

Statements by the Delegation of Thailand

H.E. Mr. Krerkpan Roekchamnong,

Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative

of Thailand to the United Nations

14th Meeting of States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

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Agenda 2(b): Victim Assistance

Mr. President,

As the aim of the Convention is a humanitarian one, Thailand believes that victim assistance must always be a core task for States Parties in implementing the Convention. We remain firm in our view that any approach to assist landmine victims should be based on the full respect of the rights of mine victims. It is the government's duty to ensure that mine victims can participate fully in society on an equal footing.

Thailand sees the Maputo Action Plan's section on victim assistance as a guiding framework for our implementation of the obligations of the Convention as well as our political commitments in this regard. We believe that there are two key factors leading to successful victim assistance efforts: comprehensiveness and sustainability.

Mr. President,

Victim assistance measures must be comprehensive. It cannot be a one-off effort but rather a long-term process encompassing many aspects of the lives of those victims. Victim assistance is not merely about the provision of emergency medical service to mine victims but also includes, as mentioned in the Maputo Action Plan, health, social welfare, education, employment, development and poverty reduction as equally crucial aspects of States Parties' obligation to fully assist their landmine victims. Thailand has therefore adopted a holistic and integrated approach to victim assistance which closely corresponds with our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Our services for landmine victims are integrated into the broader legal framework, national plans and programmes for persons with disabilities in general.

Various Thai government agencies have been working together under relevant national legislations, namely the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act and its Amendments, to ensure that we can indeed support landmine victims in various aspects of their lives. Rights of persons with disabilities in Thailand include disability allowance, legal assistance, reduced fee of public transportation,

tax exemption, house modification service, free medical service, subsidised education fee, and loan for self-employment.

Mr. President,

Victim assistance measures must also be sustainable. This is because landmines are mostly placed in rural and remote areas, far from modern medical facilities and government services. Sustainable victim assistance depends heavily on the continuity of services and support from local institutions. Local capacities must therefore be strengthened to allow members of local communities to take care of landmine victims in their own areas.

Thailand has been focusing on creating strong local community networks to empower persons with disabilities through community-based rehabilitation, establishment of community learning centres, and strengthening of local volunteer networks. Early next year, we are also planning to open local public service centres for persons with disabilities in mine-affected provinces as a pioneering project.

In this regard, Thailand stands ready to share our good practices and experiences on victim assistance.

Mr. President,

In June this year, as a current member of the Convention's Committee on Victim Assistance, Thailand hosted the "Bangkok Symposium on Landmine Victim Assistance" which brought together representatives of mine-affected countries, related international organisations and non-governmental organisations to discuss ways to strengthen mine victim assistance. Participants stressed crucial factors that help ensure mine victims' full and active participation in society namely national ownership, capacity building for national agencies, economic and social empowerment as well as political will and leadership. We highly appreciate the support from the ISU in assisting our organisation of this successful event.

Mr. President,

In closing, I would like in particular to express my delegation's special thanks to Ambassador Elayne Whyte of Costa Rica for her service in chairing the Committee on Victim Assistance.

Thank you.

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