



Fostering Partnerships: A Global Conversation with the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Disability and Accessibility

Follow up on the Global Conference on the Rights of Victims of AP Mines and Other Explosive Remnants of War
<https://bit.ly/GlobalConversationVA>

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention obliges 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 States Parties have sought to ensure that this obligation is carried out “with the same precision and intensity as with other aims of the Convention”. For States with mine victims, this entails synchronising their VA efforts with those they carry out to meet obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

These synergies have been further encouraged through the Oslo Action Plan (OAP), where States Parties re-affirmed to implement their VA commitments “based on respect for human rights, gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination.” The OAP also calls on States Parties to “carry out multi-sectoral efforts ... in line with the relevant provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”

On the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and the 23rd anniversary of the signing of the Convention, and to further strengthen synergies, the Convention’s Implementation Support Unit (ISU) with financial support of the European Union will host a global virtual conversation with the Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility of the UN Secretary General Maria Soledad Cisternas Reyes on **3 December 2020 at 13:15 GMT+1**.

The Conversation with the Special Envoy will build on the interested expressed by States and organisations, following the 2019 [Fostering Partnerships](#) VA and disability rights global conference, and the 2020 Intersessional Meetings’ panel discussion on [Victim Assistance, Safety and Protection in Situations of Risk and Humanitarian Emergencies](#), both which benefited from the Special Envoy’s input and experience.

All States and interested organisations are invited to join, as all have a place in ensuring the welfare of mine and other explosive remnants of war victims and survivors on an equal basis with others. VA and disability rights practitioners are particularly encouraged to attend. Interpretation will be provided to/from Arabic, English, French, Spanish. Sign language and cc captioning 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/GlobalConversationVA>.

The conversation will be guided by the following questions,

1. What are the complementarities, in theory and in practice, between victim assistance and CRPD?
2. It is now widely recognised that victim assistance should be integrated into broader frameworks including development plans and poverty reduction strategies. A common practice has been the inclusion of VA into disability-related policies, structures and programmes. What steps or approaches would States need to apply to ensure effective integration of victim assistance into broader national frameworks?
3. What else could the international community do to take advantage of these tools, to meet the rights of persons with disabilities including mine survivors?
4. Accessibility and inclusion are at the centre of both the CRPD and victim assistance; yet, while many efforts have been carried out in this regard, challenges such as scarce resources, lack of understanding of accessibility and inclusion, and competing priorities/lack of political interest are often observed. Taken these challenges into account, what would you suggest to affected/developing countries to do in order to ensure accessibility and inclusion?