



Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

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Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration

Update on Victim Assistance

Geneva Switzerland

Excellencies,

Distinguished colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am honoured to present the progress and challenges of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan towards the Cartagena Action Plan implementation and national disability programs. Following Afghanistan's involvement in the Cartagena Summit, the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled along with the Ministry of Public Health and Education and other disability stakeholders have continued to provide support to mine survivors and other people with disabilities through a holistic and inclusive approach.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been passed by both lower and upper houses of parliament in 2011 and has culminated in a presidential decree. Efforts towards the ratification of the convention are ongoing.

At the moment, we have many government fora and a vibrant civil society focusing on disability. We are working on tools to help us track and report on disability services more effectively.

In terms of concrete achievements, we have made strides in inclusive education. To better support the inclusion of children with disabilities, the Ministry of Education trained 750 school teachers and 660 children with disabilities and their parents on inclusive education which seeks to fulfill the right of all learners to a quality education.

The Ministry of Public Health also trained 500 health staff on disability awareness and physical rehabilitation in six provinces: Saripol, Samangan, Bamyan, Kapisa, Mazar and Gardiz to support the early detection and identification of those with disability, and to improve access to healthcare services for persons with disabilities.

The Ministry of Public Health has also approved a Disability and Physical Rehabilitation Strategy to further professionalize and prioritize disability and rehabilitation programs within the ministry. This strategy, the first of its kind, will seek to improve social inclusion of persons with disability, enhance provision of early treatment to children with severe disabilities and increase prevention measures that target avoidable causes of disability, among other goals.

The government is now also revising and extending the Afghanistan National Disability Action Plan. The previous action plan, which ended in 2011, had notable successes which will be fed into the planning for the new action plan. Amongst the achievements of that action plan were: a pilot project that organized peer support for 2,000 persons with disability - over 40% of them female, vocational training to women with disability, and matching persons with disability with jobs in government and NGOs, in addition to awareness training and projects that made public buildings accessible to those with physical impairments.

While there is tangible progress on the ground, there are significant challenges to overcome. Our caseload is large – due in part to the significant number of landmine victims – and physical infrastructure is limited. We also need to bolster our methods of monitoring and evaluating existing services. And, lastly, we need to do more to ensure that those with disability have real rights. In the coming

years, we will strive to achieve our obligations towards and improve the lives of all Afghan mine survivors and other persons with disability. We hope that you will support us in this. Thank you.