



# To Promote the Establishment of Regional Victim Assistance Network

*under the project  
Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States*





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We would like to express our deep appreciation to the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for hosting this significant event and for the invaluable collaboration of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, particularly the Department of Rehabilitation, in co-organizing this National Consultative Meeting. Their commitment to addressing the needs of explosive ordnance (EO) victims is commendable and essential for the success of this initiative.

Our sincere thanks also go to the technical partners and stakeholders who actively participated and contributed their expertise to this meeting. This includes representatives from government ministries and agencies, national mine action authorities and centers, international and national non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies such as UNDP, and research and academic institutions. Their diverse perspectives and experiences are vital for developing a comprehensive and effective Regional VAN.

We especially acknowledge the explosive ordnance survivors and victims who shared their personal experiences, providing powerful insights into the challenges and needs for victim assistance. Their voices are at the heart of this initiative and serve as a constant reminder of the importance of our collective efforts.

Finally, we express our deep appreciation to the ARMAC Steering Committee for their continued guidance and support throughout the development and execution of this important project. Their leadership has been instrumental in ensuring the progress and success of this endeavor.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Consultative Meeting on Promoting the Establishment of Regional Victim Assistance Network was held in a hybrid format on July 8, 2022, at the Shwe San Eain Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. Co-hosted by ARMAC and the General Department of Rehabilitation of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement of Myanmar, the meeting aimed to advance the establishment of a regional platform to enhance victim assistance for explosive ordnance (EO) victims across ASEAN Member States. This meeting was the fourth in a series of national consultations, following successful events in Cambodia, Viet Nam, and Thailand.

The meeting brought together over 60 participants, both in-person and online, representing a wide array of national and international stakeholders involved in victim assistance, including government agencies, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, donors, research institutions, and, importantly, EO survivors. Participants engaged in robust discussions, sharing knowledge, best practices, and challenges related to victim assistance implementation in Myanmar. The discussions were guided by the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 13.10 and an integrated approach to victim assistance, ensuring a comprehensive perspective. A significant part of the meeting involved exploring the potential roles, responsibilities, coordination, and communication mechanisms for the proposed Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN).

### **Key outcomes of the National Consultative Meeting include:**

- **Enhanced understanding** among national stakeholders regarding the importance and potential contributions of a Regional VAN in supporting EO victims.
- **Identification of existing national victim assistance programs**, services, and associated challenges in Myanmar across various sectors, including data management, medical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic integration, and legal frameworks.
- **Valuable insights** from explosive ordnance survivors who shared their personal experiences and needs, highlighting the critical gaps in current support systems.
- **Initial mapping of potential roles and responsibilities** of different stakeholder groups within the Regional VAN, including government bodies, mine action authorities, NGOs, and international organizations.
- **Preliminary discussions on the structure** of the Regional VAN, considering aspects such as human resources, communication modes, and coordination systems.
- **Collection of country-level inputs** that will be synthesized to develop an initial draft of the Regional VAN Blueprint and its Terms of Reference.
- **Increased commitment** from national stakeholders to actively participate in the development and operationalization of the Regional VAN.

The insights and recommendations gathered during this National Consultative Meeting will be crucial in shaping the Regional VAN Blueprint, which will be further discussed at an upcoming Regional Consultative Meeting and subsequently finalized at a Regional Workshop. The establishment of the Regional VAN is envisioned as a significant step towards integrating victim assistance at the regional level, fostering knowledge sharing, facilitating resource mobilization, and collectively addressing the challenges in providing comprehensive support to EO victims in ASEAN Member States.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements .....	2
Executive Summary .....	3
1. Introduction .....	6
1.1 Project Overview And Context	
1.2 Report Objectives	
1.3 Link to Broader Project	
2. Background .....	7
2.1 ERW/Mine Context in ASEAN and Myanmar	
2.2 Project Inception And Purpose	
2.3 ARMAC Mandate And Involvement	
3. Meeting Overview .....	8
3.1 Objectives Of The Meeting	
3.2 Date, Time and Venue	
3.3 Format	
3.4 Opening Ceremony Summary	
4. Participants .....	10
4.1 Total Number of Participants	
4.2 Stakeholder Groups	
4.3 Geographical Representation	
4.4 Attendance Mode	
5. Technical and Thematic Discussions .....	12
5.1 Overview of National VA Programmes	
5.1.1 Government Stakeholders	
5.1.2 Non-Government Stakeholders	
5.2 Challenges and Gaps	
5.3 Survivor Testimonies	
5.4 Guidance: IMAS 13.10 and Integrated Approach to VA	



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

6. Regional VAN Discussion .....	17
6.1 Rationale	
6.2 Group Discussions	
6.3 Stakeholder Roles	
6.4 Communication	
7. Meeting Outcomes .....	19
7.1 National-Level Commitments	
7.2 Identified Challenges	
7.3 Action Points	
8. Good Practices and Successes .....	21
8.1 Positive Experiences	
8.2 Scalable Initiatives	
8.3 Partnerships and Innovation	
9. Lessons Learned .....	23
9.1 What Worked	
9.2 What to Improve	
9.3 Contextual Adjustments	
10. Recommendations .....	25
10.1 For National Stakeholders	
10.2 For ARMAC/Regional Actors	
10.3 For Technical and Funding Partners	
11. Way Forward .....	27
11.1 Immediate Next Steps	
11.2 Regional Consultations	
11.3 Timeline for Deliverables	
Conclusion .....	28

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Project Overview and Context

Southeast Asia faces a significant challenge due to heavy contamination of explosive ordnance (EO) stemming from past armed conflicts. Among the ASEAN Member States (AMS), Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam are identified as the most affected countries. This widespread contamination poses a continuous threat to the safety and well-being of people living in these regions, with the risk of EO explosions present at any time. The devastating consequences of these incidents often result in fatalities and severe injuries, leaving survivors with life-altering disabilities, including limb loss. The physical impairments, coupled with the psychological trauma of such experiences, profoundly impact the mental and social well-being of EO victims. In societies where being differently abled is often perceived as a limitation, EO victims and other persons with disabilities (PWDs) frequently encounter barriers to participating in economic and social opportunities, hindering their daily activities and full integration into society.

Recognizing the urgent need for comprehensive support for EO victims, the AMS, in collaboration with the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), initiated the project “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States”. This project, financed by the ASEAN–Korean Cooperation Fund (AKCF), commenced in January 2021 and is expected to conclude in June 2025. Its overarching goal is to strengthen victim assistance programs across the ASEAN region through various objectives, including the establishment of a Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN).

## 1.2. Objectives of the Report

This report serves to document the proceedings, discussions, and outcomes of the National Consultative Meeting held in Myanmar on July 8, 2022. Its primary objective is to provide a comprehensive summary of the national-level perspectives on victim assistance, including the existing programs, services, challenges, and the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders.

