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Statement by Cambodia on Victim Assistance
presented to the
Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration
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**Delivered by Mr. Thong Vinal, Executive Director, Disability Action Council (DAC),
Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY)**

Co-Chairs, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour and pleasure to be here today at the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration.

On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would like to convey my sincere thanks for the opportunity to update you on progress in Cambodia in the area of assistance to persons with disabilities, including landmine/ERW survivors.

In the past 12 months Cambodia has made very significant progress in achieving the necessary context for reducing the discrimination against people with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors and in improving awareness of the rights of people with disabilities.

The first meeting of the National Disability Coordination Committee (NDCC) was conducted on March 4th, 2010 under chairmanship of Minister of MoSVY and coordinated by Executive Director of DAC. There were 20 participants including Secretary General of CMAA, Secretary of State, Under Secretary of State from relevant ministries and Directors of DPOs and INGOs, and Representatives from AusAID, ARC, UNICEF and Observers. The meeting aimed to provide knowledge to NDCC members regarding the disability issues including the contents of disability law, National Plan of Action for persons with disabilities including landmines/ERW survivors (NPA-PwDs) and the mandate of the NDCC. The meeting has identified other six technical sub-committees to be established. The executive director of DAC has been assigned to conduct consultation with relevant stakeholders in drafting the six sub-committees.

The MoSVY and DAC conducted a strategic planning workshop in collaboration with Disabled People's Organisations and NGOs to map out a 4 year strategy for implementation of the Cambodian disability law and the national plan of action for persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors.

June 10, 2010, The MoSVY and DAC in collaboration with partner NGOs organized the National Workshop on Dissemination of the Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities, including Landmine/ERW Survivors. The workshop was presided over by minister of MoSVY, and with the Closing Remarks by H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Minister Attached to the Prime Minister and Vice President of Cambodian Mine Action Authority. There were around 300 honorable guests and participants coming to the event including H.E. Margaret Adamson, Australian Ambassador, Ms. Sheree Bailey, Victim Assistance Specialist, AP Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit, Mr. Richard Bridle, UNICEF Country Representative, development partners, NGOs, media, persons with disabilities, senior government officials from relevant ministries and the 24 provinces and municipality and other experts. It also provided an opportunity for key actors to understand their roles and responsibilities within the disability sector in order to promote the implementation of NPA-PWDs and the disability law. During the event, minister of MoSVY has promised to accelerate the ratification of the UN-CRPD in the near future.

December 03, 2009, MoSVY and DAC, in collaboration with DPOs, and NGOs celebrated the International Day of Persons with Disabilities with its theme is “We all participate in the enforcement of the Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” The event was presided over by Cambodian Prime Minister with attached some honourable guests such as Deputy Prime Ministers, Senior Ministers, Ministers, Members of the National Assembly, Senators, Ambassadors, Development Partners, UN agencies. There were around 4000 participants attended in the event. In the event, the Prime Minister, strongly encouraged to draw attention on integration of disability in all aspects of the political, social, economic and cultural life in communities and also mobilize action to achieve the goals of full and equal enjoyment of human rights and their participation in society.

In late 2009, MoSVY and DAC in collaboration with national inclusive committee conducted a national consultative workshop and some meetings with line ministries, development partners, NGOs, and individual experts in order to get inputs to include into disability recommendation for submitting to the line ministries. As a result, the disability issues have been highlighted in the first draft of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) updated 2009-2013. Under coordination of the DAC, the National Inclusive Committee produced recommendation, statements and position paper on disability to be submitted to the Government Development Partners Coordination Committee (GDCC), Cambodia Development Cooperation Forum (CDCF), and for presenting and sharing among relevant stakeholders.

February 17-19, 2010, a National Workshop on the Dissemination on the Master Plan and the Policy on Education for Children with Disabilities and disability awareness-raising was organized by the Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) with technical and coordination support from DAC. The workshop was presided over by Minister of MoEYS. There were around 120 participants from relevant ministries, NGOs and persons with disabilities. The workshop aimed to raise awareness and disseminate key information about the Master Plan and the Policy, with specific emphasis on the 12 major implementation strategies, identifying next steps for implementation with responsible agencies, and developing a communication strategy to identify target audiences, key messages and modes of dissemination.

Significant achievements in the part of policy and legislation related to persons with disabilities:

- Law on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was passed

- The UN CRPD and its Optional Protocol was signed
- National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities including Landmine/ERW Survivors was adopted
- A Government Decision established the roles and responsibilities of the National Disability Coordination Committee.
- Policy on the Education for Children with Disabilities was adopted
- Master Plan for Education for Children with Disabilities was adopted
- Teacher Training Manual on Inclusive Education for children with disabilities was developed
- Quality Standards for Vocational Training Centres was adopted
- Cambodia Community Based Rehabilitation Guidelines has been submitted to Minister of MoSVY for adoption.
- Standards and quality of services provided by rehabilitation centres has been reviewed
- Policy for Pre-hospital and Hospital trauma care in Cambodia was adopted
- Sub-decree on Organization and Functioning of the Disability Action Councils was adopted
- Sub-decree on Organization and Functioning of the Persons with Disability Fund has been drafted
- Sub-decree on Employment Rate for persons with disabilities has been drafted
- Prakas (Ministry-Decree) on the Disability Rights Administration was adopted
- UNCRPD and Cartagena Action Plan have been translated into local language

Over the past 12 months, there have been many successful disability/victim assistance programs implemented in Cambodia. Disability services are known to be available in all 24 provinces and municipality in Cambodia. Key donors to the disability sector in Cambodia include: AusAID, UNICEF, USAID, EU, EC, GTZ and World Bank, Spanish Cooperation, Finland Government, JICA, NIPON Foundation, Abilis.

However, Cambodia has some challenges need to be addressed in order to improve the daily life of persons with disability :

- Inaccessibility to public buildings, transport, facilities and referral systems is a major barrier that prevents persons with disabilities from actively participating in social and economic activities.
- The national budget allocation for the disability sector in Cambodia is still low so collaboration between the national and international community is very important in providing for the sector.
- Lack of human resources, technical and financial capacity to fully respond to the needs of the disability sector.
- Disability statistics are not reliable and need to be improved for better service provision.
- Inclusion of disability into existing programs and services is still limited so there is a need for greater attention and care by relevant stakeholders to promote inclusion.
- National Coordination Mechanism is still limited due to the lack of human and financial resources

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners who have been providing generous support to the disability sector since the very beginning and I would also like to appeal for your continued support to persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors in Cambodia.

Thank you