



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
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Parallel Programme for Victim Assistance Experts
Eleventh Meeting of the States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention

Session One: The Role of the State in Victim Assistance - Cambodia's experience

Presentation by

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Co-Chairs, ladies and gentlemen,

As a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Royal Government of Cambodia has an obligation to assist victims and landmine survivors. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) has the overall responsibility of ensuring the welfare and well-being of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups. MoSVY has played an active role in collaboration with relevant ministries, institutions, the Cambodian Mine Action and Victims Assistance Authority (CMAA) and partners to mobilize resources and services needed to assist the victims in Cambodia. In addition, MoSVY has worked with a number of international and local development partners who are contributing effectively to the development of infrastructure and better service provision in all spheres of victim assistance.

Taking this great opportunity, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Co-Chairs for inviting the Royal Government of Cambodia to share the efforts and good practices to address the promotion of rights and assistance to landmine and other ERW survivors. Our efforts are based on the principles and understandings adopted in the context of the Convention. In particular, that victim assistance should not discriminate against people injured or disabled from other causes. Moreover, that victim assistance should be part of broader contexts including disability and development. This meeting provides a valuable opportunity for Cambodia to share experiences but also to learn from the experiences of other affected States.

Co-Chairs, ladies and gentlemen, you all understand that the Kingdom of Cambodia experienced decades of war and darkness of genocide which left difficulties for society such as landmines and ERW that have caused high rates of physical disabilities. According to the National Census (2008), 1.4% of a total population have a disability, or approximately 192,538 people. The literacy rate among persons with disability is only 62% as compared to

78% in the general population. Since 1979 to September 2011, a total of 63,954 landmine and other ERW casualties, of which 4,709 are women, have been recorded.

Most persons with disabilities are living with poverty and are the most affected in society. They experience discrimination and have fewer opportunities to participate in all spheres of society including areas of health, education, vocational training and income generation etc. In other cases related to the environment, economy, and society, persons with disabilities are not being considered for inclusion, or provided with equal opportunities for their participation. This impacts development, and the welfare of persons with disabilities.

The Royal Government of Cambodia recognizes the importance and need to integrate persons with disabilities into national development plans. Disability issues and assistance to persons with disabilities has been included in National Policies, the Rectangular Strategy Phase II of the government, the Second Five Year National Strategic Development Plan And the Cambodian Millennium Development Goal number 9 includes provisions for demining and victim assistance.

Cambodia adopted the Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on July 3, 2009. The law aims to protect and promote the rights of persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors. Also, the purpose of the law is to prevent, reduce and eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities, and to rehabilitate physically, mentally and vocationally to ensure persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors are able to participate fully and equally in activities within society. Also, the law focuses on livelihoods, physical and mental rehabilitation, health care and prevention, public accessibility, education, employment and vocational training, political participation, implementation of international treaties, and penalty provision. Moreover, this law identifies the key mechanisms to implement laws, policies and other activities related to disability issues. In accordance with this law, the Royal Government of Cambodia has adopted related legal frameworks and established the implementation mechanism.

Cambodia adopted the National Plan of Action for Persons with Disabilities, including Landmine/ERW Survivors (NPA) (2009-2011), in August 2009. The NPA was the result of extensive consultation across the disability sector, and was developed in the framework promoted by the Convention.

In 2010, the Royal Government of Cambodia established the National Disability Coordination Committee (NDCC), chaired by MoSVY Minister. It is mandated to monitor, coordinate, evaluate, and promote the implementation of the NPA and related national policies on disability issues, including assistance to landmine survivors, and Socio-Economic reintegration and continue to solve the landmine survivors issue and to review the progress of implementation of NPA.

Cambodia established the Social Security Scheme for Veterans and Civil Servants including the policy for supporting persons with disabilities. In addition, the government established the policy on social concession land for the armed forces and families of veterans, building houses for persons with disabilities in communities, and building the development zone for persons with disabilities. Further, the Veterans Development Zone Planning is included into the Public Investment Plan of the Government.

Cambodia adopted the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an inclusive, barrier-free and rights-based society for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (2003-2012), and signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, on October 1, 2007. The Government is in the process of ratifying the convention.

