

Intervention by Thailand
Updates from relevant States Parties on plans to facilitate progress in achieving
the aims of the Cartagena Action Plan
Standing Committee Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration
22-23 June 2011

Co-chairs,

Thailand believes that the work on Victim Assistance is at the heart of the convention since it deals directly with the people affected, and it should not end there. During the past few years, Thailand has seen a reduction in landmine victims. Last year, there were twenty-three casualties. This year, at last count, saw a reduced number of seven victims. Throughout previous standing committees and Meetings of States Parties, the Thai delegation has extensively shared our efforts and experiences in the area of victim assistance. This has included the integration of a multi-agency response plan, the emergency response simulations, a database of landmine victims and the provision of prosthesis. We believe that this approach produced great success. The death-rate from landmine incidents has also dropped significantly because of the wider networks of first responders across all 27 landmine affected provinces. But our work for landmine victims do not end here.

Co-Chairs,

The ‘ever-after’ story of landmine victims has received, and will continue to receive, a new and sharpened focus in Thailand. In the past, access to disability benefits, and assistance guaranteed by law could be difficult. In Thailand, we have outcomes to show that legislative changes can overcome this difficulty. After Thailand ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008, we passed domestic legislation related to the UN CRPD. For example (1) the Persons with Disabilities’ Quality of Life Promotion Act B.E. 2550 (2007), and the Persons with Disabilities Education Act B.E. 2551 (2008). With these internal laws, people with disability, including landmine victims, do not need to undergo undue medical examinations to be considered for disability benefits. This is to help save their costs and time. A reduction in benefit-approval processing time means victims with invisible injuries such as blindness, or deafness, which are also found in the case of landmine victims, can quickly take advantage of rehabilitation and reintegration assistance right after injuries. This extends across the nation to all disabled victims

regardless of gender, physical, social, economic, political or other barriers, including the case of disability.

Furthermore, the new labour regulation in the pipeline ensures that public agencies and private employers plan their workforce to include at least 1 percent persons with disability. Put it another way, employers will need to hire one disabled employee per one hundred employees.

Secondly, benefits available to victims are designed to create incentives guiding victims to re-enter the labour market. They are offered on a non-discriminatory basis and aimed at providing equal opportunities to persons with disabilities. Some benefits include a trust fund, a “Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities” available for expenses to protect, and to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities, through education, vocational training and rehabilitation programs.

A loaning fund available to persons with disabilities for participation in independent employment was also initiated. This fund has helped some 68,039 persons with disabilities. Legal services, and day-to-day assistance are also available to persons with disabilities in Thailand. Furthermore, persons with disabilities also receive a 500 baht, or roughly \$17 US dollars paid monthly as an additional disability living allowance.

The awareness of persons with a disability to register to receive all of these benefits remains a challenge. Thailand will continue to actively advocate for comprehensive registration of disabled landmine victims.

Thirdly, community-based rehabilitation pilot projects, in their seventh year of operations, have raised public awareness of the unique needs and the role of persons with disabilities. The network of victims and concerned persons created through this project lessens the degree of ‘stigma’ and ‘marginalization’, while increasing the victims’ sense of dignity, value and pride. In these networks, victims share experiences of their injuries and how to overcome challenges in reintegration. The community surrounding a victim changes their attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Community based rehabilitation will continue to be a key role in an effective physical, mental and economic rehabilitation of victims.

Co-Chairs,

As more minefields are cleared, Thailand believes that the reintegration of landmine victims will be an important part of the landmine convention in the years to come. Thailand's Master Plan on Victim Assistance 2012-2016 presented at the 10th MSP reflects this changing trend in Thailand and supplements the global efforts towards the Cartagena Action Plan.

On other victim assistance activities, the Government of Thailand continues to progress well in providing sufficient and affordable prosthetic limbs to victims in Thailand. We also expanded our cooperation in this area to China, after successful projects with Laos and Burundi. The Prostheses Foundation of Thailand provided 50 prostheses to the Guangdong Provincial Prosthetics and Orthotics Rehabilitation Center this month. Thailand is especially proud to be able to provide any humanitarian assistance to both states parties and states not parties and hope that we can expand our cooperation to other needed states in the near future.

Co-chairs,

As I mentioned earlier, our works for landmine victims does not end here. It is our continued work to help landmine survivors fully reintegrate into society. Therefore, we are always keen to learn from other states' best practices. At the same time, Thailand stands ready to share with others our experiences and expertise in victim assistance programmes.

I thank you.
