

Thank you, Mr. President.

Amputee Self Help Network Uganda is pleased to take the floor on behalf of the 13 member organizations of the Gender and Diversity in Mine Action Working Group.

The Landmine Monitor 2024 has the photo of a young Cambodian girl Srey on the cover this year. Srey was only four years old when she was injured by an explosive device. It wasn't until she received a prosthetic that she was able to go to school. As she grows, she will need new prosthetics and support from her peers to help counter the double discrimination of being a girl with disabilities. But as you can see from the photo – she is thriving. That is the potential of gender and diversity inclusive victim assistance. That is what the Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan must firmly commit to and strengthen.

People's experiences, roles and responsibilities, and access to resources, including basic services, are shaped by a combination of individual characteristics and environmental or societal factors. These influences also affect individuals' access to decision-making power and information, as well as the barriers and risks they face. In countries affected by explosive ordnance, intersecting diversity factors such as gender, age, disability, ethnicity, or displacement status, can lead to increased vulnerability for the civilian population.

Landmines often have different impacts on women, girls, boys, and men, both in terms of who is more likely to be a direct victim (boys and men) or an indirect victim (women, girls, and boys), as well as the barriers that exist to accessing services – for example women face greater barriers in many contexts to accessing physical rehabilitation services, whereas men face barriers to accessing psychosocial support – in both cases stigma and gender norms play their part.

We know that victim assistance is an ongoing and long-term commitment, with responsibilities toward all victims – be they women or men, girls or boys, from any background. True progress will be achieved when victims enjoy equal opportunities and have access to good quality services that are inclusive, accessible and sustainable for everyone. Every victim assistance related activity therefore needs to take gender and diversity into account so that it meets the needs of the unique individuals involved.

We are pleased to see that the Siem Reap Angkor Action Plan builds on the progress made under the Oslo Action towards inclusive Victim Assistance. The Victim Assistance Actions make frequent mention of accessibility and a variety of diversity factors including age, sex and disability. This clear and inclusive language must remain in the action plan to ensure that women, girls, boys and men all receive the appropriate services they require. The Action Plan also recognises the value of including Survivor Organizations, in line with IMAS 13.10 on Victim Assistance, which also emphasizes the need for an inclusive approach.

We also welcome the references to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the recognition that services must be age, gender and disability sensitive in the Action Plan. Finally, the Action Plan also recognises the importance of disaggregated data as well as the protection of personal data, recognizing that behind each number there is a unique human story and individual needs. Since the Oslo Action Plan, we have made strides towards improving inclusive victim assistance and strong commitment to inclusive Victim Assistance in the Siem Reap Action Plan will help us go further.