

Thailand

**Statement by
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The Meeting of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance
and Socio-Economic Reintegration:
Towards the Second Review Conference and Beyond
29 May 2009**

Co-Chairs,

First of all, Thailand wishes to acknowledge, with much appreciation, the roles of the Implementation Support Unit, especially those of Ms. Sheree Bailey and Ms. Paramdeep Mtharu, in helping the States Parties advancing their work on victim assistance.

We also want to congratulate all States Parties that have showed progress on the work of victim assistance from their reports. We indeed have much to learn from one another.

Co-Chairs,

As we are marching towards Cartagena and beyond, Thailand would like to encourage all States Parties to ponder on two issues in addition to what the Co-Chairs reported earlier. First, it is the issue of a group of 26 countries reporting a significant number of survivors, which is often referred to as VA26. The second issue deals with cooperation and assistance for the States Parties with limited capacity in order to assist them in fulfilling obligations under the Convention.

On the first issue, Thailand believes that the list of countries reporting a significant number of survivors should be maintained but be rigorously reviewed so that it remains relevant and significant. Historically, the list was developed as a reference point for the States Parties to assess the general situation of victim assistance after the First Review Conference. A clear understanding has been missing, however, especially among the 26 States Parties themselves, as to what purposes the list serves exactly.

Now it has been five years since the list was drawn up, it is an appropriate time for the States Parties, especially the 26 States Parties themselves, to collectively reassess the purpose of the list. The reassessment should be done while recognizing that so far, only limited assistance has been provided to the States Parties on the list. What is the purpose of the list then if not to identify

those States Parties which are in greater need of external assistance so that support is duly rendered to a significant number of survivors in need?

Second, the criteria used to identify States Parties on the list should be redesigned so that it is clearer and more measurable. Moreover, the list by itself should not remain static.

Third, facts and figures indicating progress on victim assistance by States Parties should be recognized. Indicators should take into account advancements made in the national capacity to implement victim assistance programmes, the integration of victim assistance with other national programmes for persons with disabilities, the proportion of landmine victims compared to people with disabilities in the country or with the whole population, and the laws and regulations that uphold the rights of persons with disabilities.

Fourth, all States Parties should recognize that the States Parties off the list have no less responsibility to their survivors than the 26 States Parties on the list. There should be concrete mechanisms to look into quality of victim assistance in the non-26 States Parties in addition to voluntary reporting.

Co-Chairs,

Aside from the issue of the VA26 list, we call on States Parties to look closely at the twin issue of cooperation and assistance. The Parallel Programmes on victim assistance both in Bangkok and Geneva recognize cooperation and assistance as crucial for successful implementation of the Convention by States Parties with a significant number of landmine survivors, especially when they are developing countries in which landmines pose significant challenges to their socio-economic development.

We therefore reiterate our call according to Article 6 (3) of the Convention for States Parties with the capacity to assist others to do so. We also want to emphasize that victim assistance be given equal priority to mine clearance and stockpile destruction in terms of resources allocation. In time of global financial difficulties like present, victim assistance programmes are usually the first to suffer from the consequences.

Co-Chairs,

Thailand has found the Nairobi Action Plan useful for guiding the improvement of our victim assistance programmes. As a new action plan for post-Second Review Conference is under way, the new plan should remain a guide rather than an obligation for the States Parties. The flexibility in

implementing the plan is essential because circumstances vary by States Parties in terms of capability and resources available for implementation.

Co-Chairs,

As a country with a strong humanitarian tradition, Thailand stands ready to share our experiences and best practices on assisting mine victims with all States Parties. In the spirit of cooperation, transparency and accountability, Thailand is pleased to announce that our preliminary draft of report on the status of victim assistance is now available on the AP Mine Ban Convention website.

Thailand looks forward to actively contributing to the processes leading up to the Second Review Conference and ultimately to the success of the Convention itself.

Thank you, Co-Chairs.
