

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION – AFGHANISTAN

COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE
(Algeria, Ecuador, Sweden and Thailand)
Intersessional Meetings
22-24 June 2021

1. The Committee welcomes the submission by Afghanistan of updated information on its victim assistance activities. Based on the information provided, the Committee presents the following preliminary observations.

Mine casualties

2. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported a total of 1,332 casualties in 2020 due to anti-personnel mines, pressure plate improvised explosive devices and other explosive remnants of war. Afghanistan reported that between 2001 and 2013 casualties had decreased to an average of 36 per month. Casualty rate during 2013-2017 increased to an average of 180 per month. In 2020 the registered number of casualties is expected to decrease, although the actual number is yet to be identified and registered. The Committee appreciates Afghanistan's efforts to disaggregate the data by gender, age and it would welcome further information on impairments/disabilities of these mine victims.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACTIONS:

Strengthen partnerships and integrate victim assistance into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks and designation of a government entity to oversee the integration (Action #33 and also Actions #1 and #6)

3. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported that the Ministry of Martyrs and Disability Affairs (MMD) is the national entity responsible for victim assistance and disabilities. Afghanistan reported that the MMD works in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Education and the Technical Vocational Education and Training Centre and other stakeholders, while the Directorate of Mine Action Centre (DMAC) continues with providing capacity building support to MMD to improve information management, planning and policy development and coordination, in addition to collecting data on mine victims and assisting the MMD in mobilising resources.
4. The Committee would welcome information on the integration of victim assistance in Afghanistan's humanitarian response plans and also other national plans.

Develop and implement measurable, realistic and time-bound national action plan (Action #33 and also Action #2)

5. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported a national disability policy and a plan of action were being developed by the MMD during the past two years with support of the DMAC and other stakeholders. In addition, Afghanistan reported that in 2019 the MMD developed a workplan to promote and strengthen the coordination (internal and external), policy, managing service delivery, e-governance, advocacy, outreach and feedback mechanism.

6. The Committee would welcome further information on the integration of victim assistance commitments in the policy and action plan including that of the National Disability Strategy (2020-2030).

Removing barriers including physical, social, cultural, political, attitudinal and communication barriers to access such services (Action #33)

7. The Committee would welcome Afghanistan reporting on measures in place and progress made to remove any barriers that may hinder social and economic inclusion and participation of mine victims in Afghanistan.

Applying multi-sectoral efforts to ensure that the needs and rights of mine victims are effectively addressed in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Action #34)

8. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported that the MMD has been working with relevant ministries and stakeholders to implement policies and programmes related to disabilities and victim assistance and it has signed memorandum of understandings with 42 ministries and other government entities to advance multi-sectoral efforts and inter-agency partnerships.
9. The Committee would welcome information on alignment of victim assistance activities with the provisions of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Establish or strengthen of a centralised database / national information management system (Action #35 and also Action #9)

10. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported efforts to improve information management in disability, including by:
- developing a comprehensive victim assistance/disability service database at the MMD;
 - piloting a victim assistance database with support of three victim assistance organizations; and,
 - conducting an assessment and developing a comprehensive project to improve the 370,000 records of martyrs and persons with disabilities through establishing a biometric system.

Access to first aid and ongoing emergency medical care (Action #36)

11. The Committee would welcome information on progress made in providing emergency response and efforts to ensure mine victims' access to healthcare, including in rural and remote areas.

Developing national referral mechanism (Action #37)

12. The Committee would welcome information on the existence of, or plan to develop a national referral mechanism and directory of services to facilitate mine victims' access to services.

Access to rehabilitation services including physiotherapy, assistive devices and occupational therapy (Action #38)

13. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported that two new Physical Rehabilitation Centres have been established in Bamyan and Zabul provinces and one rehabilitation centre has been reactivated in Kabul province. The Committee also noted that Afghanistan reported providing rehabilitation services to 11,219 men, women, boys and girls in 2020.

14. The Committee would welcome further information on efforts made to provide physical rehabilitation including physiotherapy, assistive devices and occupational therapy to mine victims including in rural and remote areas.

Access to psychological and psychosocial services including peer-to-peer support (Action #38)

15. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported that a total of 945 mine victims including men, women, boys and girls were provided with psychological counselling and peer support.

16. The Committee would welcome additional information on efforts to increase the availability of psychological and psychosocial support services, including in remote and rural areas and efforts to develop peer-to-peer support services within the national healthcare system to meet the needs of mine victims.

Access to social and economic inclusion services, including in rural and remote areas (Action #39)

17. The Committee observed that Afghanistan reported efforts to improve social and economic inclusion of mine victims including through the followings:

- around 113,000 persons have received various kinds of assistance, including pensions, through the MMD;
- 99 persons have received support with regards to their social inclusion in 2020;
- 1,761 persons have benefited from disability awareness and advocacy training; and,
- a Call Centre with capacity to answer 500 calls on daily basis has been established by the MMD to assist and guide persons with disabilities and family members of martyrs on accessing services and other relevant matters.

Taking measure for safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risks and emergencies (Action #40)

18. The Committee would welcome information on measures in place to ensure the safety and protection of mine victims in situations of risks and emergencies, including during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Strengthening inclusion and participation of mine victims and their representative organisations in all matters that affect them (Action #41 and also Action #4)

19. The Committee would welcome information on efforts made and progress achieved in strengthening participation and inclusion of mine survivors and their representative organisations into relevant policies and programmes.

CROSS - CUTTING ACTIONS:

Demonstrate high levels of national ownership, including [...] by making financial and other commitments to implementation (Action #1)

20. The Committee would welcome information on allocation of financial resources and other commitments the government of Afghanistan made to implement victim assistance.

Ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered (Action #3)

21. The Committee appreciates Afghanistan's efforts in disaggregating information by gender and age, and it would welcome further information on efforts made or measures in place to ensure consideration of diversity in its victim assistance efforts.

Challenges in implementation of Victim Assistance Commitments (Action #8)

22. The Committee would welcome information on challenges faced by Afghanistan in meeting the needs and rights of mine victims, and any support the it may require, including from the international community, to fulfil its victim assistance commitments under the Convention and the OAP.