

I would like to express our gratitude to the hosts and organizers for the invitation to join this important event. We extend our expression of gratitude to victim group participants for including us in their discussions. For us, it continues to be a privilege to be part of these vital life sustaining and rights affirming processes.

On behalf of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines I would like to thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Peace - Descontamina Colombia, for hosting this crucial dialogue meeting in Bogotá with victims' representatives from so many departments and regions throughout Colombia. The virtual participation for national and international actors was applied as an outstanding opportunity to broaden involvement.

Our great thanks also go to the ISU of the AP Mine Ban Treaty, the European Union, the High commissioner for Peace and all excellencies, and to panellists, participants, and champions of victims' rights, for sharing experiences and for inviting us to listen to the program and join in.

The International Campaign to Ban Landmines - Cluster Munition Coalition is an umbrella organization that includes hundreds of campaign member organizations internationally and engages directly 30 members working on disability rights issues, including many members who are organizations of persons with disabilities led by landmine and conflict survivors.

A key Strategic Goal of the ICBL-CMC is the measurable progress in the quality of life for victims of mines. This includes, as Colombia has clearly demonstrated by holding this national inclusive dialogue, States Parties *acting to address the needs of victims as a matter of national priority*. It also includes a call for an *increase in the meaningful and sustained participation of victims in decision-making at the international and national levels*. And, another point that was repeatedly noted as important during in the three days of this meeting, *sufficient funding to meet treaty commitments and obligations towards victims*

The ICBL-CMC recently updated its guiding principles on victim assistance. These too are very much aligned with the issues raised during the dialogue. They include principles such as taking a human rights perspective: political participation and inclusion; non-discrimination; gender and diversity; integrated approaches; accessibility; the right to full socio-economic inclusion of victims; ensuring the variety, comprehensiveness, and holistic nature of services; coordination of actors and stakeholders; capacity building; sustainability and ownership; and accountability to the affected population.

The work of departmental victims' organizations is essential and sharing of knowledge, experience, and expertise is also informative and inspiring for other victim groups, as we heard during these days. The most recent formation of a national victims' network, therefore, creates a basis for continued engagement and improvement in the vital work toward fulfilling the rights of victims.

It is generally well recognized in the international mine action community that the system for comprehensive assistance to victims already existing in Colombia has been viewed as a model case of how a State Party can go about providing assistance through a process of redress. Therefore, the purpose of this dialogue, to identify areas for improvement, gaps to

fill, and to adapt and update the Route of Attention or Roadmap for victim assistance, is itself another much welcomed and exemplary measure.

The ‘Ruta’ or Roadmap is inextricably linked with the people who move along its paths to reach assistance. Recognizing the experience of the victims on the pathways is essential to understanding and improving it. In these days we heard many insightful suggestions for adapting assistance and improving access, including to remote areas, indigenous communities, and—as often mentioned—through greater support and official recognition of the crucial practice of peer-to-peer support, by including it in the national health insurance system.

Lessons learned and shared from this workshop will inform future measures for assistance in Colombia and will continue to be helpful to the global community of victim assistance practice, as we continue to work together for a Mine Free World and towards full inclusion to ensure the rights of victims are fulfilled. This is something that the new national association of victims’ networks can contribute to significantly as it continues to engage and reach out. While we are now at the point of the closing of this Dialogue, the discussion will go on. Because in this work, it is inclusion that counts most of all. Thank you.