



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND



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## **THE BANGKOK SYMPOSIUM ON COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE: BUILDING SYNERGY TOWARDS EFFECTIVE ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION**

**23-25 JUNE 2013**

### **CO-CHAIRS' SUMMARY**

#### **Background:**

The 2009 Second Review Conference – the Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World – placed a high priority on enhancing international cooperation and assistance. Following the Cartagena Summit, the President convened, on 25 June 2010, a special session on cooperation and assistance, which further crystallised an agenda for cooperation and assistance, including sub-agendas related to mine clearance and victim assistance, respectively. At the 2010 Tenth Meeting of the States Parties (10MSP), a discussion on cooperation and assistance was held which featured the participation of more delegations than had likely ever engaged on a particular substantive topic at any previous Meeting of the States Parties. This discussion further emphasised the importance the States Parties attach to international cooperation in the context of the Convention and saw the establishment of a new Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance.

In 2011, the 10MSP President, in his capacity as the inaugural Chair of the Standing Committee on Resources, Cooperation and Assistance, convened a symposium in Tirana, which succeeded in exploring in greater depth some of the key matters concerning the victim assistance portion of the cooperation and assistance agenda. At the 2012 and 2013 meetings of the Standing Committee, the Co-Chairs, Albania and Thailand in 2012 and Thailand and Ecuador in 2013, led further efforts to advance the cooperation and assistance agenda by focusing discussion on matters such as the role of trust funds for implementation, the availability of assistance and the procedures to obtain it, and the development of an information exchange tool on assistance.

With a view to continuing to enhance cooperation and assistance under the Convention, particularly in light of the Convention's 2014 Third Review Conference – the Maputo Summit on a Mine-Free World – Thailand, with the support of Australia and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), convened the Bangkok Symposium on Cooperation and Assistance: Building Synergy Towards Effective Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation on 24-25 June 2013, which was preceded by a visit on 23 June to the Sirindhorn National Medical Rehabilitation Centre and the Thai Wheel Factory of the Thai with Disability Foundation. Over 100 representatives of 49 States and 18 international and non-governmental organizations participated in the symposium.

#### **Opening of the symposium and keynote address:**

The symposium was opened by His Excellency Mr. Nopadol Gunavibool, Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand. In opening the symposium, the Deputy Permanent Secretary highlighted that, taking into account the current challenges facing international cooperation and assistance for mine action and recognising the number of emerging opportunities in

other forums, building synergies will be key to creating sustainable solutions for resource mobilisation and international cooperation and assistance.

Also at the opening of the symposium, His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan, Special Envoy of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, delivered a keynote address. In his address, Prince Mired stressed that cooperation and assistance can only flourish successfully if mine affected countries clearly comprehend the concept of national ownership and make serious efforts to implement it. Prince Mired recalled that the States Parties formally defined national ownership at the 2009 Cartagena Summit, as including: (i) high level interest and leadership in fulfilling obligations and addressing challenges, (ii) an existing or new State entity empowered and provided with the human, financial and material capacity to carry out its responsibilities, (iii) a clear understanding of the size, location and quality of the challenge or a commitment to promptly acquire such an understanding, (iv) a realistic but not unambitious plan to address the challenge as soon as possible and, (v) a regular significant national financial commitment by the affected State itself. He further recalled that, while the existence of these components will not guarantee that resources will flow in response to needs, demonstrating national ownership makes it significantly more likely that cooperation will flourish between those with needs and those in a position to provide assistance.

### **Session #1: The Incheon Strategy and its relationship to the implementation of the Convention**

His Excellency Mr. Thani Thongphakdi, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations, Geneva, facilitated a panel discussion which explored the relationship between the *Incheon Strategy*, which was adopted in 2012 by the Member States of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and the pursuit of the aims of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. Ambassador Thongphakdi noted that the *Incheon Strategy* serves as an example of how we might bridge and understand the interconnections between the mine action world and the disability world. He further noted that of the ESCAP's members and associate members, 31 are parties to the Convention, including four which have reported the responsibility for significant numbers of mine and other victims of explosive remnants of war.