Furthermore, this report aims to capture the valuable insights shared by participants regarding the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and the potential contributions of Myanmar to this regional platform. The information presented herein will contribute to the broader project goal of enhancing victim assistance in ASEAN Member States.

## 1.3. Link to Broader Project Timeline

The National Consultative Meeting in Myanmar represents a crucial step in the initial phase of the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme” project. As outlined in the project plan, ARMAC is organizing five national consultative meetings in the most EO-contaminated ASEAN countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam. The meetings in Phnom Penh, Hanoi, and Bangkok preceded the Myanmar event. These national consultations are designed to gather country-specific inputs and foster discussions among key national VA stakeholders. The outputs from these meetings, including the identification of needs, best practices, and challenges, will be synthesized to develop an initial draft of the Regional VAN Blueprint, including its Terms of Reference. This draft will then be further discussed at a subsequent Regional Consultative Meeting, paving the way for its finalization at the first Regional Workshop. The establishment of the Regional VAN is the first objective of the project, with subsequent phases focusing on knowledge sharing, needs assessment, psychosocial support, and research.



## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1. ERW/Mine Context in ASEAN and Myanmar

The ASEAN region continues to bear a significant burden of explosive ordnance (EO) contamination, a lasting legacy of past armed conflicts. The presence of mines, cluster munitions, unexploded ordnance (UXO), abandoned ordnance, booby traps, other devices, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) poses a persistent and ever-present threat to communities living in affected areas.

Myanmar is recognized as one of the most heavily EO-contaminated countries within ASEAN, a direct consequence of the protracted conflicts it has experienced in recent years. The widespread contamination has led to tragic incidents resulting in deaths, injuries, and disabilities. Many survivors face severe physical, mental, and socio-economic challenges, which impede their ability to lead fulfilling lives and reintegrate into society.

This ongoing threat not only disrupts daily life but also significantly hampers the socio-economic development of affected communities. In this context, the urgent need for effective mine action and comprehensive victim assistance in Myanmar is critical. The development of long-term solutions to address these challenges remains essential for ensuring the safety, well-being, and social inclusion of those impacted by explosive ordnance.

### 2.2. Project Inception and Purpose

The “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States” project was conceived in response to the needs identified by AMS, particularly the EO-affected countries. These needs were highlighted during the Regional Workshop “Enhance Mine Action Knowledge and Promote Future Platforms for Mine Action Knowledge Sharing for ASEAN Member States,” hosted by ARMAC in November 2018. The project aims to address a critical gap in support for ERW (mine/UXO) victims in the ASEAN region. Its central purpose is to strengthen the overall assistance

provided to these victims by fostering regional cooperation and establishing sustainable support mechanisms. The national consultative meetings, including the one in Myanmar, serve as the initial stage of project implementation, focusing on the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN).



### 2.3. ARMAC's Mandate and Involvement

The project aligns directly with ARMAC's mandate and functions. ARMAC was established by ASEAN Leaders to enhance cooperation in addressing the humanitarian aspects of landmines and other ERW. Its core mandates include: enhancing awareness programs on the dangers of ERW, facilitating appropriate medical and rehabilitation assistance for ERW victims upon request from affected AMS, and assisting interested AMS in research and knowledge sharing on the effects of ERW and efforts to address them. The Victim Assistance project specifically falls under ARMAC's second and third mandates. ARMAC is actively working with various stakeholders, including government agencies, national authorities, UN agencies, NGOs, and research institutions, to achieve the project's objectives. Organizing the national consultative meetings is a key activity in fulfilling ARMAC's role in facilitating the establishment of the Regional VAN.



## 3. MEETING OVERVIEW



### 3.1. Objectives of the Meeting

The National Consultative Meeting in Myanmar had several key objectives centered around promoting the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN). Firstly, it aimed to provide a platform for relevant national networks and stakeholders, particularly those directly involved in supporting EO victims, to engage in detailed discussions on victim assistance implementation. Secondly, the meeting sought to share knowledge, best practices, and challenges encountered in providing assistance to EO victims within the Myanmar context. Thirdly, a crucial objective was to explore and map out the roles, responsibilities, coordination, and communication mechanisms necessary for the successful establishment and operation of the Regional VAN. The discussions were guided by the principles of the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 13.10 and an integrated approach to victim assistance, ensuring a holistic perspective on the needs of EO victims. Furthermore, the meeting aimed to provide an overview of the availability of victim assistance services in Myanmar and to amplify the voices and experiences of EO survivors.

### 3.2 Date, Time and Venue

The National Consultative Meeting was held on **Friday, July 8, 2022**, at the **Shwe San Eain Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar**. The event commenced in the morning session with the arrival and registration of participants, followed by the arrival of VIP guests and dignitaries. The opening ceremony formally began shortly thereafter, marking the start of a full day of discussions and collaboration. The meeting was designed to allow ample time for in-depth conversations, workshops, and breakout sessions. In the afternoon session, the meeting concluded with closing remarks and reflections on the outcomes of the day's discussions. To ensure inclusivity and effective participation, simultaneous translation into Myanmar's official language was provided throughout the meeting, enabling all attendees to engage fully in the proceedings.



### 3.3 Format

The National Consultative Meeting was conducted in a hybrid format, allowing for both in-person and online participation. This format enabled a broader range of stakeholders from across Myanmar and potentially the region to attend and contribute to the discussions, overcoming geographical limitations and ensuring inclusivity. The agenda included opening speeches and remarks, presentations from government and non-government stakeholders, a session dedicated to the voice of victims, and group discussions focused on the establishment of the Regional VAN. Breakout sessions were organized to facilitate focused discussions among different stakeholder groups.

### 3.4 Opening Ceremony Summary



The opening ceremony of the National Consultative Meeting was formally initiated with a warm welcome extended by the Master of Ceremonies to all participants, both in-person and online. **Dr. Thet Thet Khaing, the Union Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement**, delivered the opening speech, underscoring the critical importance of mine action and victim assistance. She highlighted the profound impact of conflict, particularly on children, and the persistent risks posed by explosive ordnance in the region.

Following her remarks, U Aung Tun Khaing, the Deputy Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, addressed the gathering. He emphasized the immense suffering endured by mine victims and stressed the importance of providing adequate treatment and support for both the victims and their families. He also highlighted

the significance of Myanmar hosting the Mine Ban Convention, reinforcing the country's commitment to advancing the cause of humanitarian mine action.



**Mr. Suonpraseth Prum, the Executive Director of ARMAC**, expressed his sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Korea for their generous financial support, and to the Union of Myanmar for co-hosting the meeting. He thanked all delegates for their participation and emphasized the importance of victim assistance in helping those affected by landmines reintegrate into mainstream society. He called for an active exchange of ideas and experiences, ensuring that no one is left behind in this critical effort.



