



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
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**Statement by Cambodia on Victim Assistance
presented to the**

Standing Committee on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration

3 July 2008 p.m.
Geneva

Dear Mr. President and Co-ordinator of Victim Assistance

On behalf of the Cambodian delegation I would like to thank you for the opportunity to support the possible elements and common approaches to victim assistance under CCW Protocol 5 Explosive Remnants of War. You did indeed very well leading the informal consultation group at the Dublin Diplomatic Conference in late May this year to have a solid foundation frame work for the assistance provided to victim of cluster bombs.

There is a common need for an innocent human being who is amputated by what ever weapon, it doesn't matter whether he or she is injured by a landmine, by a cluster bomb or by unexploded ordnances. Psychological and physical impact on individual victims and their families bear the same burden. They are all left with an indefinite life scar.

In particular Cambodia, which has recorded over 63,000 landmine and ERW victims, has been experiencing the same burden. The Royal Government has considered that assistance which provides care, rehabilitation, social and economic reintegration for victim is crucial and a basic element to start with in order to assist victims. There are still new casualties in addition to the already

tens of thousands of survivors and the assistance available is insufficient to meet their needs.

To date, through the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans, and Youth Rehabilitation, in collaboration with national and international nongovernmental organizations we developed a sound strategic priority objectives which are similar to what you have proposed in your DISCUSSION PAPER 5 on para 2 Elements and Common Approaches.

Though, it is not debatable that the responsibility to assist the victims and persons with disability lies with the Royal Government but as a country with limited national resources, this demands a great deal from those States Parties and Non-Parties who are in a position to do so to provide assistance to support our often vulnerable, poor and needy populations.

In closing, Cambodia supports the Coordinator's paper and approach and pledges to continue to contribute to discussions on victim assistance and our common efforts to relieve human suffering worldwide.

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FIRST STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR SAM SOTHA

Mr. Coordinator;

A year and a half ago Cambodia established a Steering Committee for Landmine Victim Assistance which is co-chaired by me and an Under Secretary of State from by MoSVY. Cambodia recognizes the importance of inter-ministerial cooperation and collaboration in ensuring a holistic approach to addressing the rights and needs of survivors the Royal Government in October approved the Steering Committee to include all relevant ministries to be represented in this permanent forum.

Last year we received substantial support from Australia which allowed the Steering Committee on behalf of the Royal Government to develop a national plan of action as a first step in addressing Cambodia's obligations under the AP Mine Ban Convention. The development of the objectives and an Action Plan has been widely consulted with members of the Steering Committee, key actors in the disability sector, mine/ERW survivors and other persons with disabilities.

Mr. Chair;

Cambodia is using the framework adopted by the States Parties at the First Review Conference and the tools developed by the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance to develop the national action plan. Cambodia is honoured to be co-chair with New Zealand of this Standing Committee this year.

However, developing the concrete objectives to address the rights and needs of landmine/ERW survivors is a challenging task for any country particularly when there are many other competing priorities and ministries lack the capacity to give the issue the attention it deserves. Though The process has been slower than anticipated but Cambodia is moving in the right direction and taking the time needed to ensure the widest possible consultation and strong sense of national ownership so that when it comes to implementing the Action Plan all stakeholders will be actively engaged in achieving the ultimate aim of improving the daily lives of persons with disabilities in Cambodia.

The Steering Committee has endorsed the objectives for assistance to victims and person with disabilities for the period 2008 to 2011. These include:

- Legislation on protection and promotion on the rights of persons with disabilities be adopted by the National Assembly by 2009
- By 2009 there is better collaboration in data management between government agencies including but not limited to MoSVY, and the MoH

- Guidelines for Monitoring and evaluation of PRCs developed and strengthened to improve relationships among clients and staff by 2008-2009.
- By 2010 the capacity of MoSVY to understand psycho-social needs of the disability sector and issues is strengthened in collaboration with the MoH.
- Collaboration between MoH, MoSVY, POSVT, DOSVY and Mine Action providers be strengthened.
- By 2009-2011 50% of children with disabilities have access to elementary education, 20% of persons with disabilities including landmine ERW have access to secondary education and 10% of persons with disabilities have access to tertiary education.
- Between 2008-2011, 1320 persons with disabilities will have access to community based income generating opportunities.

Once the National Plan of Action is finalized the document will then be submitted to the Prime Minister for approval. This document will be used as the basis for coordination of all victim assistance activities within the disability sector in order to enhance collaboration and cooperation, identify gaps and avoid duplication of services amongst the stakeholders. The plan will provide a means of strategic direction for the Royal Government of Cambodia, and in particular MoSVY, to gradually take ownership of services provided within the disability sector.

To conclude, I will highlight some of the progress that has been made in Cambodia towards addressing the rights and needs of mine/ERW survivors and other person with disabilities.

The Royal Government has the following major points that it will be implementing:

- 1- Basic rights
- 2- Development the Self-help Groups

- 3- Promote and strengthen the participation and rights of the victims and person with disability
- 4- Extended activities for Vocational Training for person with disabilities
- 5- Ensure sustainability of provincial Rehabilitation Centres.
- 6- Accessibility-promote and strengthen physical accessibility.

In February this year, the Council of Ministers approved Cambodia's first Law on the Rights of People with Disabilities. This law was first drafted in 2001 so it is a significant step for the Royal Government of Cambodia. The legislation is now before the National Assembly for final adoption.

Cambodia still has a lot of work to do to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place and that the relevant Ministries have the capacity to meet the challenges in addressing the rights and needs of people with disabilities in Cambodia. But through the victim assistance provisions of the AP Mine Ban Convention and guidance from Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on Victim Assistance, progress is being made to ensure that in the long-term the Royal Government of Cambodia has the capacity and infrastructure to meet its obligations not only to mine survivors but to all people with disabilities in the country.

Thank you