

Thank you very much Mr. President
Distinguished Delegates!
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I feel much honored to be afforded this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Ethiopian government on the progress we made in implementing **Victim Assistance** provisions in the country in accordance with the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention.

Since much has been said in our earlier reports, I will be very brief focusing only on major achievements registered under the Cartagena Action plan since last intercessional meeting. The unresolved challenges and the gaps we have been facing across our implementation period is also part of this progress report.

To begin with the Ethiopian government attaches greater importance that the issue of disability is a human right issue and development and is committed to promote the full and effective participation and inclusion of PWDs including land mine survivors in all developmental and humanitarian endeavors.

One of the major steps taken in the reporting period is strengthening of capacity of national CRPD steering committee that evaluates and monitors the implementation of the CRPD and NPA of PWDs. The ministry of labour and social affairs as designated focal point and a founder of the steering committee has laid down a strong legal basis namely a directive and discharge its responsibility by playing a leadership and exemplary role that could strengthen the activity of the committee. To this effect, so far, the National steering committee consisting of government Non government organization and civil society organization has been set up with a capacity to be able to evaluate, monitor and to play an advisory role to the government to implement CRPD NPA and APMBC fully and effectively.

In our last MSP report, we said that Ethiopia has developed a 10 year National Plan of Action of Persons with Disabilities, 2012-2021. This will bring Ethiopia as one of the few African countries who introduced a NPA of Persons with Disabilities in conformity with the CRPD and to fulfill its obligation to implement Article 27 of the

Cartagena Action Plan. Appreciating Ethiopia's effort to put in place a NPA on PWDs and in the context of a 2012 European Union Council Decision in support of the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan, and considering the limited resources that impede the full realization of the plan, a two days National Stakeholders Symposium was jointly organized by my ministry and the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit in Addis Ababa last November 2013.

The key objective of the *National Stakeholders Symposium* is to bring together key stakeholders that play a role in implementing the National Plan of Action in order to: raise awareness on the plan and its priority areas and objectives; to review the progress made to date in each region; and to provide participants with an opportunity to share ideas on how cooperation can be enhanced to advance towards the ultimate vision of a fully inclusive Ethiopian society.

The Minister and State minister of MoLSA, European Union Ambassador to Ethiopia, Director of APMC-ISU were dignitaries and speakers on the opening. Officials of MoLSA, ICRC, ICBL, HI, ILO, were resource persons and Regional Bureaus and DPOs have submitted reports on the progress they have made and the challenges encountered so far and group discussions were made. Finally observation and action points were identified for effective future implementation of the plan. In this occasion, I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to EU and ISU for their cooperation and I hope such contribution will continue in the future.

In another development, a national plan of Action on Human Right (2013-2015) has been issued by the Ethiopian Council of Ministers and House of people's representative's in order to promote the full realization of all human rights in the country. In addition to the political, social, environmental and developmental rights, the NPA on human rights has devoted one chapter/thematic area regarding Rights of Vulnerable sector of the population including rights of women, Children, persons with disabilities and people affected by HIV/AIDS. A national steering committee composed of high government officials Chaired by minister of the Ministry of Justice has been established. The steering committee is currently exhibiting its fullest engagement in implementing the plan at federal and regional level. As a member of the national steering my ministry is involved in this exercise to promote the human right of pwds including land mine survivors

On 29 November 2013, just before I came for this meeting, a Memorandum of understanding was signed between my Ministry and the Ethiopian Broadcasting Authority aiming at promoting the informational need of PWDs particularly of people with a hard of hearing. According to this agreement, it was noted that all types of media must incorporate disability focused programmes and simultaneous translation of sign language in all the programmes would be broadcasted. In doing so, it is hoped that all persons with disabilities, including land mine survivors in the country, will be accessed to various types of information.

Mr. Chairman!

With regard to service delivery programme, two additional prosthetic-orthotic centers have been established to make the total number of rehabilitation centers in the country 15. It is reported that in the given period, 44,296 PWDs got physical rehabilitation services with financial and in kind support from the government and ICRC. Since these centers are now equipped with the necessary facilities, a relatively more number PWDs can have access to get physical rehabilitation services in their living environment. A joint committee drawn from MoLSA and ICRC has been established to review the status of seven rehabilitation centers in the country in order to provide support that could strengthen their services. On top of that service delivery standard was prepared and issued to all rehabilitation centers in the country.

In the same period, following the graduation of 23 youngsters in orthopedic technician's training (level 4), 16 new entrants are recruited for next training (level III and level IV). Another 12 technicians will be provided up-grading course for level V programme. Skill Training, Rehabilitation and Financial support was provided for 48,048 PWDs and 106,232 children.

4,767,904 vulnerable people including Children Youth PWDs, older persons and other victims of social people were provided Social cash transfer and capacity building training.

Challenges

Needless to say that Ethiopia has put in place abundant disability related laws and programmes to deal with prevention of disability-based discrimination, promotion of independence, participation, equalization of opportunities, accessibility, gender equality and recognition of children's evolving capability. However,

- ✓ The issue of disability is not mainstreamed in all relevant government institutions despite the fact that there is a law that determine the power and duties of the federal ministries to mainstream disability in their area of interventions.
- ✓ The November 2013 symposium revealed that awareness raising programmes is at a lower stage where significant number of the population is not familiar with the NPA of PWDs.
- ✓ We have acute problem of systematic and disaggregated data regarding land mine survivors and other persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Lack of coordination with other government and NGOs and civil society organizations and lack of information is another impediment to put the laws and programmes on the ground.

Therefore, our future intervention would focus on intensive work on awareness raising programme on the government laws and programmes that can create capacities of all stake holders to implement them in order to improve the livelihood of persons with disabilities including land mine survivors.

Mr. President

As today is December 3 "the International Day of PWDs", we would like to express our wish a better livelihood for PWDs and victim assistance included and hope that governments of the world will open doors and break all barriers that hinder PWDs from participation and inclusion.

Thank you for your kind attention.