**Ms. Chanthana Sengthong, Project Manager of ARMAC**, then presented an overview of the consultative meeting, outlining its objectives and expected outcomes. The ceremony concluded with a group photo of all participants, marking the beginning of a meaningful and productive dialogue.



## 4. PARTICIPANTS



### 4.1. Total Number

The National Consultative Meeting brought together **over 60 participants**, encompassing both individuals attending in person at the Shwe San Eain Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw and those participating online. This diverse group represented a broad spectrum of stakeholders actively involved in or supporting victim assistance efforts in Myanmar.

### 4.2 Stakeholder Groups

The National Consultative Meeting convened a broad and diverse group of stakeholders, reflecting a strong multi-sectoral approach to victim assistance and mine action. Participants represented key sectors across government, civil society, development partners, and affected communities. Stakeholder groups included:

- **Government Ministries and Agencies:**

Participants included senior representatives from the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Border Affairs, Ministry of Planning and Finance, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation,

Ministry of Transport and Communications, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Ethnic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Cooperative and Rural Development, and related departments such as Social Welfare, Rehabilitation, Public Health, Legal Affairs, General Administration, Central Statistics Organization, Education, Information, and the Myanmar Police Force.

- **National Mine Action Authorities and Centers:**

Government stakeholders engaged in the meeting included those with mandates in explosive ordnance risk reduction, coordination of victim assistance, and national-level mine action management.

- **International and National Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):**

Organizations contributing to the discussions included Exceed Worldwide, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Myanmar Red Cross Society, Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, and the Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, offering practical perspectives on service delivery, rehabilitation, and community engagement.



- **Dialogue Partner – Republic of Korea / ASEAN–Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF):**

The ASEAN–Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), as a key Dialogue Partner, plays a central role in supporting the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States.” The Republic of Korea’s partnership has been instrumental in enabling national consultations, including this meeting in Myanmar.

- **United Nations Agencies:**

UNDP was acknowledged as a technical partner under the project, contributing to the broader objectives of victim assistance and inclusive development in the region.

- **Academic and Research Institutions:**

Representation from the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education reflected the involvement of the research and academic sectors in advancing evidence-based victim assistance policies and practices.

- **Explosive Ordnance (EO) Survivors:**

Survivors including U Phoe Khaing, U Naing Zaw Htet, U Kyaw Min Htun, and Daw Tin Tin Hla provided powerful testimonies during the meeting, contributing essential insights into the real-life challenges and needs of EO-affected individuals and communities.

- **Supporters and Advocates for Victims:**

Caregivers and supporters, such as Daw Myint Wai, also participated, underscoring the importance of family and community-based support in the recovery and reintegration process.



### 4.3. Geographic Representation

The majority of participants were from national institutions and organizations based in Myanmar, primarily from Nay Pyi Taw and Yangon, which reflects the national scope of the consultative meeting. However, the involvement of ARMAC, as the organizing regional body, and the participation of international organizations brought valuable insights from a broader ASEAN perspective to the discussions. The hybrid format of the meeting ensured inclusivity by facilitating participation from individuals who might have faced travel constraints. This approach allowed for contributions from representatives not only from other parts of Myanmar but also from ASEAN member states, further enriching the dialogue and fostering cross-border collaboration.

### 4.4. Attendance Mode



The **hybrid format** of the meeting accommodated both in-person attendance at the Shwe San Eain Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw and virtual participation via online platforms. This allowed for a wider reach and ensured that stakeholders who could not travel were still able to contribute to the discussions and the overall objectives of the meeting. The opening ceremony and presentations were delivered in a manner accessible to both in-person and online attendees. The group discussion sessions also incorporated both modes of participation.

## 5. TECHNICAL AND THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS



The technical sessions of the National Consultative Meeting focused on providing an overview of the existing victim assistance programs and services in Myanmar, identifying the challenges and gaps in service provision, highlighting survivor testimonies, and considering relevant regional and global technical guidance.

### 5.1. Overview of National VA Programmes and Services

The meeting featured presentations from both government and non-government stakeholders, outlining their respective roles, programs, and services in supporting EO victims in Myanmar.

#### 5.1.1. Government Stakeholders

The session involving government stakeholders was moderated by U Aung Kyaw Moe, Director General of the Department of Rehabilitation. Panelists included representatives from various government departments, each highlighting their contributions to victim assistance.

- **Department of Rehabilitation (DoR):** U Swan Yi Ya, Director, provided an overview of the DoR, established in 2018, which plays a leading role in mine action in Myanmar since 2018.

The DoR supports areas affected by armed conflict, drug abuse, mine risk, and human trafficking. Key programs include providing financial support (200,000 Kyats per person) to mine victims since 2017, coordinating mine risk education, facilitating vocational skills training, and working with NGOs/INGOs for persons with disabilities. The establishment of Mine Risk Awareness Working Groups in several states and collaboration with the Department of Central Statistics for data on affected communities were also highlighted. Challenges include access to ethnic armed group-operated areas, transportation limitations, insufficient communication infrastructure, and a lack of specialized staff and expertise in explosive devices. Collaboration with local authorities, village leaders, religious leaders, and experienced groups like the Myanmar Police are explored as solutions.

- **Department of Public Health:** Dr. Than Naing Soe, Director, outlined the overall medical rehabilitation services in Myanmar, provided by the Department of Public Health, Department of Medical Services, and Department of Medical Research under the Ministry of Health. The Health Literacy Promotion Unit raises awareness, while a network of hospitals and health centers provides a range of services, from first aid to specialized rehabilitation.



National VA activities include prosthetic centers and hospitals, socio-economic and rehabilitation services, mobile prosthetic delivery, prosthetic production, medical first-aid, amputation surgeries, and production of assistive devices. Collaboration with international organizations like ICRC for prosthetic workshops and vocational training was noted. Challenges include limited transportation, limited assistance in border areas, complicated access to services, insufficient funding, difficulties in device maintenance, the need for standardized staff qualifications and modern equipment, and the need for enhanced psychosocial support and socio-economic reintegration. Recommendations include prioritizing mine risk education and enhancing accessibility of physical rehabilitation services.

- **Department of Social Welfare (DSW):** Daw Mya Thida, Deputy Director, focused on psychosocial support services, emphasizing the department's prioritization of physical and psychological care. The DSW conducts joint activities with partners like ICRC and established a Nationwide Case Management Supervision Unit (NCMSU) for data collection. They have trained 182 individuals to support vulnerable groups and provide psychosocial support services, including counseling, stress relief activities, case management, and vocational rehabilitation. Challenges include the need for immediate transfer of severely injured victims to better hospitals and the difficulty in measuring the impact of psychosocial support. Geographical limitations and transportation challenges in remote affected areas were also noted, highlighting the need for more organizational support.