Ms. Aiko Akiyama, Disability Focal Point at the Social Development Division of the ESCAP, recalled that, in November 2012, the Member States of the ESCAP launched a third Asian and Pacific Decade for Persons with Disabilities and, in doing so, adopted the *Incheon Strategy* to "Make the Right Real" for persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific. She noted that the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) served as the overarching legal and normative framework for regional work in the field of disability. Containing 10 interrelated goals, 27 targets and 62 indicators, the *Incheon Strategy* aims to accelerate implementation of the CRPD with a view to achieving a vision of an inclusive society that ensures, promotes and upholds the rights of all persons with disabilities in the region.

Mr. Monthian Buntan, Member of the Senate of the Kingdom of Thailand and Member of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, noted that, while the *Incheon Strategy* does not explicitly refer to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, it recognizes that persons with disabilities include those who are victims of landmines. Senator Buntan highlighted that through goal 10 on regional and international cooperation, the *Incheon Strategy* also recognizes challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Asia and the Pacific, including the post-war impact. He concluded that through its aim of achieving disability-inclusive development and its specific imperative to accelerate the ratification and implementation of CRPD, the *Incheon Strategy* is undoubtedly capable of being a tool to help landmine victims and survivors and help bring about effective implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. He noted that this is especially with the case with respect to States which are parties to both Conventions and actively involved in the development and implementation of the *Incheon Strategy*.

Dr. Reykhan Muminova, Victim Assistance Officer at the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre, highlighted that six specific goals of the *Incheon Strategy* (Goals 2,3,4,8,9 and 10) are particularly relevant when considering victim assistance approaches and actions of the *Cartagena Action Plan* and that in this regard the *Incheon Strategy* and the pursuit of the Convention's aims are interrelated. She illustrated this point through the use of concrete examples of how the mine action programme in Tajikistan is leading the way in integrating mine victim assistance into broader approaches to disability. She emphasised that the work to implement the Convention does not exist in isolation of initiatives in other arenas and that efforts should be made to find synergies with initiatives such as the *Incheon Strategy*.

## **Session #2: What do we know and what do we not know about victim assistance funding?**

Dr. Prachaksvich Lebnak, Deputy Secretary General of the National Health Commission Office, Ministry of Public Health of Thailand, facilitated a session which sought to explore what is both known and not known about victim assistance funding. He recalled that while the Convention obliges each State Party in a position to do so to “provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims,” monitoring of States Parties' efforts to comply with this obligation generally has featured a narrow focus on resources specifically denominated as “victim assistance” funds. He noted, however, that for over a decade States Parties have expressed that they aim to fulfil this obligation by providing assistance through both targeted efforts and mainstream development cooperation.

Mr. Loren Persi, Victim Assistance Coordinator with the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, indicated that assistance for landmine victims that emanates from donor States' humanitarian funding mechanisms has been observed to reach survivors and enhance the impact and sustainability of services for persons with disabilities in their communities. He noted that development assistance is difficult to measure in terms of whether it could be considered victim assistance funding and difficult to trace in terms of whether it is benefiting mine victims. He indicated that most victim assistance resources are paid through out-of-pocket expenses by victims, rather than—as is often supposed—bilateral development assistance. He suggested that there is a need to continue supporting dedicated victim assistance activities and that it is important to monitor the support which flows through healthcare, disability, employment, compensatory, social welfare and transitional justice frameworks and its impact. He highlighted that there is added value in supporting victim and survivor networks.

