

Republic of Sudan

Meeting of the Standing Committees

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND
25th – 29th May 2009**

Oral Statement on Victim Assistance

Sudan

Mr. President
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, the victim assistance program in Sudan is managed with the belief that VA is a set of tangible interventions and strategies aimed at improving the quality of life of mine/ERW victims and persons with disabilities in the Country.

Since the adoption of the recommendations of the first Review Conference in 2004, the VA Program in Sudan made a number of steps forward.

The VA coordination forums are chaired by National Mine Action Centre in the northern Sudan Khartoum and by the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs in the southern Sudan. The coordination forums meet on a monthly basis and the meetings are attended by a large number of national and international organizations including mine/ERW and persons with disabilities' groups.

In addition, three Landmine Victims Associations have been established in different areas of Sudan.

The Victim Assistance Program in Sudan follows the strategic objectives and targets identified by National VA Strategic Framework and Work Plan which have been officially approved by the Government of Unity through the Mine Action Authority in 2007. Furthermore, the VA National Work plan was revised on the 4th and 5th February 2009 during a National Workshop which was attended by relevant authorities, expert and representatives from various organizations.

On 15th March 2009 the Government of Sudan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (CRPD) which has been approved by the Council of Ministers.

The VA legal framework is also incorporated into the new Disability Law which was recently approved by The Council of Ministers. The law, which mentions the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, clearly indicates mine/ERW victims as a target group.

In March 2009 UNOPS-UNMAS and the Cranfield University organized one-week Course on VA for 19 participants coming from the government and a number of organizations involved in VA and disability. The course which illustrated the various areas of VA was facilitated by UN and ISU-GICHHD experts.

Mine/ERW victims' data is gathered and analyzed using the IMSMA database which is managed by UNMAO in close collaboration with the national authorities. The data is generally collected by international and national organizations involved in Mine Action.

The total number of mine/ERW victims registered by the IMSMA database is 4,198 with 29 new accidents recorded from January to April 2009.

Under the area of **Physical Rehabilitation**, various projects and initiatives are ongoing.

The ICRC in collaboration with the National Authority for Prosthetic and Orthotics (NAPO) and the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs of the Government of South Sudan is continuing to support the training of Orthopedic Technologists and other professionals and the production of prostheses and orthotics in various areas of the country.

The NAPO's mobile workshop which was established in the year 2008 now active and it has already provided support to 135 Persons with disabilities in North Kordofan State, 105 in River Nile State and 185 in Gadariff State.

NAPO in collaboration with ICRC has completed the construction of a new workshop complex for the production of medical shoes and crutches.

The ICRC in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs of the Government of South Sudan has completed the construction of a new Referral Rehabilitation Center in Southern Sudan for the production of prostheses and orthotics. The center, located in Juba, was officially opened on the 5th January 2009 and it is now fully operational. Furthermore, the new referral centre collaborates with all the states of the South Sudan and with other existing structures such as the Rumbek Orthopedic Centre managed by the NGO Medical Care Development International.

Courses on physiotherapy are ongoing in Khartoum and Juba; both courses are managed by OVCI in collaboration with the Government.

During the reported period, an increasing number of local and international NGOs are also providing mobility aids to mine/ERW victims and persons with disabilities in remote mine/affected areas in the north and south of the country.

At a Government level, the Ministries of Social Welfare in the north and south of Sudan are responsible for the provision of **psychosocial support** to vulnerable populations including mine/ERW victims and Persons with disabilities.

In addition, most of the organizations funded by the VA program are carrying out psychosocial and peer-to-peer support to mine/ERW victims and Persons with disabilities on a regular basis.

However, this area of VA is still to be empowered and needs more technical and financial support.

Currently UNOPS-UNMAS is funding over VA 15 projects and most of them focus on the **economic reintegration** of mine/ERW victims and persons with disabilities in the north and south of the country. This has been possible thanks to the generous support of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

The identified VA projects are being implemented by national and international NGOs for a total of 2,400 direct beneficiaries.

Most of the projects have been designed and are implemented with the participations of mine/ERW Victims and persons with disabilities.

Furthermore, the DDR Commissions, UNDDR, South Sudan War Disabled Widows and Orphans Commission and other government bodies and organizations are also supporting the economical-reintegration of former combatants and war affected populations including mine/ERW victims.

Despite the work done in the past years, the VA program in Sudan still face a number of challenges such as funding and accessibility of the affected areas.

The main priorities of the VA program in Sudan are to progressively transition the VA Program to the Government and to ensure that all relevant ministries will include the support to mine survivors in their annual financial and work plans and that will use the available resources accordingly.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank UN agencies, the ICRC, and the national and international organizations working on VA and disability in Sudan for their tireless efforts and for the great work done.

I also want to officially express my sincere gratitude to the Governments of Canada and Switzerland for their generous and continuous support.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.