- **Department of Social Welfare:** U Kyaw Myo Thant, Director, discussed socio-economic integration and education services for mine victims and their families. The Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement (MSWRR) is the focal ministry for reintegration and develops strategies for broader VA. Support is provided based on data collected by relevant departments. Collaboration with other ministries includes rural development projects and micro-finance from the Ministry of Cooperative and Rural Development, mine-related education and special education assistance from the Ministry of Education, infrastructure development and schools for PWDs from the Ministry of Border Affairs, and connecting ethnic groups with other departments by the Ministry of Ethnic Affairs. The DSW primarily focuses on livelihood support,

vocational training (e.g., hair cutting, tailoring, digital training), and income generation, with 256 nationwide case managers, including in mine-affected areas. Current developments include a VA contact and procedure template and readiness for cash and equipment support. Challenges and proposals include mobile training schools, expanding livelihood programs to cover all ages, stronger collaboration, and more accurate and timely data collection.

- **Department of Legal Advice:** U Sann Lin, Director, addressed the legal frameworks for PWDs in Myanmar, noting that assistance is guaranteed by law. Myanmar signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2011, promoting the full and equal enjoyment of human rights for all PWDs. Domestic laws, including the 2008 Constitution (Articles 347 and 367), provide for equal rights before the law and the right to healthcare for all citizens, including those with physical and psychological disabilities. Current protection projects include free victim registration, addressing workplace discrimination, providing healthcare and vocational training, prioritizing vulnerable groups, offering legal aid, and promoting health education. The 2020–2027 initiatives aim for comprehensive PWD protection. While not specifically for mine victims, these laws cover all disabled individuals.

Following these presentations, a question and answer session addressed topics such as enhancing mine risk education in school curricula and ensuring long-term support services for mine-affected communities, with suggestions for increased cash support and leveraging the Ministry of Science and Technology for information management.





### 5.1.2. Non-Government Stakeholders

The second panel, moderated by U Swan Yi Ya, Director of the Department of Rehabilitation, featured representatives from non-governmental organizations involved in victim assistance.

- **International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC):** Mr. Zeon De Wet, Physical Rehabilitation Programme Manager, provided an overview of ICRC's long-term support for physical rehabilitation in Myanmar since 1979, guided by their Disability Vision 2030. ICRC focuses on inclusive, people-centric programs, targeted physical rehabilitation services, building an enabling work environment, and promoting disability inclusion in legal and policy environments. Their physical rehabilitation assistance aims to increase accessibility without barriers. Key programs include the SURS referral program implemented by the Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) providing transport, accommodation, and rehabilitation support. Outreach programs include mobile repair workshops and a repairmen network. ICRC also provides technical support for prosthetic foot production and offers training scholarships in prosthetics and orthotics. Comprehensive physical rehabilitation services are provided by multidisciplinary teams. Psychosocial support (MHPSS) programs started in 2020, and social inclusion initiatives include participation in Paralympic sports. Socio-economic inclusion efforts involve micro-economic initiatives and career development programs. Successes include recognizing the importance of MHPSS and broadening the referral system. Challenges include the need for more professionals and human resources. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of outreach activities and positive feedback from MHPSS programs. Next steps involve supporting the National Rehabilitation Strategy implementation and evaluating the expansion of MHPSS programs.

- **Exceed Worldwide:** Mr. Carson Harte, Chief Executive, shared national perspectives on victim assistance implementation based on Exceed Worldwide's experience, formerly known as The Cambodia Trust, which started in Cambodia in 1990. Exceed Worldwide focuses on physical rehabilitation and supports three Physical Rehabilitation Centers (PRCs) in Cambodia. Their goals include developing a local expert workforce, embracing orthotics, ensuring coordinated technology application, joint planning with governments, and sustainability.

Achievements include a nationwide local expert workforce, standard operating procedures, bulk purchasing, central fabrication for polypropylene technology, and coordination in data collection. They established the Cambodia School of Prosthetics and Orthotics (CPSO), recognized internationally and operating under ISO standards, which also franchises education partnerships in several ASEAN countries including Myanmar. In Myanmar, they started a Category II BSc program in 2014 at the University of Medical Technology Yangon, supporting clinics at the National Rehabilitation Hospital. Financial sustainability is pursued through a "trade not aid" approach, focusing on the growing private sector and employment for PWDs. Lessons learned emphasize the growth of public-private partnerships and the need to adapt to changing economic landscapes.

- **Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS):** Dr. Htin Zaw Soe, General Secretary, introduced MRCS, established in 1938, promoting healthcare services based on humanitarian principles. With 330 branches and over 4,000 volunteers, MRCS has been involved in mine risk education since 2015 in 8 states, training volunteers and assisting over 30,000 patients with referral services. Achievements include establishing a free physical rehabilitation center in 2013 with ICRC support, providing mobile repair services for prosthetic limbs, and offering a scholarship program for further education in Cambodia. Challenges include risks faced by volunteers and limitations in funding and transportation. Future plans involve extending first aid and mine risk education at the community level. Next steps include follow-up on educational programs, collaboration with focal points, providing personal hygiene sessions, connecting victims to authorities for rehabilitation, psychosocial support, community-based prosthetic arm services, and workshops for PWDs.

- **Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association (MMCWA):** U Wai Myo Han, Head of Office, presented MMCWA, a local organization established for health education and social standards for mothers and children in Myanmar. MMCWA has been involved in the national mine awareness working group since its inception, providing psychological support, financial assistance for medical consultations, mental health curriculum trainings, livelihood training for members (including mine victims), interest-free loans, and public education awareness. Challenges include difficulty traveling to remote areas and the need for livelihood support experts.

- **Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAf):** Daw Moe Moe Ei, Secretary, introduced MWAf, established in 2017 to promote the roles of women in Myanmar. MWAf has contributed to mine awareness programs, assisted internally displaced women, provided assistance to mine victims, and cooperated with government ministries. Experiences shared highlighted that awareness sessions and training have empowered mine victims with more knowledge and capacity. Challenges include difficulty accessing some areas, the loss of learning ability and rehabilitation capacity in victims, lack of information and assistance in remote areas, and the need for a strong network for better assistance.



## 5.2. Challenges and Gaps

Throughout the presentations/discussion, stakeholders from both government and non-government sectors highlighted a range of persistent challenges and gaps affecting the delivery of victim assistance services in Myanmar. These challenges reflect a combination of logistical, institutional, technical, and financial constraints:

- **Access limitations** to affected areas, particularly in regions under the control of ethnic armed groups, due to security concerns and geographical remoteness.
- **Transportation barriers** that hinder the timely delivery of rehabilitation, medical, and psychosocial services, especially in border and rural communities.
- **Inadequate communication infrastructure** in remote locations, limiting effective coordination, case referral, and information dissemination.
- **Shortages of trained personnel** in critical areas such as prosthetics and orthotics, mental health, and explosive ordnance response.

