

**Statement of the Thai Delegation
on Assisting Landmine Survivors (Agenda Item 11 d.)
1 December 2005**

Chairperson,

Distinguished Delegates,

I am honoured to have the opportunity to speak on “Assisting Landmine Survivors,” one of the core issues that remains close to the heart of Thailand’s mine action policies. During the course of 2004-2005, Thailand has made her best efforts to move the work in this area forward. Some of the highlights include the development of the Master Plan for Victim Assistance, re-classification of persons with disabilities, and data cooperation with concerned international agencies.

In early 2005, Thailand Mine Action Center (TMAC) set out to develop a Master Plan for Victim Assistance, which is now close to being finalized. The Plan lays out concrete goals to be achieved, including increasing the registration rate of persons with disabilities by 80 percent, promoting “self-help” for physical therapy among landmine survivors and their families, and scaling up community participation in physical and psycho-social rehabilitation services. It also identifies strengthened coordination among concerned agencies as one crucial ingredient in attaining the goals. Once completed, the Master Plan will be submitted to the National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action for endorsement and possibly for further integration into the 10th National Socioeconomic Development Plan for 2007-2011.

In developing the Master Plan, TMAC has been in close consultation with responsible public agencies, different sectors of civil society and NGOs. The aim is not simply to brainstorm practical ideas for substantive benefit but also to reinforce a sense of ownership among concerned parties.

Victim assistance in Thailand has been carried out over a long period with great cooperation among civil society and NGOs. The Plan, therefore, is intended to promote the dynamics of this synergy both in actions and in words.

In Thailand, several laws and regulations do exist in favour of persons with disabilities. The 1991 Act on Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, for example, indicates certain kinds of medical treatment, education, vocational training, social welfare allowances, investment loans, employment and accommodation that persons with disabilities could receive. At the same time, the Act also induces concerned agencies to better provide their services and facilities to the disabled through generous tax incentives. In 2005, legislation was strengthened to impose penalty on business and organizations when they fail to provide employment for the disabled. Next year, coordination will be fostered among responsible agencies for the production of leaflets containing necessary information for the disabled and will make these leaflets available to persons with disabilities, including landmine survivors, with the help of relevant authorities and NGOs.

Apart from the progress made in planning, positive developments are also taking shape in the area of data collection. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is currently refining its classification of persons with disabilities. In addition to the existing types of hearing, vision, physical, mental, development and learning deficiencies, mine-related disabilities will be made a distinct category. With this new classification in place and standardized, Thailand hopes that data on mine victims would be better collected and put into good use for the improvement of mine victim assistance policies.

Still on the issue of data collection, Thailand wishes to express great appreciation for the joint efforts of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) and the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration in producing a victim assistance

questionnaire, the response to which is to appear in the Zagreb Progress Report as Annex V. The significant merit of the questionnaire is to systematize and provide data compilation regarding assisting mine victims. Thailand is pleased to be able to respond promptly to the questionnaire and will continue to lend support to this very useful endeavor.

Chairperson,

Distinguished Delegates,

As one distinguished speakers stated in the opening ceremony last Sunday, “victim assistance knows no deadline.” This statement should prompt us to be wary about so many challenges ahead but not be too worried to give up on hope for zero new victim. In Thailand, several measures have been undertaken to better assist existing mine victims while curbing the number of new ones. This results in a downward trend of new mine victims in Thailand. In 2004, there were 24 new mine casualties compared to 29 cases in 2003. Thailand believes that we could achieve even fewer casualties in the years to come. At the center of Thailand’s confidence lies the partnership we have with private actors and NGOs, to whom we would like to express our admiration for their dedicated work and cooperation, particularly Thailand Campaign to Ban Landmines, Handicap International - Thailand, Association of Persons with Physical Disability International, General Chatchai Choonhavan Foundation, and Khun Susan Walker. Thailand will do more in strengthening partnership with all parties concerned, both domestically and internationally, as we are determined to bring our work on victim assistance to a higher ground.

Thank you.
