

Statement for the Siem Reap-Angkor Summit Fifth Review Conference to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, Cambodia, 25-29 November 2024

Mine-Free World 2024

Excellency the President, Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the South Sudan delegation, I would like to express my sincere thanks for inviting us to share the progress made by the government in its efforts to fulfill its commitments to assist mine victims as agreed upon in the Oslo Action Plan. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Your Excellency the President, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Committee on Victim Assistance Slovenia, Burkina Faso, the Netherlands, and Zambia.

South Sudan has been greatly affected by mines and explosive remnants of war that left after many years of conflict, which ended in 2005, coupled with the fighting in 2013 and 2016.

Since 2011, when South Sudan became a state party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, it has committed to uphold the rights of mine survivors through collaborative efforts with organizations of persons with disabilities, key government ministries, UN Agencies, INGOs, CSOs, and NGOs.

Victim Assistance has been mandated to the Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, which works in collaboration with the National Mine Action Authority and other government institutions to coordinate, monitor, and report progress and challenges on victim assistance in the country.

From **2004** to **2024**, South Sudan has registered a total of **5,317** survivors, with **3,861** injured (**1,557** men, **250** women, **666** boys, **148** girls, and **1,240** unknown) and **1,456** killed (**469** men, **116** women, **236** boys, **62** girls, and **573** unknown). The casualty rate continues to increase due to the growing population (returnees, refugees, and flood-affected areas) moving into new areas with risks of mines and ERW posing greater danger to them.

The National Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare is seeking support to establish a national disability database to integrate data on all person with disability to ensure efficient service delivery to all persons with disabilities.

As a State Party to the Convention, South Sudan has committed to continuing to advocate for improving the quality of life for survivors by establishing the National Action Plan 2020 for disability inclusion, supported by the EU through the ISU. This plan provides a roadmap for advocacy for the ratification of the UNCRRPD. South Sudan is working to finalize another comprehensive disability action plan and draft disability bill. These policy framework and legislation will inform decisions, plans, and address concerns of persons with disabilities to protect and promote their rights.

There is emphasis to build capacity for national ownership of the government institutions; parliament and survivors to ensure comprehensive disability inclusion in all sector .Many institutions are not informed about disability concerns and how to mainstream disability in the broader programs.

Furthermore, efforts are in place to Increased survivors' participation with the union of person with disability, Organization of person with disability and disability-rights activists at all levels.

South Sudan seeks to strengthen coordination mechanisms, mobilize resources, and obtain technical assistance to support survivors and their families. Through this mechanism, relevant government ministries, state governments, INGOs, NGOs, and UN agencies work collaboratively to implement projects on victim assistance.

These activities include:

- Provision of emergency medical care to victims, with some survivors living with items in their body parts seeking further medical support that is very expensive to acquire.
- Physical rehabilitation, mental health, and psychological support.
- Socio-economic support (implementation of cash transfer projects), data collection, provision of educational assistance to school-going children, and addressing the needs and rights of persons with disabilities.
- National flood and disaster preparedness action plan approval is ongoing.

The challenges facing victim assistance include:

- Disability is not a government priority, leading to insufficient funding.
- limited donor funding.
- Influx of refugees and South Sudanese returnees from neighboring countries.
- Insecurities in some parts of the country.
- Continued flooding in most parts, hindering mobility to other parts of the country.

I acknowledge the EU support and other donors that have made it possible for the Victim Assistance Coordinator to participate in the NDM, intercessional meetings, MSP, Global VA Conference meetings from the fourth review conference to date.

Our participation in international conferences has been a source of capacity building, empowering us to learn from the experiences of other countries, share similar activities in our country context, and improve our annual Article 7 transparency reports.

Additionally, EU support has enabled South Sudan survivors to participate in this 5RC, which would not have been possible without this support. We seek continued sponsorships to strengthen the survivor capacity network with civil society coalitions and strive for opportunities to join different platforms, promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in South Sudan.

South Sudan's Victim Assistance program requires more financial and technical support to ensure survivors attain the highest level of participation and improved service provision to all states of the country.

Thank you.