- **Language and cultural barriers** in ethnically diverse communities, creating the need for local focal persons fluent in indigenous dialects.
- **Insufficient financial resources** to sustain victim assistance services, including healthcare, rehabilitation, and socio-economic reintegration programs.
- **Maintenance and repair challenges** for assistive devices in hard-to-reach areas, limiting long-term usability for survivors.
- **Lack of standardized qualifications** and professional accreditation for rehabilitation and medical staff.
- **Outdated or inadequate medical and rehabilitation equipment**, affecting the quality of services provided.
- **Limited systems to measure psychosocial support outcomes**, complicating efforts to evaluate effectiveness and impact.
- **Fragmented coordination among stakeholders**, underscoring the need for stronger collaboration to deliver comprehensive and integrated assistance.
- **Gaps in data collection** on mine/EO victims, affecting the accuracy and responsiveness of program design and targeting.
- **Concerns about sustainability**, particularly in the transition from aid-based support models to more enterprise-driven, self-reliant approaches.
- **Safety risks for volunteers** involved in mine risk education and frontline victim support, especially in high-risk zones.
- **Cognitive and rehabilitation decline** among some victims, with a need for continuous care and adaptive therapies.
- **Limited support for persons with disabilities (PWDs)** in border areas, where services are often unavailable or inaccessible.
- **High travel costs and logistical burdens** associated with reaching rehabilitation centers from remote areas.
- **Lack of systematic follow-up mechanisms** to monitor victims' long-term progress and evolving needs.

These challenges highlight the importance of sustained investment, inter-agency collaboration, and localized approaches to ensure equitable and effective victim assistance across Myanmar.





### 5.3. Survivor Testimonies

A dedicated session during the meeting provided a deeply moving platform for survivors of explosive ordnance (EO) incidents to share their personal stories. Through their voices, the harsh realities behind the statistics came to life—stories of pain, resilience, and the enduring human spirit. Each testimony was a powerful reminder of the urgent need for comprehensive, survivor-centered assistance.

- **U Phoe Khaing** recounted the life-altering moment he stepped on a landmine while returning from work in the forest—an explosion that resulted in the loss of both his legs. He described the overwhelming fear, the loneliness of the aftermath, and the emotional burden placed on his family. Yet within that darkness, he found support from hospital staff and the Department of Rehabilitation, who helped him begin the long journey of recovery. His words carried a quiet strength as he expressed feelings of both sadness and gratitude—sorrow for what he had lost, but hope for what remained.
- **U Naing Zaw Htet** shared his story of stepping on a landmine while foraging for plants. Severely injured, he relied on his uncle to carry him to Yangon Hospital. Support from the Myanmar Red Cross Society and financial aid from the government helped him begin to rebuild his life. Yet he spoke candidly about the ongoing struggle to earn a living and the barriers he faces in starting a small motorbike repair shop—his dream for a more independent future.
- **U Kyaw Min Htun** told a harrowing story of how his life changed while walking to a rubber plantation. After stepping on a landmine himself, his husband, rushing to help him, tragically stepped on another. Their survival depended on the courage of a young passerby who helped bring

them to the hospital. His testimony reflected not only the devastation of the incident but also the enduring trauma and interdependence of survivors and their families.

- **Daw Tin Tin Hla** also spoke as a victim of explosive ordnance. Although fewer details were shared, her participation was no less powerful—her presence itself a testament to the strength of those who continue to live with the physical and emotional scars of conflict.

Together, these testimonies painted a vivid and painful picture of the long-term consequences of EO accidents—not only the physical injuries, but the emotional trauma, economic hardship, and social exclusion that follow. They also served as a call to action: a reminder that behind every data point is a person with a story, a family, and a future worth fighting for.

These voices must remain at the center of all victim assistance efforts. Their courage in sharing their experiences is a critical part of shaping policies, programs, and partnerships that truly respond to the needs of survivors across the region.

### 5.4. Regional/Global Technical Guidance

Throughout the meeting, the discussions were anchored in the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 13.10, which provides authoritative guidance on victim assistance within the broader context of mine action. IMAS 13.10 offers a comprehensive and integrated framework for victim assistance, covering essential areas such as medical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic reintegration, and legal rights. By referencing this standard, the meeting ensured that the development of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) aligned with internationally recognized best practices and technical benchmarks.

The integrated approach promoted by IMAS 13.10 highlights the importance of addressing the multi-faceted needs of explosive ordnance (EO) victims. It also underscores the need for coordinated efforts across sectors such as health, social welfare, and legal frameworks, ensuring that all victims have the support they need to reintegrate into society and regain their dignity and self-reliance.



## 6. REGIONAL VAN DISCUSSION



A significant portion of the National Consultative Meeting was dedicated to discussing the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN). The session was structured to foster dynamic and focused discussions through breakout sessions, where participants were grouped based on their stakeholder categories (government and non-government). These discussions explored the rationale, proposed functions, stakeholder roles, and potential structure of the VAN, focusing on its ability to enhance victim assistance across the ASEAN region.

### 6.1. Rationale and Proposed Functions

Participants recognized the necessity of a Regional VAN for several key reasons. The network was seen as a crucial platform for enhancing connectivity and facilitating the provision of assistance to EO victims, particularly those living in rural and remote areas. The Regional VAN was expected to significantly contribute to supporting victims through various means, including data collection, intensive and ongoing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic integration (particularly through NGOs), and addressing legal and policy aspects. Participants emphasized the need for a platform to establish

a clear work plan and framework with defined approaches, objectives, timelines, and expected outcomes. The VAN was also envisioned to play a vital role in fostering research and establishing monitoring mechanisms for victim assistance activities. The aim was to create a comprehensive network operating at the in-country, regional, and grassroots levels. Furthermore, the VAN was anticipated to serve as a central point for integrating victim assistance at a regional level, facilitating knowledge sharing, raising funds to support member states, and collectively discussing efforts to overcome challenges in victim assistance.





## 6.2. Group Discussions Summary

Following the breakout sessions, groups presented their feedback and engaged in further discussion. Participants highlighted the need for the VAN to be easily accessible and beneficial for victims. They suggested that the VAN should prioritize states and regions with the most pressing needs.

### Key areas of discussion included:

- **Why a Regional VAN is necessary:**

To enhance coordination, facilitate knowledge sharing and research, mobilize resources, and provide better support to EO victims across the ASEAN region, particularly in underserved areas.

- **What the Regional VAN can contribute:**

Providing a platform for data collection, improving access to medical care and rehabilitation, strengthening psychosocial support services, promoting socio-economic integration, and advocating for supportive laws and policies.

- **Roles of institutions:**

Participants considered how their respective institutions could contribute to the Regional VAN, linking their potential roles to IMAS 13.10 and an integrated approach to victim assistance.

- **Who should be in the Regional VAN:**

Suggestions included local authorities, affected communities, healthcare professionals, social and physical care providers, donors, and NGO partners. Prioritization of states and regions with the most significant need was also suggested. Specific principles for joining the network, such as criteria for EO-affected and non-affected states and donors, were discussed.

