

**Statement by Thailand
on Victim Assistance
at the Fourth Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
on 11 September 2013

Mr. President,

Thailand has committed to providing the best possible assistance and care to victims of these inhumane weapons, including those who became persons with disabilities as a result. After accumulating more than ten years of experience with victim assistance (VA), Thailand has adapted our efforts in order to focus on what we believe to be the following effective approaches.

Firstly, to ensure the sustainability of our VA programme, Thailand has incorporated all aspects of victim assistance, including emergency health care services and support for persons with disabilities, into relevant and existing national programmes. In Thailand, the number of mine and ERW survivors is less than one percent of the total number of persons with disabilities. It was, therefore, possible to guarantee continuous support and benefits to mine and ERW victims by simply integrating victim assistance into existing national policies, plans and frameworks. At the same time, this also became an effective way to prevent survivors from being marginalized.

Secondly, to guarantee the rights and benefits of mine and ERW survivors, we found that legal mechanisms were critically needed. Therefore, over the years, we became aware of the important role that the development of various laws played in support of our VA programme. In our experience, these legal instruments have helped to serve as a comprehensive framework of rights-based laws with provisions guaranteeing the rights of all persons to access relevant welfare, public services and appropriate assistance without discrimination.

Finally, closer cooperation with our partner organizations is needed. We believe that specialized NGOs and community-based volunteer groups are often best-placed and most responsive to the specific needs of the local community as well as those of the special needs groups. The Government is now working to support the work of these groups, including by providing financial support.

Mr. President,

Thailand continues to strive for a world safe for innocent civilians. While that goal has yet to be realized, Thailand remains fully committed to providing the best possible victim assistance programmes to mine and ERW survivors.

Thank you.