Mr. Kerry Brinkert, Director of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), shared findings of research which draws from the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) data on development assistance flows. He highlighted that States Parties are providing funding for basic health care, basic health infrastructure, health personnel, medical education and training, medical services and human rights that greatly exceeds the amount of funding which they label as *victim assistance* funding. He concluded that the mine action community is not in a complete way measuring the amount of resources directed for matters that are ultimately going to benefit mine victims and that measuring funding (i.e., an input) may not be the right approach when what matters are the outputs, outcomes and impact of funding, be it labelled as victim assistance or not. He also noted that understanding the role of development assistance in meeting the Convention's promise to mine victims is important when it comes to sustainability as dedicated mine action funding will disappear or in many cases already has. He added that a pre-occupation with external funding for victim assistance may overshadow the importance of national ownership and responsibility given that the well-being and the guarantee of the rights of one's population are matters which are within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

Ms. Chizuru Kaneko, Policy Officer with the Conventional Arms Division, of the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, shared a donor's perspective on what we know and do not know about victim assistance funding. She noted that assistance that Japan has been providing which has benefited mine victims may not have been distinctly noticeable to the Convention community. She concurred that it is not easy to quantify the true magnitude of funding for victim assistance, that there are other important efforts by donors that are seemingly unrelated to victim assistance which should not be underestimated, and that national ownership is indispensable to achieving full social and economic inclusion of victims. She added that mine victims could benefit if a higher priority at all levels was given to disability reform in general.

Mr. Theo Verhoeff, former Director of the International Committee of the Red Cross' Special Fund for the Disabled (SFD), shared the SFD's experiences supporting and financing physical rehabilitation programmes. He recalled that landmine survivors are part of a broader population of individuals requiring similar physical rehabilitation services and that physical rehabilitation centres need to address all current and future physical rehabilitation needs, irrespective of the cause of the need. He noted that regardless of the number of landmine survivors benefiting from ICRC-supported services, the funding may come from a wide range of sources and it would be difficult to provide breakdowns of these sources. He added that what is more important is to focus on the ways and means of ensuring that the ultimate outcome is achieved – that lifelong physical rehabilitation needs are met – and that this involves a focus on sustainability from the outset, a long-term outlook and national ownership.

### **Session #3: The diversity of regional approaches to cooperation in mine action**

His Excellency Mr. Luis Gallegos Chiriboga, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, Geneva, facilitated a session which sought to highlight the diversity of regional approaches to cooperation in mine action. He noted that the effort to implement the Convention and to more generally overcome challenges related to mines and other explosive remnants of war has seen an emergence of a variety of regional cooperation initiatives. He noted that while some of these initiatives are still emerging, such as the 2012 agreement by the Member States of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to establish a regional mine action centre, others are more mature, such as the work undertaken for over a decade by the Slovenian-based International Trust Fund, originally in South Eastern Europe and now also in other regions.

Mr. Goran Gačnik, Deputy Director, International Trust Fund – Enhancing Human Security (ITF), presented the ITF's experience in regional cooperation. He recalled that the ITF was established by the Government of Slovenia in March 1998, initially to help Bosnia and Herzegovina in the implementation of the peace agreement and to assist and support post-conflict rehabilitation with the ITF progressively expanding its operations to other affected countries in South Eastern Europe and to other regions. He noted that one of the key lessons from the ITF's experience is the importance of serving as a neutral intermediary and focusing on a technical rather than political level, particularly given the sensitivity of post-conflict environments. He also indicated that the benefits of regional cooperation include younger national programmes benefiting from the experience of others, the pooling of resources, and staff exchanges to share expertise and foster experience.

Mr. Ioane M. S. Alama, Regional Security Adviser with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Secretariat's Political Governance and Security Programme, presented the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Strategy. He noted that the idea of addressing, on a regional basis, problems associated with UXO, was first raised by Member States in 2010. Following a scoping study and Leaders' Statement in 2011, the regional strategy was developed and endorsed in 2012. He noted that some of the challenges faced by Member States include a lack of baseline data, resources,

technical capacity, and policy frameworks and that the regional strategy aims to address these challenges in a flexible, rather than one-size-fits-all, manner. He noted that lessons learned to date include the importance of national ownership and reaching out to partners.