- **How the Regional VAN can be structured:**

Discussions touched upon the need for human resources and a committee with representative members, effective modes of communication, and a clear coordination system among the committee and stakeholders. The importance of including contact information for focal persons at the state and regional levels to facilitate access to assistance for mine victims was emphasized.

## 6.3. Stakeholder Roles

Participants identified the potential roles of various stakeholders within the Regional VAN. Government bodies were seen as essential for policy development, resource allocation, and coordination at the national level. ARMAC was envisioned to play a central role in facilitating regional coordination, knowledge sharing, and potentially fundraising. NGOs and international organizations were recognized for their expertise in service delivery, community engagement, and advocacy. Donors would be crucial for providing financial support to sustain the network and its activities. The active involvement of EO victims and affected communities was deemed paramount to ensure that the VAN addresses their needs effectively. The establishment of specific principles for joining the network was discussed to ensure relevant and committed participation.



## 6.4. Coordination and Communication Mechanisms

Effective coordination and communication mechanisms were recognized as vital for the success of the Regional VAN. Participants discussed the need for a clear coordination system among the VAN committee and various stakeholders. Suggestions included identifying focal persons at different levels (national, state, regional) with accessible contact information to facilitate communication and access to assistance for EO victims. The discussion also touched upon the most effective modes of communication for the network, considering factors such as accessibility, reliability, and cost-effectiveness. The use of a centralized platform for information sharing, knowledge exchange, and coordination was also implied in the discussion about creating a “connectable and easy” network.

## 7. MEETING OUTCOMES



The National Consultative Meeting in Myanmar marked a decisive moment in the development of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and the larger goals of the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme.” The meeting catalyzed critical discussions and resulted in actionable outcomes that will influence both the immediate and long-term success of victim assistance programs throughout the ASEAN region. It provided a platform to lay the foundation for a collaborative, regional effort to address the needs of explosive ordnance (EO) victims.



### 7.1. National-Level Commitments

The meeting underscored a profound commitment from both government and non-governmental stakeholders toward the establishment and operationalization of the Regional VAN. Government agencies, through their active participation and strong endorsements, pledged to support the network’s formation, signaling the importance of integrating national victim assistance efforts with a cohesive regional strategy. Their commitment to coordinating actions with ASEAN partners and other relevant entities reflects a shared understanding of the need for comprehensive and sustainable solutions.

Equally vital was the endorsement from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and regional partners, whose engagement demonstrated an unwavering dedication to collaborating across borders. These organizations committed to contributing their expertise, resources, and networks, providing a crucial foundation for the success of the Regional VAN. By offering their experience in victim assistance and advocacy, they further solidified their role as key players in this collective movement.

The presence and contributions of explosive ordnance survivors were pivotal, bringing personal experiences to the table that directly inform the design and functioning of victim assistance strategies. Their voices serve as a constant reminder that victim-centered approaches must be at the core of every initiative. Their participation underscores the importance of ensuring that the needs, rights, and perspectives of those affected by EO contamination shape the policies and strategies developed through the Regional VAN.

### Challenges

Talking: ARMAC Control Center

Challenges

- Assistance to persons with disabilities is very limited particularly in border area of Myanmar
- Access to rehabilitation services can be complicated and often requires long and expensive travel
- Making maintenance and repairs of assistive devices difficult
- Staff needs retraining and lacks internationally standardized technical qualifications
- Need cleaning and more modern equipment
- Needs related to psychosocial support, livelihood assistance and socioeconomic reintegration



### 7.2. Identified Challenges

As the discussions progressed, the meeting also provided an invaluable opportunity to address the challenges that continue to hinder effective victim assistance in Myanmar. The challenges, although significant, are not obstacles but focal points for collaboration and innovation.

A primary concern raised was the persistent issue of limited funding. While funding for victim assistance programs has been a continuous challenge, the meeting reaffirmed the importance of mobilizing both national and international



resources. A diversified approach to funding will be crucial to ensuring the sustainability of victim assistance programs, and the meeting served as a call to action for stakeholders to work together to secure long-term financial support.

The lack of integration and coordination among key sectors also emerged as a major challenge. Without coordinated efforts, victim assistance services remain fragmented and less effective.

The meeting stressed the need for a comprehensive, unified approach to victim assistance that spans across government bodies, NGOs, and international organizations, ensuring that resources are efficiently utilized and that there is no duplication of efforts.

Other challenges discussed included the difficulties of ensuring accessibility to services in remote and conflict-affected areas. Addressing these barriers will require innovative solutions, such as improved logistics, enhanced communication channels, and better infrastructure to ensure that victims, regardless of location, can access the services they need.

Moreover, the shortage of trained human resources, particularly in specialized fields such as psychological support and rehabilitation, was highlighted. The need to strengthen data management systems, and to enhance the integration of victim assistance services, was also stressed. These challenges will be critical focal points as the Regional VAN is developed, requiring the collective expertise and collaboration of all stakeholders to find sustainable solutions.



### 7.3. Action Points

The meeting resulted in several concrete action points that will guide the next steps in the creation of the Regional VAN. These action points reflect the priorities identified by stakeholders and outline the path forward for ensuring that the Regional VAN can successfully integrate victim assistance efforts across the ASEAN region.

- **Consolidation of National Inputs:** ARMAC will compile the valuable inputs, feedback, and recommendations collected during the meeting, synthesizing them into a comprehensive document that will serve as the foundation for the initial draft of the Regional VAN Blueprint and its Terms of Reference (ToR).
- **Development of the Regional VAN Blueprint:** ARMAC will lead the development of the Regional VAN Blueprint, based on national consultations, which will include the network's objectives, structure, membership criteria, operational modalities, and the roles of various stakeholders. This document will be key to ensuring that the Regional VAN is effectively aligned with international standards and best practices.
- **Regional Consultations:** Following the development of the initial draft, a Regional Consultative Meeting will be held to refine the draft based on the feedback from stakeholders across the ASEAN region. This will ensure that the Blueprint and ToR reflect the diverse perspectives of all ASEAN Member States.
- **Finalization of the Regional VAN Blueprint:** The final version of the Blueprint and the ToR will be discussed and agreed upon at the first Regional Workshop. This step will mark the official operationalization of the Regional VAN, enabling the network to begin fulfilling its critical mission of supporting victims across the region.
- **Ongoing National Engagement:** Even as the Regional VAN takes shape, Myanmar's national stakeholders will continue to work on strengthening victim assistance programs at the national level, addressing the challenges identified during the meeting, and ensuring that local efforts are aligned with the goals of the Regional VAN.

## 8. GOOD PRACTICES AND SUCCESSES



Despite the significant challenges faced, the National Consultative Meeting in Myanmar showcased several noteworthy good practices and successes in victim assistance. These examples reflect the resilience and dedication of various stakeholders and highlight the positive strides made in victim assistance efforts.

