

**Intervention by Colonel Talerngpan Chiewvej,
Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC)
MINE VICTIM ASSISTANCE: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC
REINTEGRATION
Meeting of the SC on VA
December 5, 2000, ILO Convention Room

1. Introduction

The rough estimation of the suspected mined area in Thailand is approximately 796 square kilometer, covering 19 provinces, 48 districts, and 148 villages. The danger of APLs is still very tangible in Thailand. The latest incident occurred on 14 July this year in Srakaew Province along the border of Thailand and Cambodia, costing legs of 2 farmers.

Providing assistance to people with disabilities, including mine victims, has been accorded high priority in the Royal Thai Government's policy long before Thailand joined the Ottawa Convention.

After Thailand joined the Convention, Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC) was created in 1999 to be the national focal point on mine action. One of the tasks assigned to TMAC is coordinating activities on assistance for mine victims and families, which is part of a broader context of assistance to disabled people. It is Thailand's conviction that any victim assistance program must be sustainable by the victims themselves.

2. Challenges

In TMAC's experience, there are 2 challenges to efficient victim assistance, namely :-

- **Coordination** among various agencies working on assistance for mine victims, their families, their communities, and persons with disability as a whole. Mine victim assistance is a multifaceted and complex affairs, with activities running the range from emergency and continued medical care, physical rehabilitation and prosthetic assistance, psychological and social support, to economic reintegration and capacity building. Therefore various agencies, both governmental and non-governmental, have to be involved. On the governmental side, they include Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, and Ministry of Defence. The issue also receives attention from many NGOs, domestic and international, including some under the royal patronage. Therefore, there must be coordinations and constant communication among government agencies themselves, between the governmental and non-

governmental sectors including the mine victims, and between domestic and foreign or international agencies, to avoid confusion and duplication. In its capacity as national focal point for mine action, TMAC is trying to do so.

- **Lack of database** Thailand recognises the importance of a sound, systematic, updated and comprehensive database on mine victims. Since its inception, TMAC has tried to gather as much information on mine victims as possible by using existing sources, such as from hospitals, military units and other governmental organizations. However, it seems not to be sufficient, systematic and efficient enough.

3. Response to Challenges

- With regard to coordination, on 22 November 2000, TMAC organized a seminar on mine victim assistance. Participants included members of the National Committee

It is hoped that these survey and data collection, when completed, will help TMAC to coordinate all the assistance to the mine victims more efficiently.

4. Other Activities

While waiting for the result of the Survey, TMAC is also active in helping mine victims. Recent activities include the followings :

- Through TMAC, donation was given by His Holiness the Supreme Patriarch, the most senior Buddhist monk of Thailand, to every family of mine victims in Sakaew Province, on 12 August 1999, to honour Her Majesty Queen Sirikit's birthday.

- In June 2000, the Prosthesis Foundation under the Royal Patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Galyani Vadhana Krom Luang Naradhiwas Rajnagarindra, Elder Sister of His Majesty the King, in collaboration with TMAC, visited Sakaew Province in order to provide free prosthetic assistance to mine victims.

- TMAC also work closely with the Handicap International (HI), which is very active in providing prosthesis to victims in Thailand. HI staff attended mine awareness training course of TMAC at the training center in Lopburi Province, in order to run HI's mine awareness program in Chantaburi Province.

- In August 2000, it has been agreed within the National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action that the sub-committees on victim assistance and on mine awareness be merged as one in accordance with the

arrangement of the intersessional work program under the Ottawa Convention.

Thailand will include all the developments aforementioned in our next Article 7 report's Form J.
