

Statement by the Delegation of Thailand
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Mr. Chairperson,

I begin by thanking Belgium, members of the Committee on Victim Assistance, and the ISU for organizing this Expert Meeting. We are delighted to be here, and are eager to listen to all your stories and share some of our own.

Mr. Chairperson,

The 1997 Mine Ban Treaty was the first disarmament convention committing States Parties to provide assistance to the victims of a specific weapon. Twenty years on, what had started as a single paragraph has become much more. Other weapons-related conventions have adopted this rapidly emerging norm. For instance, the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V on explosive remnants of war (ERW) in 2008, and most recently included in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

In this respect, I wish to highlight the importance of promoting cooperation and synergies with other international instruments and bodies and welcome the activities undertaken by the Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance in this regard, for instance, the on-going talks with the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. Chairperson,

Thailand recommends that, in order to ensure sustainable support for victims, it is essential to realize victim assistance obligations in a non-discriminatory manner, both through specific initiatives, and also through broader development, human rights, and humanitarian efforts under national plans, policies and frameworks - in other words, an “integrated approach to victim assistance”.

For Thailand, the Maputo Action Plan provides a framework that allows us to make qualitative assessments of progress in victim assistance. We have activities addressing the specific needs of victims, while integrating victim assistance into other frameworks by incorporating relevant actions into the appropriate sectors.

These include disability, health, social welfare, education, employment, development, and poverty reduction.

To offer some examples, our services for landmine victims are integrated into the broader legal framework, national plans and programmes for persons with disabilities in general, which closely corresponds with our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Currently we operate 120 agencies and 2,125 Disability Service Centers in 27 Provinces nationwide, including in border areas with the highest density of landmine victims. The Centers offer ease of access to all available services that persons with disabilities are entitled to, such as rehabilitation programs, subsistence funding, employment seeking support, and wheelchairs. Moreover, social officers make routine visits to communities and households of persons with disabilities to see how they can further support them, while ensuring that we are on standby 24/7 to provide assistance through dedicated hotlines and emergency response units stationed around the country.

Mr. Chairperson,

One key challenge we are still facing in our implementation, and I am certain many States are also grappling with, is how to ensure that persons with disabilities, their families and communities, and in fact, the wider public, are aware of their right, services, and channels of accessing them.

Our agencies have been expanding engagement on the national level with the public through mainstream media, including social media. Furthermore, liaison teams are regular visitors to communities, and we have organized more frequent events and exhibitions especially at local festivals and events with large gatherings.

Most recently, on 3 November, Thailand organized its annual activities in observance of the Day of Persons with Disabilities, presided over by H.E. the Prime Minister of Thailand who has been a strong promoter of the idea “leaving no one behind”. This year’s activities focused on empowering persons with disabilities for inclusive, equitable and sustainable development, with the critical message that all of us are responsible to ensure the full and equal participation of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and create enabling environments by, for and with persons with disabilities, where the dignity of an individual person and equality among all are respected and upheld. The activities were broadcasted nationwide and gained exposure on social media.

In this respect, we therefore request the meeting to share with us any useful strategies, experiences, or recommendations on this matter.

Mr. Chairperson,

Thailand fully supports the convening of the “Global Conference on Victim Assistance” in 2019. I would like to briefly share with you all Thailand's experience from hosting a similar event back in 2015.

Many of you here may recall or even participated in the Bangkok Symposium on Landmine Victim Assistance which Thailand organized together with the ISU. The Symposium was attended by approximately 100 victim assistance experts from 34 countries and 9 organizations. The feedback we received on the Symposium was overwhelmingly positive. Particularly, participants were pleased that the event focused on comprehensive and sustainable landmine victim assistance that took into account physical and non-physical challenges faced by landmine survivors. We gave particular attention to frame discussions and activities according to the Maputo Action Plan. The participants also enjoyed a field visit to Surin Province in the north-eastern region of Thailand to see the local work being done on a wide variety of topics, such as health, social welfare, education, employment, development and poverty reduction of victims.

Mr. Chairperson,

In view of enduring consequences landmines have produced, it is clear that little can be achieved without the firm commitment of States. We believe that the “Global Conference on Victim Assistance” to be held next year will reiterate our long-term commitment to all victims and their families. I urge all States Parties to support this initiative and the work of the Committee.

Thank you
