

Republic of Sudan

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9th Meeting of the States Parties

GEVEVA, SWITZERLAND
24th - 28th November 2008

Dr

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Oral Statement on Victim Assistance

Sudan

Mr. President
Excellencies
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

First and foremost, the victim assistance program in Sudan is managed with the belief that VA is a set of concrete activities and strategies aimed at improving the quality of life of mine/ERW victims and PWDs in the Country. I will briefly update you on some of the progress achieved. A more detailed written report is also available.

The UNMAS-IMSMA database registers all information gathered by organizations involved in Mine Action. According to the database, the total number of identified mine/ERW wounded in Sudan is **4,119** with 42 new accidents recorded from January to October 2008.

Currently there is no surveillance system in place; a feasibility study was recently carried out in the Southern Sudan and the results will soon be shared with partners and authorities. At the same time, UNICEF is supporting the training of health workers in South Kordofan State for the collection of data through the Public Health Care System.

The National Mine Action Center has implemented a project funded by the Swiss Government to revise an existing "*first aid on trauma care*." A total of 18,000 copies of the leaflet have been produced and distributed through community health workers and NGOs to improve the response to mine/ERW related accidents in rural areas.

The ICRC in collaboration with the National Authority for Prosthetic and Orthotics (NAPO) and the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs-GOSS is continuing to support the training of Orthopedic Technologists and other professionals.

Courses for physiotherapists soon will start in Juba, where a University for Physiotherapy Studies is under construction.

Handicap International has been training nurses and health care providers in basic physiotherapy skills in various areas of southern Sudan. HI has also supported NAPO in Khartoum in developing a physiotherapy syllabus and the courses will soon start in the NAPO centers.

NAPO in collaboration with ICRC has started the construction of a new workshop complex for the production of medical shoes and crutches.

The NAPO's mobile workshop which was established early this year is now active and it has already provided support to 135 PWDs in North Kordofan State.

ICRC in partnership with the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs-GOSS has completed the construction of a new Referral Rehabilitation Center in Southern Sudan for the production of prostheses and orthotics. The center, located in Juba, will be officially opened on the 3rd of December 2008.

An increasing number of local and international NGOs are also providing mobility aids to mine/ERW victims and PWDs in remote mine/affected areas in the north and south of the country.

At a Government level, the Ministries of Social Welfare in the north and south of Sudan are responsible for the provision of psychosocial support to vulnerable populations including mine/ERW victims and PWDs.

In addition, most of the organizations funded by the VA program are carrying out psychosocial and peer-to-peer support to mine/ERW victims and PWDs on a regular basis.

However, this area of VA is still to be empowered and needs more technical and financial support.

Currently there are a number of economic reintegration projects ongoing in the north and south of the country. Thanks to the support of the Canadian Government a total of 12 VA projects are being implemented by national and international NGOs and target the economical empowerment of 2,463 direct beneficiaries (mine/ERW victims and PWDs).

The *DDR Commissions, UNDDR, South Sudan War Disabled Widows and Orphans Commission* and others are also supporting the economical-reintegration of former combatants and war affected populations including mine/ERW victims.

The Victim Assistance Program in Sudan follows the strategic objectives and targets identified by National VA Strategic Framework and Work Plan which have been officially approved by the Government of Unity through the Mine Action Authority. The National VA Work Plan will be reviewed in January 2009.

The VA legal frame work is also incorporated into the new Disability Law which was recently approved by The Council of Ministers. The law, which mentions the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, clearly indicates mine/ERW victims as a target group.

The Government of Sudan is also making progress toward the ratification of the UN Convention for the Rights of PWDs which has been approved by the Council of Ministers.

The VA working groups are chaired by National Mine Action Centre in Khartoum and by the Ministry of Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs in Juba. All VA interventions are designed and coordinated with relevant government bodies. Members of the VA working groups are relevant organizations and authorities including the South Sudan Mine Action Authority.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank ICRC for their wonderful work and other national and international NGOs and organizations working in Sudan to assist mine/ERW victims and PWDs.

I also want to officially express my sincere gratitude to the Governments of Canada, Japan, and Switzerland for their generous and continuous support.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.