

Statement by the Delegation of Thailand
Ms. Onanong Kumhang,
Social Worker,
Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities
at the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Intersessional Meetings
19 May 2016
Agenda Item 2: Victim Assistance

Mr. Chairman,

Thank you for giving us the floor to speak in our national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

We believe that the human person is the heart and soul of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. States Parties joined the Convention precisely to announce their solemn commitment to prevent the loss of human lives and suffering caused by the use of indiscriminate weapons such as anti-personnel mines. Thailand therefore holds our obligations on victim assistance under the Convention seriously as a prioritised issue and puts effort in finding ways to do it better and in a more constructive manner. Indeed, it is with this noble aim of preventing new mine victims as well as assisting those who have fallen victims that drives us to excel other important obligations, such as stockpile destruction, mine clearance, and mine risk education.

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand is one of the countries adversely affected by landmines. Currently, there are over one thousand mine victims living in Thailand. Although new mine accidents have become increasingly rare, we have learned that victim assistance must be an ongoing and continual endeavour. As a States Party to the Mine Ban Convention, it is the Government's duty to take care of mine victims to ensure that they stand on an equal footing and are able to inclusively participate in the society. Our victim assistance efforts are also in line with our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Mr. Chairman,

Thailand sees an integrated mine victim assistance system as our hallmark. Services for mine victims in Thailand are all incorporated into the wider system of assistance to persons with disabilities in general. Mine victims in Thailand are not only taken care of by authorities directly related to mine action but also by authorities in many other fields such as public healthcare and human security. Each relevant agency plays its own role in assisting mine victims but coordinates

and works closely with other agencies. This allows Thailand to develop a comprehensive and sustainable victim assistance system implemented by various government agencies at both national and local levels.

At present, Thailand has put in place legal and physical infrastructure to support mine victims and other persons with disabilities with the goal to inclusively integrate them into the society. Rights of mine victims are recognized and respected. Discrimination against persons with disabilities in Thailand has been diminishing. Recently, the Thai authorities has started establishing more service centres for persons with disability in mine-affected areas so as to ensure that mine victims in rural areas have equal access to government services as others living in towns and cities. We also encourage local communities' involvement in our victim assistance efforts to ensure that services provided to mine victims will be most accessible and sustainable.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite our efforts, Thailand regrettably still sees new cases of mine-related accidents taking place with 6 new mine victims from the beginning of the year 2015 up to the present, including one border patrol police officer and one forest guard officer who lost their lives. Such incidents remind us very well that victim assistance obligation is ever significant for States Parties to the Convention and that we must continue to work with a sense of urgency.

Mr. Chairman,

In closing, Thailand would like to reaffirm our willingness to share our good practices and experiences in the field of mine victim assistance with other interested mine-affected states. We believe both our success stories and lesson-learned incidents can provide useful insights for other states facing the same situation. In this regard, we take this opportunity to invite all delegations to attend the side-event on victim assistance at lunchtime today where we will also be participating in the panel discussions.

Thank you.

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