### 8.1. Positive Experiences

Participants shared valuable experiences related to effective inter-agency collaboration, particularly in the context of providing victim assistance:

- **Collaboration between Government and NGOs:** The Department of Rehabilitation (DoR) has effectively partnered with both national and international NGOs to deliver services for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), contributing to a comprehensive and multi-sectoral approach to victim assistance.
- **Prosthetic Workshops and Vocational Training:** The collaboration between the Department of Public Health and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to establish prosthetic workshops and vocational training programs has been instrumental in providing long-term support for mine victims, helping them regain mobility and independence.

- **Mine Risk Awareness Initiatives:** The establishment of Mine Risk Awareness Working Groups in high-risk areas by the DoR has been a proactive and effective strategy for educating communities about the dangers of unexploded ordnance (UXO), contributing to greater safety and risk reduction in affected regions.
- **Expansion of Referral Systems:** The ICRC's expansion of its referral system to include more victims has proven to be a critical initiative, improving the accessibility of services. Additionally, the positive feedback regarding their Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) program demonstrates the significant impact of addressing the psychological well-being of survivors.
- **Physical Rehabilitation Services:** The Myanmar Red Cross Society's long-standing commitment to providing free physical rehabilitation services, coupled with their mobile repair service for prosthetic limbs, stands as a model for ensuring that vital services are accessible to victims, including those in remote areas.
- **Empowerment through Awareness and Training:** The Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation has made significant strides in empowering mine victims, particularly women, by organizing awareness sessions and training programs that enhance their social inclusion and economic independence.





## 8.2. Scalable Initiatives

Several initiatives discussed during the meeting demonstrated the potential for replication and scaling across the ASEAN region:

- **ICRC's Outreach Program:**

The ICRC's outreach program, which includes mobile repair workshops and the creation of a network of repairmen, offers a scalable solution for reaching victims in remote areas and ensuring the ongoing maintenance of assistive devices, such as prosthetics. This approach could be adapted across ASEAN to increase the reach and impact of victim assistance services.

- **Exceed Worldwide's Capacity-Building Model:**

Exceed Worldwide's model of establishing local expert workforces in prosthetics and orthotics, along with their franchise partnerships in education, offers a sustainable approach to capacity building. This initiative not only empowers local communities but also creates a regional network for training and skill development in the prosthetics sector.

- **Department of Social Welfare's Outreach Program:**

The nationwide outreach program by the Department of Social Welfare, which includes case managers working in mine-affected areas, demonstrates an effective mechanism for extending support to a broader population. The program's ability to integrate victim assistance into the broader social welfare infrastructure is an excellent example of how to scale services for diverse groups in need.

## 8.3. Partnerships and Innovation

The meeting highlighted several examples of successful partnerships and innovative approaches to victim assistance:

- **Collaboration Across Sectors:**

Effective partnerships between government ministries (such as the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Defence) and international organizations (e.g., DoR and ICRC) have proven vital for enhancing coordination in victim assistance. These collaborations ensure that victims are referred to appropriate services and receive comprehensive support tailored to their needs.

- **Financial Sustainability in Prosthetics:**

Exceed Worldwide's "trade not aid" approach to financial sustainability in the prosthetics and orthotics sector presents an innovative model for long-term impact. By emphasizing market-driven solutions and self-sufficiency, this model offers a pathway to sustainability in the sector, ensuring that assistance remains available even as external funding sources fluctuate.

- **Innovation in Prosthetics Technology:**

The ICRC's development and use of polypropylene technology for prosthetics in low-resource countries represents an important technological innovation. This solution addresses the specific needs of affected communities by providing cost-effective and durable prosthetic limbs, making it a model that could be adopted in other regions facing similar challenges.

## 9. LESSONS LEARNED



The National Consultative Meeting provided valuable opportunities to reflect on the lessons learned from victim assistance efforts in Myanmar, identifying what has worked well and areas needing improvement.

### 9.1. What Worked

The hybrid format of the meeting proved highly effective in facilitating broad stakeholder participation, ensuring that a diverse group of participants could engage, regardless of their location. The active involvement of government officials, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international organizations, and explosive ordnance (EO) survivors contributed to a rich, multifaceted discussion.

A key strength of the meeting was the reference to and application of the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 13.10, which provided a solid framework for discussions, ensuring that victim assistance efforts aligned with internationally recognized best practices. The dedicated session for survivor testimonies effectively amplified the voices of EO victims, placing their direct experiences at the center of the dialogue and emphasizing the need for victim-centered approaches.

Additionally, the existing partnerships and collaborations between government agencies and national/international organizations were demonstrated to be effective in delivering critical victim assistance services. For example, outreach initiatives such as mobile repair workshops proved indispensable, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring continued access to essential services even in times of crisis.





## 9.2. What to Improve

Despite the positive outcomes, several areas were identified that require attention for improvement:

- **Inclusion of EO Survivors:** Enhancing the inclusion and active participation of EO survivors in all stages of victim assistance program development and implementation is crucial. Their insights are invaluable in shaping services that truly meet their needs.
- **Coordination and Integration:** Strengthening coordination mechanisms across different stakeholders to prevent duplication of efforts and ensure a comprehensive, integrated support system is a priority.
- **Accessibility:** Addressing persistent challenges related to accessibility, particularly in remote and conflict-affected areas, requires innovative solutions and increased resources. Expanding the reach of services to all affected areas, including hard-to-reach regions, remains a critical challenge.
- **Data Management:** Improving data collection, management, and sharing systems will enhance the targeting of victim assistance programs and enable better monitoring of their effectiveness.
- **Sustainable Funding:** Exploring more sustainable funding models beyond traditional donor support is necessary for the long-term viability of victim assistance programs. Diversifying funding sources and establishing more sustainable financial mechanisms will help ensure continued support for victims.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Expanding psychosocial support services and ensuring their long-term availability is essential, as mental health challenges often persist long after physical rehabilitation is complete.

## 9.3. Contextual Adjustments

Future efforts to assist EO victims in Myanmar must be tailored to the country's unique context, taking into account the diverse ethnic and linguistic landscape, ongoing landmine contamination, and existing legal and policy frameworks related to persons with disabilities.

- **Self-blame and Awareness Campaigns:**  
Many civilians affected by landmine incidents experience self-blame, a psychological barrier that hinders recovery and reintegration. Awareness campaigns that emphasize the rights of victims and the available assistance are crucial in addressing these issues.
- **Legal Protections:**  
Ensuring that national laws and policies effectively protect the rights and meet the needs of all persons with disabilities, including mine victims, is essential. Strengthening legal protections and promoting inclusive policies will ensure that victims' rights are upheld.
- **Adapting Service Delivery:**  
Service delivery models must be adapted to overcome geographical and logistical challenges. This includes considering transportation barriers, infrastructure limitations, and other logistical difficulties in delivering assistance to remote areas.

