

Inauguration of the first International seminar on "Antipersonnel mine victims' assistance" in Medellín

This Tuesday, August 18th, is the opening of the first international seminar on "Assistance to Victims of Anti-Personnel Mines" where the aim is to achieve a collective design of a public policy that surpasses the scope of the institutional services offer; incorporating follow-up tools and indicators which allow to measure the advances in the Effective Enjoyment by victims of their Rights throughout their journey to socio-economic reintegration; and fulfilling the specific characteristics for each population group, thus promoting their participation in policy decision.

Six national and international experts, social entities, non-governmental organizations and delegates from diverse State agencies responsible for the subject, will exchange experiences and knowledge that will allow to strengthen the quality and opportunity of the processes related to the assistance of victims of anti-personnel mines, unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices victims' assistance. It is calculated that since the year 1990 to date, anti-personnel mines accidents have left 7,785 victims in Colombia, from which 1,736 come from events in the Department of Antioquia.

The international experts are Wanda Muñoz Jaime, Sebastian Kasack and Davide Naggi, specialists in anti-personnel mines matters in countries such as Angola, Cambodia, the Philippines, Lebanon, Uganda and Sri Lanka. The Colombian contribution will be in the name of María Angélica Serrato, Claudia Medina and Luis Carlos Corral, specialized in different victims' assistance matters, public policy, as well as in follow-up and monitoring of actions and objectives. In addition, Judge Clara Helena Ruales, and the expert in rights based public policy, Luis Eduardo Pérez, will also be present with their contributions.

Thierry Dudermeil, Cooperation Counselor for the European Union, Andrés J

ulían Rendón, Secretary of the Government's Office of Antioquia; Carlos Mario Rivera, Secretary of Health and Andrés Dávila Ladrón de Guevara, Director of the Presidential Program for Mine Action (Paicma) will also attend the meeting, as well as delegates from the international community, department operators, non-government organizations and government, department and local entities.

The first international seminar on Antipersonnel mine victims assistance, which sets a standard in the country's current stage in terms of amends to victims, is an initiative of the Presidential Program for Mine Action (Paicma), the European Union, and it is organized by the Restrepo Barco Foundation, Ideaborn and Cotecno.

This seminar is part of the activities to be held before the Second Review Conference of Antipersonnel Mine Ban Treaty, or the antipersonnel mines ban treaty, an event that will gather delegates from the Convention's 156 State Parties and Organizations related to this matter in Cartagena de Indias, from November 29th to December 4th, 2009.

For more information on the seminar's development, experts' profile and subject matters to be treated please go to www.accioncontraminas.gov.co