Brigadier General (Rtd.) Mohammad Breikat, Director of Jordan's National Committee for Demining and Rehabilitation (NCDR), highlighted that, in pursuing its mission, the NCDR has amassed a variety of skills, capacities and experiences, which it has been active in sharing with others in the Middle East and beyond. He noted that mine-affected countries can benefit greatly by participating in or instigating regional cooperation, including by creating fertile ground for exchanging experiences, establishing networks for ongoing knowledge exchange and allowing for exchanges in common languages. He further noted that challenges faced by affected States in promoting cooperation include that there are few Arabic-language resources and that available funding is insufficient to match the demand for training and information exchange.

Ms. Ariam Gebremariam, Managing Director of the Addis Ababa Regional Office of the Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities (SADPD), shared the Secretariat's experience in supporting regional efforts in disability programming and policy implementation processes. She indicated that the first African Decade of Persons with Disabilities was proclaimed by the African Union (AU) for the period 1999 – 2009, that the SADPD began its work in 2004, and that a second African Decade has been proclaimed. The main goals of the African Decade are to raise awareness about the situation of the estimated 60 – 80 million persons with disabilities in the region, and to identify solutions tailored to the African experience that enhance participation, equality and empowerment of Africans with disabilities. Given how these goals relate to the goals of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, she noted that there is great scope for cooperation between the Convention and the Secretariat of the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities.

#### **Session #4: The United Nations Mine Action Strategy**

Mr. Kerry Brinkert, Director of the Implementation Support Unit, facilitated a session which aimed to explore the relationship between the United Nations' Mine Action Strategy 2013-2018 and cooperation and assistance under the Convention. In introducing this session, he noted that the United Nations system and one specific aspect of the United Nations system (i.e., the UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action) are explicitly mentioned in Article 6 of the Convention on cooperation and assistance. He further remarked that as the UN system is one of the most important funding channels for most affected States and for most donors, and that the UN plays an important role in advising national authorities, in implementing programmes and in setting standards for mine action.

Mr. Esteban Olhagaray, Project and Communication Specialist with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Cambodia, on behalf of the United Nations Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action, presented the United Nations' Mine Action Strategy 2013-2018. He noted that the new strategy, which was the result of an intensive consultative process, consists of four strategic objectives which are complemented by seven internal commitments by the UN to strengthen the UN's capacity and effectiveness. He also highlighted that the strategy is people-centred and a monitoring and evaluation mechanism will be developed to illustrate progress towards the fulfilment of the strategy's objectives.

Ms. Christine Pahlman, Mine Action Coordinator for the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), presented donor perspectives on the UN strategy. She welcomed the strategy and the efforts it has made to spell out clear objectives, indicators and specific UN activities. She expressed the view that the important thing now is how the strategy is implemented in that,

while the strategy provides a good framework for mine action, its broad formulation means that the challenges and the opportunities will also lie in the details. She encouraged the UN to continue to consult with a wide range of partners at the global, regional and national levels to guide the implementation of the strategy. In addition, she expressed the hope that the UN would soon establish a monitoring and evaluation mechanism in support of the strategy.

Amélie Chayer, Policy Analyst for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munitions Coalition (ICBL-CMC), shared a non-governmental perspective on the UN strategy. She welcomed the fact that the principle of partnership in mine action is an integral part of the strategy and that regular and substantive participation on the part of non-governmental organizations is considered an enabling factor for the strategy to work. She noted that the ICBL-CMC has high hopes that the implementation of the strategy will result in positive changes for affected communities. She suggested ways that the implementation of the strategy could help facilitate cooperation and assistance, including by reinforcing national leadership and coordination of mine action programmes, supporting States to develop and implement plans with milestones in line with their international legal obligations, and by carrying out efforts to universalize the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. In adding that the strategy will contribute to cooperation and assistance as long as implementation proceeds in an efficient manner, she proposed the following four concrete steps that could be taken: i) administering and transferring funding to implementing partners in a timely manner, with donors setting limits on turnaround time; ii) setting a reasonable maximum percentage that can be used for administration, thus ensuring that the maximum amount of funds possible is spent for actual implementation; iii) reporting in a transparent manner on how funds are allocated and spent by multilateral mechanisms; and iv) evaluating funding mechanisms regularly with the results published.

