

## APLC INTERSESSIONAL MEETING

### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS OF THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE

Thank you, Madam Chair,

It is a great honour for Ecuador to serve as Member of the Victim Assistance Committee together with Belgium, Colombia and Croatia, under your able leadership.

Our Committee has actively engaged in the analysis of the wealth of information on victim assistance submitted by the States Parties and based on the work done so far, has the honour to present the following general observations and conclusions:

Reporting according the commitments undertaken under the Maputo Action Plan remains an important challenge for the States Parties, especially on raising awareness on the rights of mine victims (Action 17), on enhancing the capacity and participation of victims in national plans, policies and legal frameworks (Action 16), on improving the rights of mine victims through the successful implementation of national plans, policies and legal frameworks (Action 13). More information is available on the enhancement of coordination among the national relevant institutions (Action 15), on improvement of the services and rights of victims after the implementation of victim assistance projects (Action 14), on the assessments of needs of victims (Action 12) and annual updates of the implementation of national plans and policies (Action 18).

The Committee is grateful for the wealth of information received from the States Parties, which has allowed us to learn more in detail about their challenges in addressing the victim assistance commitments under the Maputo Action Plan and their priorities for international cooperation and assistance. These general challenges are:

- Lack of funds to implement victim assistance projects, to carry out national victim needs assessments, to meet the needs of victims that are permanently increasing in contaminated areas, to keep operative the prosthetic and orthopaedic plants and increase their capacity to meet the increasing demand;
- Suspension of support for victim assistance projects by traditional bilateral and multilateral partners. Some States are showing national ownership and allocation of national resources to help the return of the partners;
- Improve the coordination and prioritization by executive and legislative functions for the adoption of victim assistance legal and administrative frameworks;
- Limited available budget for victim assistance and limited funds from donors in comparison with mine clearance;
- Low level of victims awareness about their rights and of communities awareness in advocating for psychosocial support, social acceptance and integration;

- Lack of media advocacy for the rights of mine victims and persons with disabilities in general;
- Lack of adequate support to and awareness of victims of the available services, fact that leads to poor services;
- Lack of services provided in remote and rural areas, as well as lack of medical centres and specialized personnel;
- Lack of adequate level of coordination among relevant actors and shortage of qualified national teams;
- Shortage of specialized professionals and modern medical-diagnostic equipment as well as of rehabilitation centres.

The Committee will continue to engage with States Parties with significant number of victims to help to make their needs known and will work closely with the Committee on Cooperation and Assistance on an individualized approach to help them to overcome these challenges and to meet their priorities for assistance.

Thank you very much.