

Republic of South Sudan

Nineteenth Meeting of the States Parties (19MSP) Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

15-19 November, THE HAGUE.

South Sudan's Victim Assistance Statement

Mr. President, Excellences, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to express my sincere gratitude for inviting me to this important meeting of the 19MSP of Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention taking place here in the Hague. I am pleased to have this opportunity to update you on progress that South Sudan has made with regards to its obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

- Mr. President, South Sudan has main-streamed Victim Assistance into policies and programmes of the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare (MOGCSW), which is mandated to oversee the victim assistance program and its integration into broader national plans. This Ministry is the lead ministry in South Sudan on issues related to persons with disabilities. We at the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) work closely with Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare to ensure the integration of Victim Assistance into broader policies and programmes. As part of our joint efforts, we co-chair an inter-agency monthly coordination meeting.
- The NMAA with other partners such as Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPD), Union of Physically Disabled Persons, Leprosy Mission, Landmine Victim Association and the South Sudan Network of Women with Disability worked in close cooperation with the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare in developing national disability and inclusion policy 2015 and national social protection policy framework, both of which includes Victim Assistance provisions.
- South Sudan has developed a National Disability Plan of Action with financial support from European Union and expert support of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) of the AP Mine Ban Convention in August 2020. The Plan has been submitted to Council of Ministers for approval. This process has been interrupted by COVID 19 Pandemic but we are closely following to secure the approval. The development of this plan was done with full consultation with and inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities and landmine/ERW victims from all the 10 states of South Sudan. Taking into consideration gender and diversity including representatives of local organizations from the affected regions and the capital. Allow me to express our gratitude to those who have contributed

in this regard. We are also thankful to our international partners such as the OVCI Rehabilitation Centre, the ICRC, the South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms, the ICBL, the UNMAS, Humanity & Inclusion and UNDP for their contributions and support in drafting and developing the plan. South Sudan is especially thankful to the European Union for its generous support enabling us to host an inclusive national stakeholder dialogue to develop the plan, and our gratitude goes to the Implementation Support Unit of the AP Mine Ban Convention for their valuable specialists support in drafting and developing our first-national inclusive plan of action. We are expecting the plan to get approved soon. And taking this opportunity, I would like to call on our international partners, the European Union, the UN agencies, and the States Parties in a position to assist, to support us in implementing this plan. We are not in a position to achieve its objectives without your cooperation and assistance.

Mr President,

- South Sudan is also making progress towards the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, The chairperson of the specialized committee on human rights at the national parliament has updated the document and it is now on the list for approval, however, due to COVID 19 pandemic, the process of approvals has been delayed.
- The Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare has trained some of its staffs to provided psycho-social support to vulnerable people, landmine victims and people with disabilities but they are not enough to cover all the ten states of South Sudan.
- Persons with disabilities/landmine victims association are supported with small grand by Humanity Inclusion (HI) to run income generating activities but the funds are not enough.
- The National Ministry of General Education is promoting the rights of all in education by enrolling children with disabilities and ensures emphasis on accessibility to basic services by bringing in sustainable policies, laws and regulation that supports the disable people in line with the national Disability Inclusive policy 2015.
- South Sudan -National Mine Action Strategic Plan 2018-2021 includes a section on gender, focusing on how different gender and age groups are affected by mines and ERW and have specific and varying needs and priorities including collection of data disaggregated by sex and age.
- South Sudan National Humanitarian response plan/disaster mitigation, preparedness and management policy consider the needs of persons with disabilities. The humanitarian response targets hard to reach locations and enables delivery of quality integrated services to vulnerable population including persons with disabilities/landmine victims.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to point out some of the challenges that South Sudan encounters in relation to our efforts to address the needs of landmine/ERW victims:

- South Sudan continued to record increase on the number of new mine/ERW accident. In total there are 35 mine and UXO victims recorded in 2021, 28 injured and 7 are killed. Among the injured there are 4men, 5 women, 7 boys and 12girls. Among the killed there 0 men, 1 women, 6 boys and 0 girls.

However, the total number of AP mine victims is expected to increase if needs assessment is conducted.

- Lack of funding to conduct needs assessment for the mine/ERW victims in South Sudan.
- Insecurity still continues to hamper VA activities in South Sudan hence affecting people with disabilities who are caught up by conflict.
- COVID 19 pandemic has also contributed to the delay of service delivery to the vulnerable population who are in hard to reach locations.
- Services such as psychosocial support, medical and social inclusion are extremely limited and physical rehabilitation to mine/ERW survivors and persons with disabilities are inadequate in South Sudan.
- The service providers are limited and are concentrated within the Capital Juba that cannot be accessed by many victims living the rural areas
- The national capacities to manage VA activities is extremely limited – we are glad that one the themes of this meeting is – national capacity building – and we look forward to your cooperation and assistance in this regard with South Sudan – Mr. President. In conclusion Victim Assistance is one of the most neglected pillar of mine action in South Sudan since South Sudan join the mine ban convention in 2011. But South Sudan remains fully committed to uphold the rights of mine victims.

In conclusion, Mr. President, Excellences, dear partners, allow me to once again to express South Sudan's sincere thanks to our partners and to also appeal for much-needed further cooperation and assistance to enable South Sudan to implement its VA Action Plan.

Thank you,

Mike Rashid Fulla Obaldo,

South Sudan