

**Statement by the Thai Delegation
on Victim Assistance and Socio-Economic Reintegration
at the Meeting of the Standing Committees
of the Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 23-27 April 2007**

Co-Chairs,
Friends and Colleagues,

Thailand places great importance on the issue of landmine victim assistance and socio-economic reintegration. For Thailand, victim assistance is not simply a humanitarian issue. Rather, it is an issue closely linked with human rights, human security, as well as social and economic development. We are convinced that, for any landmine victim assistance programme to be comprehensive and effective, it must be inter-disciplinary in nature, addressing all the different dimensions of the matter.

At the 7MSP in September 2006, Thailand informed the meeting that it had completed the drafting of the Master Plan on Mine Victim Assistance for the years 2007-2011. At that time, such Master Plan was still awaiting final approval by the National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action. Today, my Delegation is pleased to inform you that the Master Plan has been formally approved by the National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action on 26 February 2007. This means that the Master Plan now holds official status as the national guideline on landmine victim assistance, to be followed by all relevant government sectors.

The Master Plan on Mine Victim Assistance for the years 2007-2011 is a product of broad-based consultations among the relevant government agencies, civil society and NGOs. It is a comprehensive document in that it addresses both the immediate physical and mental needs of landmine victims, while at the same time providing for longer-term support to ensure that landmine victims are able to fully reintegrate into the society. This Master Plan also extends support to family members of landmine victims who, in many cases, have suffered no less than the landmine victims themselves. Regarding the implementation of the Plan, different government agencies have been assigned to implement relevant parts of the Plan which correspond to their area of expertise. It is believed that this inclusive and participatory approach will ensure a more effective execution of the Plan. The English translation of the Master Plan is now available for those of you who might be interested in learning more about it.

My delegation would also like to take this opportunity to inform our distinguished friends and colleagues that the Master Plan for Mine Risk Education for the years 2007-2011 has also been formally approved by the

National Committee on Humanitarian Mine Action on 26 February 2007. This Master Plan will serve as a preventive framework to ensure that those living in the vicinity of the mine-contaminated areas fully understand the danger of landmines and UXOs and, as a result, can better protect themselves from this deadly weapon.

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Thailand is fully aware of the developmental dimension of landmine victim assistance and has mainstreamed mine victims into the Tenth National Economic and Social Development Plan. In this Plan, mine victims are recognized as a distinct group of persons who need special care and support.

However, when it comes to landmine victims and persons with disabilities, Thailand views that most, if not all, of the landmine victims are also persons living with various forms of disabilities. Therefore, it is incumbent that they should benefit from the legal and policy framework established to protect and assist persons with disabilities.

Thailand believes that the recently adopted United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), upon entering into force, will complement the existing victim assistance framework. The CRPD provides us, States Parties, with another, equally compelling, perspective on landmine victim assistance. The Mine Ban Convention may have addressed the issue of victim assistance primarily from a humanitarian perspective. However, in light of the CRPD, landmine victims are not simply a humanitarian case. Rather, they are individuals with rights. They have a right to be free from fear and to be free from want. It is therefore our hope to see that they fully enjoy such rights. In this regard, Thailand is proud to have been among the many countries that signed the CRPD on 30 March 2007, the first day that it opened for signature.

At the national level, landmine victims in Thailand are provided with various kinds of recourse. They are protected under the Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons Act of 1991. They also benefit from the work carried out by the Office of Empowerment for Persons with Disabilities, established under the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security.

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Regarding the number of landmine casualties, my delegation is pleased to inform you that since 7MSP, the number has decreased. Having said this, Thailand realizes that we cannot rest on our laurels. Emergency response

teams with trained pre-hospital medical care personnel have been set up in a total of 2,521 districts. It is anticipated that by 2011, all 6,746 districts in Thailand will have in place emergency response teams. This will ensure that landmine victims receive prompt pre-hospital treatment which may assist in minimizing their injuries. Apart from this, Thailand is aware that existing landmine victims still need both short-term and long-term care and support. In some cases, the support is life long.

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Thailand's victim assistance programme may not be without its flaws, but we are confident that we are on the right track. Our country is committed to assisting landmine victims and to ensuring that they are fully reintegrated into society with dignity. With our determination, and the support of our friends in this room, we know that we can succeed.

Thank you.
