

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION – THAILAND

COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE

(Italy, Chile, Sweden and Thailand)

Intersessional Meetings

30 June – 2 July 2020

Observations of the Committee on the information submitted by Thailand

1. The Committee welcomes the submission by Thailand of updated information on its victim assistance activities. Based on the information provided, the Committee presents the following preliminary observations.

Mine casualties in 2019

2. The Committee observed that Thailand reported 10 casualties including 5 civilians, 4 deminers and 1 patrolling soldier, of which 1 man was killed and 1 woman and 8 men were injured. This shows an increase, comparing to 4 casualties Thailand report for 2018. Thailand also indicated that there are 1.7 million Thais live with disabilities including 357,705 in the 27 mine affected provinces and the data has yet to be examined to define the total number of mine survivors.

Establish or strengthen of a centralised database (Action #35)

3. The Committee observed that Thailand reported having a database that compiles information on persons with disabilities including mine survivors and the it is managed by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Thailand reported that the information stored in the database are disaggregated by type of disability, gender, age, occupation, education, income and location. Thailand indicated that the information is shared with key relevant ministries and institutions and the database can be found online as well.

Integrating victim assistance into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks and designation of a government entity to oversee the integration (Action #33)

4. The Committee observed that Thailand reported it has adopted a holistic approach on victim assistance to integrate the needs and rights of mine victims into broader legal frameworks, national plans and programmes related to persons with disabilities. Thailand has indicated that while victim assistance effort is implemented largely by the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (MOSDHS) and the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), the Thailand Mine Action Centre (TMAC) remains active as a coordinator among relevant stakeholders to ensure victim assistance efforts are carried out successfully.

Developing and implementing measurable, realistic and time-bound national action plan (Action #33)

5. The Committee observed that Thailand reported implementing the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan for Health Care System Development for Persons with Disabilities and the 2017-2021 National Development Plan for the Quality of Life of the Disabled to meet the needs of persons with disabilities. Thailand also reported allocating budgets for the implementation of the these and other relevant plans, some of which are reported as follows:

- a) approximately \$8 million allocated to Provincial Disability Service Centres (DSCs) in 2020;
- b) \$159 million provided for interest-free loans to be provided to self-employed persons with disabilities and for their caregivers, through the Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities;
- c) the Fund for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities has provided approximately \$16.5 million to support self-rehabilitation of persons with disabilities and their families in 2019;
- d) the MOSDHS has spent \$289,000 for renovation of 462 houses of persons with disabilities;
- e) \$128,800 allocated for sign language interpreters on an annual basis;
- f) \$364,000 allocated for assistive devices, tricycle on an annual basis; and
- g) \$1.44 million allocated to personal assistance since 2011 to present.

6. The Committee would welcome an electronic copy of the 2017-2021 Strategic Plan for Health Care System Development for Persons with Disabilities and the 2017-2021 National Plan on Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.

7. The Committee would also welcome further information on inclusion of gender and diversity of mine victims in the two plans and the degree of progress in their implementations.

Removing barriers including physical, social, cultural, political, attitudinal and communication barriers to access such services (Action #33)

8. The Committee observed that Thailand reported progress concerning physical accessibility of services such as public buses, train stations and subsidised public transports and taxis. The Committee would welcome further information on progress which may have been made in the removal of social, cultural, political, attitudinal and communication barriers in 2019.

Applying multi-sectoral efforts to ensure that the needs and rights of mine victims are effectively addressed in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Action #34)

9. The Committee observed that Thailand reported that the MOPH, the MOSDHS, and the National Institute for Emergency Medicine (NIEM) along with TMAC are directly engaged in victim assistance efforts at policy, programme and coordination levels as per their respective mandates. Thailand reported that victim assistance provisions have been integrated into different legal frameworks pertinent to the rights and needs of persons with disabilities in line with Thailand's obligations under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Access to first aid and ongoing emergency medical care (Action #36)

10. The Committee observed that Thailand reported that TMAC has been working with the NIEM to ensure the availability of on-site emergency medical services, as a result deminers have become well-prepared for on-site emergency medical treatments and NIEM ensures access to hospitals, with professionally trained and equipped to treat explosive (trauma) injuries.

Developing national referral mechanism (Action #37)

11. The Committee observed that Thailand reported having a directory of services which is made available online by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities as well as a referral mechanism within its healthcare system. The Committee would welcome further information on referral mechanism for broader services including social, economic and psychological services in Thailand.

