

Intervention by Thailand
Updates from relevant States Parties on challenges and work that remain
in applying the victim assistance aspects of the Cartagena Action Plan
at the national level
During the Meeting of the Standing Committee Victim Assistance and
Socio-Economic Reintegration
24 May 2012

Co-chairs,

As one of the countries that hold the responsibility to provide for the well-being of a significant number for landmine survivors, Thailand has always strived to do its utmost in providing assistance for the care and rehabilitation of mine victims, including their social and economic reintegration. As we are reaching the mid-point of the implementation the Cartagena Action Plan, it is my pleasure to share with the meeting a summary of the progress we have made in applying the Cartagena Action Plan to our national policy and law making as follows.

Firstly, Thailand realizes that victim assistance is multidimensional which requires **a holistic and integrated approach**. To translate this into action, the National Sub-Committee on Victim Assistance, under the National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action, was set up to provide a platform for all concerned agencies to discuss and address cross cutting issues from emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological support, to social and economic inclusion. The committee has conducted various interagency plans and activities which include a unified response plan tailor-made to the case of landmine accidents as well as a series of interagency simulation exercises in the mine-risk areas.

Besides, victim assistance is not a one sided service. The constructive engagement of mine survivors is essential in achieving the ultimate goal of victim assistance and social and economic inclusion. Therefore, we always encourage and facilitate **the full and active participation of mine victims** as well as other relevant stakeholders in victim assistance related activities particularly during the formulation of the master plan to ensure that their needs are reflected and responded. Moreover, this is also the best way to **raise awareness among mine victims about their rights and available services**.

Secondly, the development of a long-term and sustainable system and framework for victim assistance is indispensable. In order to do so, Thailand places high emphasis on **the integration of victim assistance into broader national plans, policies and legal frameworks**. By doing so, we can be assured

of both the basic rights and benefits to be enjoyed by landmine victims on an equal basis as well as a continuation of necessary resources. One of the milestone achievements regarding this is the adoption of the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act B.E. 2550 (2007), and the Persons with Disabilities Education Act B.E. 2551 (2008). These Acts, which are passed in response to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, enable people with disabilities, including landmine survivors, to quickly take advantage of rehabilitation and reintegration assistance right after sustaining their injuries. This right also extends across the nation to all disabled victims regardless of gender, physical, social, economic, political or other barriers, including the case of disability.

Co-chairs,

With these policy and legal frameworks in place, our plan to integrate the work of victim assistance into a ^{broader} ~~boarder~~ national scheme related to disability, health and development has now being materialized. From February to March this year, a series of three workshops on landmine victim assistance was carried out in order to enhance our village and health volunteer network's capacity to better support landmine victim assistance process. The workshops has equipped 181 village and health volunteers and 119 others local government officials, who work together in the landmine-affected provinces, with necessary knowledge on how to apply their existing work in helping and empowering person with disabilities to answer specific needs of landmine victims. At the workshops, the participants had learnt details of every rights and benefits the landmine victim is entitled to from an emergency health care service to a social and economic inclusion. Moreover, we also tasked them to help complete and update the landmine survivor database to be used as a follow-up mechanism to make sure that the landmine victims enjoy all those rights and benefits as promised by law. As this network of village and health volunteers is one of the main mechanisms working to help empowering different marginalized groups on the ground, we are confident that, through this network, the work of landmine victim assistance will be sustainably enhanced and can be fully integrated into the boarder disability scheme. It is our hope that, in the near future, this network will serve as a change-agent that helps empowering all the concerned agencies to work in an integrated manner for the benefit of all the landmine victims.

Co-chairs,

The assistance to mine victims can be also improved by lessons learned from one country to another. It is our pleasure to reiterate that Thailand stands ready to share our experience in providing victim assistance with other countries. During the past few years, we have shared techniques and expertise in developing

affordable prosthetics devices with many countries including Laos PDR, Burundi and Malaysia. I am pleased to share with this meeting that Thailand has now expanded its international cooperation from the area of physical rehabilitation to social and economic inclusion. In July, we will conduct the first training program on how to adopt a community-based rehabilitation approach into national disability scheme for Myanmar. We hope that this project will help strengthen Myanmar's effort to support social and economic inclusion of person with disabilities, including landmine survivors.

Moreover, we believe vision speaks louder than words, thus, we are organizing a trip for representatives of foreign governments and NGOs to see various aspects of Mine Action and Victim Assistance in Thailand, on 7 - 8 June 2012. One of the main purposes of this trip is to share lessons learned and good practices in the area of emergency medical care and physical rehabilitation, especially prosthetics devices, with our neighboring countries. We hope that the trip will provide experts and policy makers from Thailand as well as our neighboring countries, who require assistance in these areas, an opportunity to discuss plans for further cooperation.

Lastly, as Thailand fully subscribes to the humanitarian objective of this Convention, it has always been our determination to enhance our efforts, as well as to share our experiences in this area for the benefit of all the victims of this inhumane weapon.

I thank you. Co-chairs.
