



The Republic of Uganda

**Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration
Geneva, 3 June 2008**

Statement by

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Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
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Co-Chairs, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

Thank you for the opportunity to briefly update you on the activities of the Government of Uganda in the area of assistance to persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors. More detailed information is available.

There are efforts being made by the Government to collect data on landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities, in particular by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Ministry of Education and Sports and Ministry of Health, Uganda Bureau of Statistics and the Uganda Mine Action Centre. This data still remains scattered. However, the Government has established a Community Information System (CIS). This is being implemented in 28 districts and will have been rolled out over all the 80 districts by 2010. The CIS has developed a tool for data collection and information in terms of disability include Name of person with disability, cause of disability, type of disability, age, marital status, level of education, immunisation status, main economic activities and other skills.

The Ministry of Health has established a Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation Section. This is to address the Medical rehabilitation needs of persons with disabilities. Rehabilitation services have been decentralised and health workers oriented to Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR).

The Regional Orthopaedic Workshops have been established to produce assistive devices. These orthopaedic workshops also provide prosthetics and orthotics. Currently orthopaedic technicians in the north support new survivors by fitting them with prosthesis as soon as the stump is ready to receive it. However, there are still a big number of landmine survivors who have not received support of this kind.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development through Community Development Officers and Rehabilitation Officers is carrying out psycho-social support activities for landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. Counselling services are being provided at community level. However, there is need to strengthen these services so that psychosocial support activities are expanded to cover remote areas where some of these

groups have been resettled. There is also need for surveys to assess and understand the magnitude of the problem and level of individual need.

Improving access to appropriate psychological and social support is being done through training of social workers working with NGOs and CBOs in Guidance and Counselling. Training of Trainers Manual in CBR has been completed with support from World Vision. Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development experts in CBR will soon embark on a capacity building programme for all stakeholders working in the North. Arrangements are also underway to train peer groups to engage in psychosocial support activities.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is planning to provide vocational employable skills to persons with disabilities at Ocoko Vocational Rehabilitation Centre. Arrangements are underway to renovate Ogur Rehabilitation Centre to specifically train landmine survivors in employable skills and CBR. There are also arrangements to support persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors, to secure land for agriculture. The Government is supporting them by contributing towards building houses for those who are accepting to leave the IDP camps.

Resettlement assistance is being provided to landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities for one year. After the harvest they are expected to live an independent life.

There is a National Policy on Disability which provides an overall framework for implementation of programmes for persons with disabilities and comprehensive legislation.

Uganda signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 30 March 2007 and the process of ratification is in its final stages.

In conclusion, relevant ministries are cooperating to ensure the implementation of policies to benefit persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors. There is a National CBR Steering Committee which brings together representatives from line Ministries, Disabled Peoples Organisations and other stakeholders. The committee meets on quarterly basis to exchange information and harmonise implementation strategies.

I take this opportunity to thank the Norwegian development agency – NORAD – for their support to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development through the Norwegian Association for the Disabled to strengthen our capacity to provide assistance to persons with disabilities in Uganda.

Progress is being made. The Government has the Comprehensive Plan for Victim Assistance. But, there is still a lot of work to be done to implement the actions to achieve our SMART objectives. The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development is working very hard to ensure that the plan becomes a reality; although it is faced with many competing priorities. Uganda faces many challenges in addressing the rights and needs of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities, including inadequate resources to fully implement programmes and a lack of technical support to build capacities within the relevant ministries and among the service providers.

Thank you for your attention.