invested in line with principles of rights-based and non-discrimination. **How can States and organisations ensure this is done correctly?**
5. It is of great important to encourage development cooperation that is inclusive of survivors and other persons with disabilities, as well as to build the capacity of their representative organizations such as survivor networks and organizations of persons with disabilities, and promoting accountability on use of funds. **What good examples of these joint ventures exist? What accountability measures can be undertaken and most welcome by donors?**
6. At *Fostering Partnerships*, delegates, separated in regional discussion groups examined the various opportunities to pursue regional cooperation. These agreed that a more comprehensive assistance could be achieved by either developing or applying some or all of the following cooperation models:
 - a. enhanced regional cooperation and links with regional organisations;
 - b. regional fund(s) to mobilise resources;
 - c. private-public partnerships;
 - d. south-south cooperation;
 - e. mechanisms to exchange experiences, good practice and sharing of ideas;
 - f. enhanced opportunities for training of service providers and follow-up training; and,
 - g. ensuring assistance to victims through the SDG agenda and CRPD.

Are there any good examples of these efforts that could be highlighted?