



ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)

INTERVENTION

Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
Vientiane, Lao PDR

AGENDA ITEM 9(A)- VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

ARMAC welcomes the report of the Coordinators on Victim Assistance, Niger and Japan, and expresses its appreciation for their work in supporting the implementation of **Article 5**. For ARMAC, victim assistance remains a central pillar of humanitarian mine action and an area where regional cooperation can make a practical contribution to stronger and more sustainable national responses.

Mr. President,

Drawing from our work with ASEAN Member States, ARMAC would like to highlight three considerations for strengthening victim assistance.

FIRST – victim assistance should be survivor-centred, evidence-based and integrated into sustainable national systems.

The needs of victims extend well beyond immediate medical care. Comprehensive assistance requires access to physical rehabilitation, psychological and mental health support, as well as social and economic inclusion.

These services are most sustainable when victim assistance is integrated into broader national systems, including health, rehabilitation, disability, social protection and other relevant public services, while ensuring that the specific needs and rights of victims remain visible and addressed.

ARMAC has supported this approach through regional research and feasibility studies across affected ASEAN Member States, with particular attention to physical rehabilitation and mental health and psychosocial support. This work has contributed to stronger evidence for service mapping, planning and more inclusive responses.

SECOND – mental health and psychosocial support should remain an integral part of comprehensive victim assistance.

Physical rehabilitation alone cannot address the full and long-term impact experienced by survivors, their families and affected communities. Through our regional victim assistance programme, ARMAC has strengthened psychosocial support capacities among frontline service providers through a regional Training-of-Trainers programme and the development of practical guidance materials.

Our experience demonstrates that sustainable psychosocial support requires more than training individuals. It requires national capacity, effective referral pathways, accessible services and stronger connections between mine action, health and social systems.

THIRD – survivors should be participants in victim assistance, not only beneficiaries of it.

Policies and programmes are stronger when the experiences, priorities and perspectives of survivors are meaningfully reflected in their design and implementation. ARMAC promotes meaningful survivor participation through national and regional consultations and through the ASEAN Regional Victim Assistance Network, providing a platform for national authorities, practitioners, survivors and partners to exchange experience and strengthen regional cooperation.

Together with the **ASEAN Regional Victim Assistance Guideline** and regional evidence generated through our work, these mechanisms help translate lessons and experience into more sustainable institutional practice.

Mr. President,

From our regional experience, ARMAC sees three priorities going forward: strengthening national systems rather than creating parallel services; investing in rehabilitation and mental health and psychosocial support as essential components of comprehensive assistance; and ensuring the meaningful participation of survivors in decisions that affect their lives.

International and regional cooperation can support these priorities by connecting nationally identified needs with relevant technical expertise, capacity development, knowledge and resources.

ARMAC remains committed to working with ASEAN Member States, States Parties, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, civil society, survivor organisations and other partners to strengthen the **availability, accessibility and sustainability of comprehensive victim assistance**.

Ultimately, our collective efforts must ensure that survivors, their families and affected communities are able not only to access the support they need, but also to participate fully and with dignity in their societies.

Thank you, Mr. President.