

Subject: Sudan Annual report on Victim Assistance

VA in Sudan addresses needs of mine/UXO victims and PWDs in general, without discrimination in terms of gender, age, sex, creed, etc. VA is in fact a “window of opportunity” to advocate and improve services for PWDs in the Country.

The activities reported can be divided into 6 sectors of intervention:

a. Capacity building and integration of VA within other mine action areas of intervention.

The VA departments in Sudan have been empowered with technical personnel (medical doctor, social worker, etc.) that will be in charge of coordinating VA related activities in the Country.

Sudan Government started the first project for clearance of mines and UXO along a main railway linking North and South for a total length of 446 Km. Medical staff and equipment have been assigned to the de-mining teams in the field. The project includes MRE activities and a VA component which consists in the identification and referral of victims, and provision of mobility aids through the nearest orthopaedic centres in the area.

The inclusion of VA in de-mining projects is to optimise resources as the team on the ground can also carry out identification of victims in the area. Furthermore, mine/UXO survivors can be hired to carry out various works within the safe locations nearby the de-mining area.

b. Institutional Support, Advocacy and Policy.

A National Victim Assistance Strategic Framework has been developed by the National Mine Action office/commission, together with UNMAS. The document, which will guide the VA interventions in the country for the next 5 years, has been submitted to the government for final approval.

The time frame of the strategic framework is similar to the general Sudan Mine Action Strategic Framework and the CPA.

The National Victim Assistance Strategic Framework aims at reinforcing a network of government bodies and partners to support VA programs and activities through reconciliation, development and peace building.

On the 30th March 2007 Sudan Government signed the UN Convention on “The Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. Sudan is one of first six countries to sign the convention. The convention will open new possibilities and areas of support for PWDs including mine/UXO victims in Sudan.

Although the conflict in Darfur is not yet solved, there is no record of use of landmines in the region. This can be considered a good outcome of the Ottawa Convention.

c. Medical Care and Physical Rehabilitation

In Sudan, all mine/UXO victims are entitled to receive prosthetic services free of charge.

The government of Sudan allocated a total of 380,000 USD\$ for the procurement of components and material for the production of prostheses, orthotics and mobility aids.

A pilot program to support a mobile unit for production of mobility aids will soon start in Sudan. The mobile unit will cover 6 states in the Northern areas of the country.

ICRC is building a large orthopaedic centre in Juba which will be the referral centre for the all of Southern Sudan. ICRC is also supporting the training of 17 technicians in different specialities of physical rehabilitation.

d. Social Reintegration & Economic Empowerment.

A call for proposal has been organised, 12 pilot projects will be selected and supported through the Human Security Trust Fund Project which is funded by the Japanese Government.

DDR Sudan in coordination with the UNDDR will support 3,000 former combatants, victims of mine/UXO.

e. Data Collection, Needs Assessment and Surveys.

The collection of data in Sudan is a very daunting task considering the size of the country (over 2,5 Mil square kilometres).

To date, the Ministry of Social Welfare, together with UN agencies, disability unions, NGOs and other organisations have collected information about mine/UXO victims. However, information and data about victims and survivors are still limited and additional efforts are required to gather more information and to harmonise the existing records with the IMSMA data base.

According to the IMSMA data base, a total of 2,404 victims have been recorded.

On the other side, DDR has already identified over 3,000 combatants injured by mine/UXO.

Finally, a victim assistance needs assessment is currently ongoing in South Sudan (areas of Wau and Juba).

f. Coordination.

In March 2007 the First National VA workshop was organised in Juba (South Sudan). The Workshop was attended by a large number of authorities, organisations and diplomats including representatives from the Sudanese Permanent mission in Geneva and the Austrian Government which is the co-chair for Victims Assistance and Social Reintegration in 2007.

During the reported period, a network of partners and ministries has been established. The Ministries that are involved in VA are:

- Federal Ministry of Welfare (that is planning to include VA within their yearly work plan).
- State Ministries of Social Affairs in each of the 25 States in Sudan.
- Ministry of humanitarian Affairs.
- Ministry of Defence.
- Federal Ministry of Health and the States Ministries of Health.
- Departments of planning by providing low cost houses or empty plots to the victims or their families even the killed ones plus the follow up of the implementation of the building codes.
- Ministry of High Education by considering 5% less for the disabled students in the selection criteria for the addition in the universities.
- Ministry of Interior to use the police centres in the affected areas to report about the accidents and to use its facilities to evacuate the victims to the nearest health centres.

During the course of the past months the VA working groups have been joined by a larger number of NGOs and CBOs that are now coordinating and planning activities together with UN agencies (UNMAS, UNDP, etc.), ICRC and other institutions.

Thanks to the coordination mechanisms established and the development of the National VA Strategic Framework, most of the VA objectives will also be incorporated into the work plan of relevant ministries.

To conclude I would like to mention that the Ottawa Convention has greatly contributed in the peace process in Sudan as the former fighting parties, through Mine Action activities, are now working together for the reconstruction of the Country and to support PWDs and mine/UXO victims in Sudan.

Thank you for your kind attention.