

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION

SRI LANKA

STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION – VICTIM ASSISTANCE

COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE

(Italy, Slovenia, Uganda (Chair) and Zambia)

Intersessional Meetings

19-21 June 2023

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

Mine casualties

3. Sri Lanka reported 3 casualties including 1 boy and 2 men injured in 2022. Sri Lanka reported that approximately there are 600 mine survivors in the country. Sri Lanka also reported a total of 2,900 mine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) casualties between 1985 to 2022.
4. The Committee recalls that in 2022 Sri Lanka had reported a total of 1,716 mine and ERW victims, and it would welcome a clarification or additional information on the different statistics provided concerning casualties.
5. Sri Lanka also reported that the National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) has initiated a survey to identify the victims in northern, eastern and north-central provinces through which 403 mine and ERW victims were identified by the end of 2022. Sri Lanka reported that the survey, in addition to disaggregating data by gender, age and disability, assists in assessing the needs of the victims.

VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACTIONS:

Strengthen partnerships and integrate victim assistance into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks and designation of a government entity to oversee the integration (Actions #1, #6 and #33)

6. Sri Lanka reported that the NMAC holds the responsibility of coordinating victim assistance implementation, and it has designated an officer to ensure coordinated efforts with national stakeholders.
7. Sri Lanka reported progress in engagement of the Ministry of Health's (MoH) disaster preparedness and response division, non-communicable diseases unit and directorate of youth, elderly and disabled in victim assistance efforts.
8. Sri Lanka also reported that integration of victim assistance into relevant national frameworks, such as the National Disability Policy that provides a comprehensive and progressive and holistic framework for equalisation of opportunity for persons with disabilities. Victim assistance is also considered in the new national law on disability that has been developed to ensure the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD).

Develop and implement measurable, realistic and time-bound national action plan (Actions #2 and #33)

9. Sri Lanka reported implementing the National Action Plan on the Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which was being updated in consultation with persons with disabilities and landmine survivors. Sri Lanka also reported that a strategy for mental health was being developed and that the draft draws on the experiences of the landmine survivors and others in rural areas who have been exposed to a stressful and traumatic event.
10. The Committee would welcome receiving an electronic copy of the National Action Plan on the Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

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

11. Sri Lanka reported on efforts to ensure that mine victims are not discriminated against, and that their concerns are considered in broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks.
12. The Committee would welcome further information on efforts made to remove barriers including physical, social, cultural, political, attitudinal and communication barriers that hinder full inclusion and participation of landmine survivors and persons with disabilities.

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)

13. Sri Lanka reported applying a holistic approach to ensure the integration of victim assistance into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks and on efforts to ensure the inclusion of victim assistance into the CRPD implementation mechanisms and policies. Sri Lanka also reported applying a multi-sectoral approach by engaging various ministries and other national stakeholders such as the Ministry of Health.
14. Sri Lanka reported that the Ministry of Social Service (MOSS) is the lead Ministry in matters pertaining to persons with disabilities, while other ministries such as the MOH, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Defense (MOD) are involved in disabilities and assistance to victims.

Establish or strengthen of a centralised database / national information management system (Actions #9 and #35)

15. Sri Lanka reported the development of a hospital-based injury surveillance system by the MOH, with the aim to register all accidents reported to hospitals, including accidents due to mines and ERW. Sri Lanka reported that the non-communicable disease unit of the MOH explores the possibility of incorporating mine injuries as a specific category to its surveillance system.
16. Sri Lanka also reported that NMAC continued to maintain a database on mine and ERW victims and that a survey has been undertaken in Northern, Eastern and North-Central provinces, to verify the information in the database which identified 403 victims in five districts as of the end of 2022.

17. The Committee would welcome further information on the integration of data on mine victims registered by NMAC into the injury surveillance system or another relevant national centralised database.

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

18. Sri Lanka reported that the needs of mine victims have been integrated into national health policies and programmes.

19. The Committee would welcome information on the number of mine victims that have benefited from health services in 2022. The Committee would also welcome information on integration of the needs of mine victims into broader healthcare policies and programmes.

Developing national referral mechanism (Action #37)

20. The Committee would welcome information on the existence or progress achieved in developing a national referral mechanism and directory of services, to ensure mine victims and other persons with disabilities access to services.

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

21. Sri Lanka reported on availability of rehabilitation services, which are delivered by following public hospitals, to everyone in need of rehabilitation support including mine victims:

- Ragama Rheumatology & Rehabilitation Hospital
- Digana Rehabilitation Hospital
- Maliban Rehabilitation Hospital
- Jayanthipura Rehabilitation Hospital
- Kandagolla Rehabilitation Hospital

22. Sri Lanka reported on efforts to upgrade rehabilitation services in Northern and Eastern provinces, including by undertaking major policy developments that includes the adoption of an Essential Service Package, a National Guideline of Rehabilitation Services and adaptation of WHO's global assistive devices list to Sri Lanka. Sri Lanka further reported on efforts to improve Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR).

23. The Committee would welcome information on availability of or plans to make occupational therapy available to mine victims in Sri Lanka.

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

24. Sri Lanka reported on the availability of psychological support, with psychiatrists, mental health medical officers and reported that this support is offered in all districts in the northern province, to ensure diagnostic, treatment, counselling and referral, where some NGOs also provide counselling services.