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on the discussions and insights gained during the National Consultative Meeting, the following recommendations are proposed to further strengthen victim assistance efforts in Myanmar and to contribute to the establishment of an effective Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN).

### 10.1. For National Stakeholders

- **Strengthen Institutional Roles:** Government ministries and agencies should further define and solidify their specific roles and responsibilities within the national victim assistance framework, ensuring clear lines of accountability and coordination.
- **Formalize Coordination Mechanisms:** Establish more formal and regular coordination mechanisms among government agencies, national mine action authorities, NGOs, international organizations, and affected communities to enhance information sharing, avoid duplication of efforts, and ensure a comprehensive and integrated approach to victim assistance.

- **Enhance Data Collection and Management:** Invest in improving systems for the accurate and timely collection and analysis of data on EO victims, including their needs and the assistance provided, to inform program development and resource allocation.
- **Prioritize Accessibility:** Develop and implement strategies to improve the accessibility of victim assistance services, including medical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and socio-economic reintegration opportunities, particularly in remote and underserved areas, addressing transportation, communication, and security challenges.
- **Invest in Capacity Building:** Increase investment in the training and professional development of national staff in specialized areas such as prosthetics and orthotics, psychosocial support, and mine risk education to address the shortage of qualified personnel.
- **Promote Awareness of Legal Rights:** Conduct awareness campaigns to inform EO victims and their families about their legal rights and the assistance available to them under national laws and policies, encouraging them to seek support without self-blame.





## 10.2. For ARMAC/Regional Actors

- **Provide Technical Assistance:**

Offer technical assistance and expertise to ASEAN Member States, including Myanmar, in the development and implementation of victim assistance programs, drawing upon regional and international best practices and standards, including IMAS 13.10.

- **Facilitate Knowledge Sharing:**

Continue to facilitate the sharing of knowledge, best practices, and lessons learned in victim assistance among ASEAN Member States through workshops, consultations, and online platforms.

- **Consolidate Regional Feedback:**

Effectively consolidate the inputs and feedback from the national consultative meetings to develop a robust and relevant Regional VAN Blueprint and Terms of Reference that reflect the diverse needs and contexts of the participating countries.

- **Support Resource Mobilization:**

Explore and facilitate opportunities for regional resource mobilization to support victim assistance programs in affected ASEAN Member States, potentially through joint fundraising initiatives.

- **Promote Regional Collaboration:**

Continue to promote and support collaboration and networking among victim assistance stakeholders across the ASEAN region through the Regional VAN.

## 10.3. For Technical and Funding Partners

- **Ensure Long-Term Funding:**

Commit to providing sustained and long-term financial support for victim assistance programs in EO-affected ASEAN Member States, recognizing the enduring needs of survivors and their communities.

- **Align Support with IMAS:**

Ensure that technical and financial support for victim assistance aligns with the principles and guidelines outlined in the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 13.10 and promotes an integrated and comprehensive approach.

- **Support Local Capacity Building:**

Prioritize support for initiatives that focus on building the long-term capacity of national institutions and local organizations in ASEAN Member States to deliver effective and sustainable victim assistance services.

- **Facilitate Technology Transfer:**

Support the transfer of appropriate and cost-effective technologies for prosthetics, orthotics, and other assistive devices to enhance local production and accessibility.

- **Support Research and Innovation:**

Invest in research and innovation to develop more effective and culturally appropriate approaches to victim assistance, including psychosocial support and socio-economic reintegration strategies.

## 11. WAY FORWARD



The National Consultative Meeting in Myanmar has laid a critical foundation for the country's active engagement in the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN). The meeting has been pivotal in advancing the collaborative efforts toward a regional framework that will better serve victims of explosive ordnance (EO) across ASEAN.

### 11.1 Immediate Next Steps

The immediate next step involves ARMAC compiling, synthesizing, and analyzing the valuable inputs, feedback, and recommendations gathered during the National Consultative Meeting. This information will be instrumental in drafting the initial version of the Regional VAN Blueprint and its Terms of Reference. Throughout this process, continued communication and engagement with Myanmar's national stakeholders will be vital to ensure their perspectives are accurately captured and incorporated into the foundational documents. This collaborative effort will ensure that the Regional VAN is tailored to meet both the region's collective and individual country needs.

### 11.2 Regional Consultations

Once the initial draft of the Regional VAN Blueprint is prepared, it will be presented and discussed at the next Regional Consultative Meeting. This meeting will bring together representatives from all five EO-affected ASEAN Member States to review the draft. It will provide a platform for refining the Blueprint, ensuring it effectively addresses the common challenges faced across the region while accommodating the unique needs of each participating country. This process will promote a more inclusive and adaptable Regional VAN.

### 11.3 Timeline for Deliverables

The finalization of the Regional VAN Blueprint and its Terms of Reference will take place during the first Regional Workshop, tentatively scheduled for 2023. This workshop will mark a significant milestone in the consultative process, enabling the completion of the Blueprint and the Terms of Reference. The workshop will set the stage for the formal establishment and operationalization of the Regional Victim Assistance Network. This network is envisioned to serve as a sustainable, centralized platform that will enhance victim assistance throughout the ASEAN region, ultimately improving the lives of countless explosive ordnance survivors and their communities.



## CONCLUSION



The National Consultative Meeting in Myanmar stands as a pivotal moment in the collective effort to advance victim assistance for explosive ordnance survivors within the ASEAN region. This meeting not only reflects Myanmar's strong commitment but also highlights the unified determination of a wide array of stakeholders, including government ministries, non-governmental organizations, UN agencies, and most critically, EO survivors themselves, to address the pressing humanitarian crisis caused by explosive remnants of war.

The meeting served as a catalyst for open, constructive dialogue, producing invaluable insights into the strengths and gaps within current victim assistance programs, while identifying tangible opportunities to enhance these efforts. The active and engaged participation of national stakeholders underscores Myanmar's essential role in shaping the establishment of a Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) — a regional platform designed to foster collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and resource mobilization to support EO victims across ASEAN.

The action points and commitments emerging from the meeting reaffirm Myanmar's proactive role in creating a comprehensive and sustainable network that can address the immediate and long-term needs of victims. The shared experiences and perspectives, particularly from EO survivors, will be central in shaping the Regional VAN, ensuring that it is not only responsive but also deeply aligned with the needs of those most affected. By contributing to the development of this network, Myanmar is playing a vital part in the broader goal of building a more peaceful, secure, and inclusive ASEAN community.

The success of this initiative will have lasting implications — not only for the survivors of explosive ordnance but for the region as a whole. Through continued collaboration, the Regional VAN will strengthen victim assistance, enhance coordination across borders, and, most importantly, ensure that no one affected by explosive ordnance in ASEAN is left behind in the journey toward healing, resilience, and recovery.

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## ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)



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