Access to rehabilitation services including physiotherapy, assistive devices and occupational therapy (Action #38)

12. The Committee observed that Thailand reported that rehabilitation services are provided through the Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) with participation of local administration to promote the health and quality of life of persons with disabilities including through 15 hospitals in four regions. Thailand reported that rehabilitation services are also made available by 2,414 DSC in 77 provinces, aiming to reintegrate persons with disabilities into the community. Thailand also indicated that prostheses are provided and repaired free of charge and they are provided by provided by Foundation of H.R.H the Princess Mother, and the Sirindhorn National Medical Rehabilitation Institute.
13. Thailand reported that persons with disabilities living in remote areas are provided with physical rehabilitation assistance through mobile services and in addition district hospitals regularly send out physiotherapist to provide homebased therapy to persons with disability and follow up progress of their rehabilitation after they are discharged from the hospital. Village health volunteers also make a routine visit to their house for routine check.
14. The Committee would welcome further information on the availability of occupational therapy and on the number of mine victims (girls, women, boys, men) that have benefited from rehabilitation services in 2019.

Access to psychological and psychosocial services including peer-to-peer support (Action #38)

15. The Committee observed that Thailand reported progress in meeting psychological and psychosocial needs, as follows:
- a) psychological support is made available through the 2,414 DSCs in 77 provinces;
 - b) psychological support is also made available through the CBR projects;
 - c) each provincial hospital has psychiatrist and social workers to help disabled persons who are mentally affected by the accidents. Psychiatrists conduct routine visits to the houses of persons with disabilities to check on their mental health;
 - d) each year, two teams of professionals and volunteers at each community learning centre provide service to at least 500 persons with disabilities to bring people in the communities closer together and offer opportunities for persons with disabilities to participate in the community's activities;
 - e) peer to peer support has been promoted to meet the psychosocial needs of mine victims and other persons with disabilities; and
 - f) the Mental Health Act was amended in 2019 with strengthened provisions on aspects such as rehabilitation, protection of patients' privacy and promoting persons with disabilities' rights to employment opportunities.
16. The Committee would welcome additional information on progress made in providing or strengthening peer to peer support in 2019, and information on the number of mine victims that have been benefited from psychological and psychosocial supports in 2019.

Access to social and economic inclusion services, including in rural and remote areas (Action #39)

17. The Committee observed that Thailand reported providing social and economic services to persons with disabilities with the aim to improve their quality of life, as follows:

- a) there are several legal frameworks regulating support for employment, pensions, loans, revenue exemption and rehabilitation support in favour of social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities;
- b) all persons with disabilities have access to free healthcare at any public hospitals;
- c) vocational trainings are available for persons with disabilities through eight Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Centres in each region of the country in various fields, both short and long-term courses with duration of 6 months to 1 year, to increase physical, social and vocational skills of persons with disability;
- d) all persons with disabilities registered with the MOSDHS receive an allowance of approximately \$33 per month;
- e) persons with disabilities can apply for interest-free loan of \$1,922 and \$32,260 if applied as a group;
- f) there are 5,474 persons with disabilities employed in the government sector and 65,978 in the private sectors;
- g) tax exemption is applicable to persons with disabilities, caregivers, and employers who hire persons with disabilities and provide accessibility for them;
- h) renovation of 462 houses of persons with disabilities;
- i) in accordance with the Education Provision for Persons with Disabilities (2002), persons with disabilities are provided with free tuition up to higher education in public universities that provides courses suitable for persons with disabilities and children with disabilities have options to join in regular schools or get enrolled into specialised schools as per their needs;
- j) persons with disabilities can request for personal assistance service for a period of one year. In 2019 there were 11,417 personal assistants in the service; and
- k) in 2019, 35 mine victims in 7 mine affected provinces were provided livelihood assistance directly by TMAC.

18. The Committee would welcome further information on mechanisms in place to measure and track the provision of socio-economic services to mine survivors through the above-mentioned integrated efforts, and information on the number of mine survivors that have benefited from such supports annually.

Taking measure for safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risks and emergencies (Action #40)

19. The Committee observed that Thailand reported implementing a Disaster Management Plan for Persons with Disabilities, and that the Service Centres for Persons with Disabilities are trained to act for protection and safety of persons with disabilities in case of disaster in line with Action Plan for Disaster Management. The Committee would welcome an electronic copy of the plan.

Strengthening inclusion and participation of mine victims and their representative organisations in all matters that affect them (Action #41)

20. The Committee observed that Thailand reported that every persons with disabilities can participate in social activities in accordance with Article 20 (4) of Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act, and would welcome information on efforts invested to strengthen inclusion and participation of mine survivors and their representative organisations in relevant policies and programmes in 2019.

Challenges in implementation of Thailand's Victim Assistance Commitments

21. The Committee would welcome additional information on any key remaining challenges in victim assistance as well as any specific proposal Thailand may have on how the Committee and the

international community could be of further support to Thailand's efforts in fulfilling its victim assistance obligations.