MoSVY adopted the Work Platform 2008-2013 to Strengthen and Expand Welfare Services and Rehabilitation for Persons with Disabilities. The Work Platform identifies a clear strategy which potentially will improve the situation of persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors. In 2010, MoSVY also adopted the National Community-Based Rehabilitation Guideline for Cambodia which is being implemented by CBR Project operators nationwide.

We are all aware disability is a cross-cutting issue which requires joint involvement and collaboration from all relevant stakeholders. Assisting persons with disabilities, including landmine/ERW survivors is not the unique responsibility of MoSVY but is also part of the overall obligations of ministries and related stakeholders especially the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, and the Ministry of Planning. We work together to implement the laws and policies and generate projects to protect and promote the rights and services for persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors. To facilitate this collaboration, the Disability Action Council was established in 1997, and stipulated in the Law on the Protection and the Promotion of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2009. The DAC is a national coordination and advisory mechanisms on disability and rehabilitation issues.

In terms of emergency and continuing medical care, the Ministry of Health (MoH), in collaboration with CMAA and MoSVY, works to promote the emergency and medical care responses for persons with disabilities and landmine/ERW casualties at referral health centres at the provincial, district and commune level nationwide. In addition, an MoH letter ordered all health centres at all levels to provide free healthcare for persons with disabilities and victims.

In the area of physical rehabilitation, MoSVY is proud of the progress made in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross, Cambodia Trust, Handicap International, and Veterans International. As a result of this collaboration: 11 Physical Rehabilitation Centres provide services to over 20,000 persons with disabilities annually; MoSVY established a Component Factory which with funding from the ICRC produces around 17,000 orthopaedic items a year which are distributed to the PRCs nationwide; MoSVY collaborated with Cambodia Trust to establish the Cambodian School of Prosthetics and Orthotics (CSPO). So far, 163 students from 18 countries have graduated. In addition, in 2009 MoSVY took over the overall management of Spinal Cord Rehabilitation Centre from Handicap International.

MoSVY collaborated with local and international non-governmental organizations to establish 9 Vocational Trainings Centres and provide vocational training at the community level for persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors. In 2008, MoSVY adopted the Circular on Improving the Quality of Vocational Training for Persons with Disabilities. The training courses mainly focus on electronics, motor repair, handicrafts, tailoring, sculpture, computers, fish raising, farming, agriculture and small grant business. To

date, approximately 16,297 persons with disabilities have graduated and among those, 65% are either in self-employment or have jobs.

Persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors are given priority to access vocational training at 38 public vocational training centres and 263 private vocational training centres nationwide.

The Ministry of Education Youth and Sports has adopted a number of national policies on education for children with disabilities such as the Child Friendly School Policy, the Policy on Education for Children with the policy on integrate Education for Children with Disability special need, the Master Plan for Children with Disabilities. MoSVY established the National Paralympics Committee, the National Special Olympic Committee and the Cambodian National Volleyball League for Disabled. Also MoSVY organizes sport competitions at the national and international level. Furthermore, MoSVY has encouraged the formation of groups of artists comprising of persons with disabilities at centres and in the community. Local television present news using sign language and create TV programs for persons with disabilities.

From our experiences we understand that the key to success in addressing the rights and needs of persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors at the national and grassroots level relies heavily on the concrete willingness of the government agencies, deep understanding of the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, and collaboration between all stakeholders to jointly implement national laws, policies and plans effectively.

Despite the great achievements, the Royal Government of Cambodia also faces some challenges such as the limitation of financial, human and technical resources to continually promote the implementation of national laws, policies and related legal documents on disability and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society.

To conclude, with the obligation to Ottawa Convention, the Royal Government of Cambodia has contributed to the development of policies, plans and infrastructure to protect and promote well-being of persons with disabilities nationwide.

Taking this great opportunity, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you, donors and partners, especially AusAID, UNICEF and USAID for their invaluable collaboration and contributions to the Royal Government of Cambodia and to MoSVY in order to promote the implementation of the national policies and national strategic development plan related to disability issues and to assist landmine/ERW survivors.

Finally, I thank you, Co-Chairs, delegations of States Parties and others, for taking your invaluable time to join the 11th Meeting of the States Parties to the Ottawa Convention in Cambodia. I wish you good health and to achieve all missions in the golden land of Angkor the kingdom of wonder.

All States Parties must continually push the implementation of the Ottawa Convention to end the disabilities caused and to promote the well-being of persons with disabilities including landmine/ERW survivors.

Thank you