Mr. Elias Zimba, Minister at the Permanent Mission of Mozambique to the United Nations, Geneva, on behalf of the President-Designate of the Convention's Third Review Conference – the Maputo Summit on a Mine-Free World, noted that enhancing cooperation and assistance will be vital to addressing challenges that remain in the pursuit of the Convention's aims. He expressed the view that cooperation and assistance have been approached in a sophisticated and focused manner since the 2009 Cartagena Summit on a Mine-Free World, as most recently evidenced at the Bangkok Symposium. He noted that this has yielded many important conclusions, including that it is clear that, while money is important, cooperation and assistance is about much more than just money. He echoed the sentiments expressed by many during the symposium about the central role of national ownership, the need for efficiency in mine action in part by making use of evidence-based decision-making in demining, and the need for discussions on mine victim assistance to be taken into broader international human rights and healthcare arenas. He concluded that these and other inputs from the Bangkok Symposium would greatly assist in helping to shape how cooperation and assistance might be considered at the Third Review Conference.

#### **Co-Chairs' conclusions:**

A wealth of knowledge, experience and views were shared during the Symposium, with some key conclusions emerging as follows:

1. The Convention's promise to landmine survivors will be, in large part, achieved through the integration of activities into broader approaches to disability. It is important, therefore, that the challenges faced by landmine survivors be evident within disability discussions and that those from the disability world continue to participate in cooperative efforts to implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

2. The fact that a so-called *landmines world* is part of a larger world means that the resources to fuel the fulfilment of our aims could come from wide-ranging sources. The challenge, therefore, is two-fold. First, there is a challenge in terms of making use of the full range of funding sources, be they specifically related to mine action or not. Second, there is a challenge in ensuring that funds that are invested are actually achieving their desired ends.
3. Also as concerns cooperative efforts to fulfil the Convention's promise to landmine survivors, it is clear that there is a need to focus more intensively on sustainability. Addressing the needs and guaranteeing the rights of landmine survivors are national responsibilities which will remain for the long-term. Programmes and services embedded in a national health care system will need to take this point into account. Those requiring external resources to ensure sustainability should make sure that their resource needs are communicated as priorities in broader development frameworks.
4. Building upon the need to ensure sustainability is the imperative to establish partnerships and to do so from the outset. For example, partnerships are essential for achieving national ownership over a sustainable physical rehabilitation programme. Partnerships are key to individual States Parties taking on a leading role in sharing its experience and capacities. Partnerships are important to overcome capacity constraints. In addition, as has been evident in regional cooperation, partnerships enable partners to do more together than they could on their own.
5. A central theme, if not the central theme, throughout the symposium was the fundamental place of national ownership – both to facilitate cooperation and assistance, and to actually comply with the Convention's obligations. This point was highlighted from the outset during the keynote address by His Royal Highness Prince Mired. In addition, national ownership was mentioned during every panel discussion and alluded to by almost every panellist. The implementation of the Convention is the responsibility of each individual State Party in areas under its control or jurisdiction. Those that have understood and internalised this point have generally been more successful in deepening relations with partners, in mobilising resources, and in producing results.

The Co-Chairs closed the symposium by thanking His Royal Highness Prince Mired Raad Al Hussein of Jordan for his valued participation, the Government of Australia and the Implementation Support Unit for their support and assistance, all panellists and participants for their preparations and active participation and the Royal Thai Government for hosting the event. In addition, the Co-Chairs thanked the Sirindhorn National Rehabilitation Centre and the Thai Wheel Factory of the Thai with Disability Foundation for their hospitality in hosting visits by participants.