25. Sri Lanka reported that the MOH has developed a National Mental Health Strategy to address mental health, including for persons with disabilities and mine survivors. Sri Lanka had also reported that mental health is a well-established service in the Northern province and efforts have been made to strengthen the service to meet the needs.

26. The Committee would welcome information on availability of or plan to provide peer to peer support to mine victims, in complement to the mental health services available.

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

27. Sri Lanka reported that in 2022 NMAC has allocated Rs 05Mn to provide immediate assistance to the mine and ERW victims such as livelihood assistance, water and sanitation facility, artificial limbs and arms, clutches and wheelchairs, spectacles and other essential supports.

28. The Committee would welcome further information about mine survivors that have been provided with socio-economic assistance.

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

29. The Committee would welcome information on progress in strengthening measures to ensure the safety and protection of mine victims in situations of risks and emergencies.

Strengthening inclusion and participation of mine victims and their representative organisations in all matters that affect them (Actions #4 and #41)

30. Sri Lanka reported on the inclusion of mine victims and their representative organisations in development of relevant policies and programmes, including in the drafting process of the new law and in updating the national plan on disabilities.

31. Sri Lanka also reported that National Action Plan on the Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been amended to require the National Disability Council to consult with persons with disabilities and their representative organisations in planning, executing and monitoring of public decision-making processes

CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS:

Demonstrate high levels of national ownership, including [...] by making financial and other commitments to implementation (Action #1)

32. Sri Lanka reported progress in drafting a new law that includes victim assistance as well as the allocation of 5 million Rupees in 2022 to assist mine and ERW victims.

Ensure that the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men are considered (Action #3)

33. Sri Lanka reported that the government recognises that women, girls, boys and men may be affected differently by mine/ERW contamination due to their roles and responsibilities and might therefore have specific and varying needs and priorities, therefore, the Government of Sri Lanka makes every effort to ensure gender and diversity considerations are taken into account in the planning, implementation and monitoring phases of mine clearance.

34. Sri Lanka also reported that new data on mine victims that are being collected by a survey, is disaggregated to consider diverse needs and gender.

Challenges in implementation of Victim assistance Commitments (Action #8)

35. The Committee would welcome information on other challenges including in areas of integration of mine victims into broader frameworks and mine victims access to socio-economic services, and information on how the international community including the Committee on Victim Assistance can assist Sri Lanka to fulfil its victim assistance commitments under the Convention and the OAP.

The Oslo Action Plan country reporting tracker
Victim Assistance
Sri Lanka

Actions	Indicators						Additional information request by the Committee (deadline 9 August)
		2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	
#33	# States Parties that have designated a government entity to coordinate victim assistance activities						
	# States Parties that have national action plans in place containing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound objectives and related indicators						The Committee would welcome receiving an electronic copy of the National Action Plan on the Equalization of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Committee would welcome further information on efforts made to remove barriers including physical, social, cultural, political, attitudinal and communication barriers that hinder full inclusion and participation of landmine survivors and persons with disabilities.
#34	# States Parties that report that they include mine victims in relevant national policy and support frameworks						
#35	# States Parties that include victims of anti-personnel mines in disability data systems						The Committee would welcome further information on integration of data on mine victims that had been registered by NMAC into injury surveillance system or another relevant centralised database.
	# States Parties that disaggregate victim data by gender, age and disability						
#36	# States Parties reporting on efforts to ensure an efficient and effective emergency response to mine accidents						The Committee would welcome information on the number of mine victims that have benefited from health services in 2022. The Committee would also welcome information on integration of the needs of mine victims into broader healthcare policies and programmes.
#37	# States Parties that report having a national referral mechanism						The Committee would welcome information on the existence or progress achieved in developing a national referral mechanism and directory of services, to ensure mine victims and other persons with disabilities access to services.
	# States Parties that report having a directory of services in place						
#38	# States Parties reporting on efforts to increase the availability and accessibility of comprehensive rehabilitation services						
	# States Parties reporting on efforts to increase the availability of psychological and psychosocial support services						
	# States Parties that have established peer-to-peer services within their national healthcare system						The Committee would welcome information on availability of or plan to provide peer to peer support to mine victims, in complement to the mental health services available.
#39	# States Parties reporting on efforts to remove barriers to the social and economic inclusion of mine victims						The Committee would welcome further information mine survivors that have been provided with socio-economic assistance.
#40	# States Parties that report integrating protection of mine survivors in their humanitarian response and preparedness plans						The Committee would welcome information on progress in strengthening measures to ensure the safety and protection of mine victims in situations of risks and emergencies.

#41	# States Parties that report that they include victim representatives or their organizations in victim assistance planning at the national and local level						
CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS							
#1	# States Parties that report, having included Convention implementation activities in national development plans, poverty reduction strategies, humanitarian response plans and national strategies for the inclusion of persons with disabilities, where appropriate						
	% mine-affected States Parties that report making national financial commitments to the implementation of their obligations under the Convention						
#3	# mine-affected States Parties that report having evidence-based, costed and time-bound national strategies and work plans in place						
	# women in States Parties' delegations attending Convention meetings						
#8	# States Parties that prepare their Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting						
	# States Parties that report on progress and challenges during formal and informal meetings						The Committee would welcome information on challenges encountered to assist victims and information on how the international community including the Committee on Victim Assistance can assist Sri Lanka to fulfil its victim assistance commitments under the Convention and the OAP.