

Cambodia Statement
7th Meeting of State Parities
Speech on Landmine Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration
Geneva, September 18-22, 2006

Mr. Vice President, Your Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I take a few second to congratulate Madame President to have been appointed as the President of the 7MSP.

And it is a great honour for me to be here with an opportunity to share briefly the progress of responding to the needs of victim assistance.

Each year Cambodia has over 800 survivors added up to total of 45,000 mine survivors in the country in 2005.

Mine victims are among the poorest of the poor in Cambodia. Most of them live below the poverty line – which in Cambodia is calculated at 50 cents a day. Unfortunately, some mine victims are still not able to attain the basic needs such as: shelter, food, health, and education.

Mr. Vice President,

The Royal Government of Cambodia did its best to establish a structure in the disability sector in order to respond better to the challenges being faced by the PwD. It established the Disability Action Council (DAC) as a focal point. The CMAA delegated the Victim Assistance to the DAC. In Zagreb, we reported that the DAC was too concerned about restructuring and not about the Victims. And now we are happy to say, the DAC is back on track.

As you are aware, the disability and rehabilitation is multi sectoral which needs many players to be involved, interministerial, financial and technical. There is still need for increasing co-ordination, especially between government, local and international NGOs and bilateral and multilateral donors to take part in the process of the Victim Assistance Program. DAC commits itself to furthering this coordination in 2006 and 2007.

Our coordination task is mainly funded by USAID and other donors. A new project at the National Level, AusAid has proposed that the Australian Red Cross designs a new coordinating structure between the Social Affairs Ministry and DAC to undertake the Mine Victim Assistance program coordination. They will be jointly working with and building the capacity of CMVIS, Cambodian Red Cross, Ministry and DAC staff.

The following is the progress since our report to Zagreb.

1) *Progress being made:*

Services available through the PRC continues to include the production/supply of prosthetics, orthotics, wheelchairs, walking aids, physical therapy, and psychosocial care. In addition, supporting services such as accommodation, meals, and transportation allowances are provided in some.

In Zagreb, we promised to look at the sustainability of the rehabilitation centres.

Disability Action Council is coordinating a deep independent study on the physical rehabilitation sector since June 2006. It will examine the effectiveness of services, their sustainability, and the funding requirement. Scheduled to be finished by the end of October, it is funded by AusAid, UNICEF and EU. In 2007, we will report back its findings. By then Cambodia will know what human resource and further services financially, materially are needed for the physical rehabilitation. This study is also to assess the service provided by the government.

To its commitment, the Cambodian Government gave \$100,000 to the rehabilitation sector in December 2005 and again in August 2006.

Socio-economic reintegration:

Last month UNICEF, Ministry of Social Affairs and Disability Action Council began a project to build the capacity of Social Affairs Ministry staff to Coordinate Nation-wide Community Based Rehabilitation programs. This is to enable PwD better integrate in their own community and will be coordinated at grass root level.

This information is not widely known in the rehabilitation sector. And we realize the need for better coordination between all actors.

Health Care:

At Zagreb we promised to ask the prime Minister to offer free hospital assistance to mine victims. We did not do this, Sorry survivors, but we try again this year.

However, The Cambodian School of Prosthesis and Orthoses has just been approved to provide training for Physio-therapists the next 5 years with the support of 1 million dollars. The school has also recently collaborated with Singaporean School of Prosthesis and Orthosis to bring in Singaporean trainers to train in Cambodia.

Disability Law:

On Monday, September 18, which is yesterday, the national Disability Law was brought to the Council of Ministers and we still hope that it will be passed by the December 2006. The secretary of state of Social Affairs Ministry works very hard for this. So this is how we have tried to keep our Zagreb promise.

In addition, the new convention on the rights of people with disability has been translated into Khmer by - a Survivor from a mine effected community Mr. Ny Nhar - and will be made available to the sector through DAC.

Data Collection:

We promised in Zagreb to further the excellent work of CMVIS and Cambodian Red Cross in the data collection of casualty statistics by getting more data on how survivors have been assisted or not assisted. We said we would do this in two provinces. Jesuit Service with the assistance of CMVIS has begun this in the Banteay Meachey and Siem Reap Province.

Conclusion:

Let me conclude by saying that comprehensive and sustainable rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration services/programs for people with disabilities including landmine victims can only be guaranteed by a collaborative and co-ordinated partnership involving all sectors and PwD themselves.

In 2007, we will engage relevant ministries more deeply in implementing the action we have started. We will establish better communication between all actors in the sector by conducting 2 open meetings for information, feedback and new ideas on furthering action for PwD including mine victims.

Before the end, May I take this occasion to thank USAID, AusAid, UNICEF and all agencies who contribute greatly to address the needs of mine victims in Cambodia. *Thank you Mr. Vice President!*