

NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING

Phnom Penh, Cambodia | 2 December 2021

To Promote the Establishment of Regional Victim Assistance Network

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



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC) conveys its profound appreciation to the Republic of Korea for its generous financial contribution through the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), which has made the successful convening of this National Consultative Meeting possible. We are equally grateful to the Royal Government of Cambodia for graciously hosting this important event, and to the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) for their invaluable cooperation, coordination, and technical support.

ARMAC further expresses its sincere appreciation to the participating ministries and government institutions whose engagement enriched the discussions. In particular, we recognize the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS), and the Ministry of Health (MoH) for their active participation and policy-level contributions. We also acknowledge the Disability Action Council (DAC) and the Persons with Disabilities Foundation (PWDF) for their critical inputs and continued partnership in advancing inclusive support for persons with disabilities, including victims of explosive ordnance.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our international partners, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Humanity and Inclusion, Exceed Worldwide, Jesuit Refugee Service, the Cambodian Red Cross, and the Sir Bobby Charlton Foundation, as well as national and international stakeholders. Their unwavering commitment to the cause of victim assistance has significantly contributed to the depth and relevance of the deliberations.

ARMAC is especially grateful to the Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation (CDPO) and to the courageous survivors of explosive remnants of war (ERW) who generously shared their personal experiences during the meeting. Their powerful testimonies serve as a compelling reminder of the human dimension of mine action and the urgency of sustaining survivor-centered support across ASEAN.

Finally, ARMAC wishes to acknowledge the Embassy of Brunei Darussalam to the Kingdom of Cambodia, in its esteemed role as Chair of the ARMAC Steering Committee, for its continued leadership and guidance in advancing regional collaboration in mine action. We also extend our deep appreciation to all Members of the Steering Committee for their strategic oversight and steadfast support. Special recognition is accorded to the Kingdom of Cambodia, as the host country, whose warm hospitality and active involvement were instrumental in ensuring the success of this significant event.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The National Consultative Meeting held December 2, 2021, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, marked a critical milestone in ARMAC's "Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States" project, an initiative led by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC), with support from the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF). The meeting brought together over 50 participants, including representatives from government ministries, national mine action authorities and centers, national associations/foundations, international organizations, and survivors of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The meeting's primary objective was to advance the establishment of a Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN), a critical initiative to foster greater regional cooperation and coordination in providing support for ERW victims across ASEAN Member States (AMS). Key outcomes from the meeting included:

- **Knowledge Exchange:** Participants shared best practices and identified actionable strategies for strengthening victim assistance programs in affected AMS.
- **Challenges and Opportunities:** The meeting facilitated open discussions about the challenges faced in providing victim assistance, while also identifying opportunities for enhancing service delivery and expanding access to vital support services.
- **First-hand Testimonies:** ERW survivors shared their personal experiences, shedding light on the immediate needs and gaps in victim assistance services, providing valuable insights to inform future programming.
- **Establishment of the Regional VAN:** Initial discussions on the formation of a Regional VAN laid the groundwork for the development of its Blueprint and Terms of Reference, which will guide future actions and define roles, responsibilities, and operational frameworks for the network.

A major emphasis of the meeting was on collaboration — particularly the need for stronger partnerships among stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and UN entities. There was a shared recognition of the importance of improving the accessibility of services, promoting socioeconomic integration for survivors, and enhancing psychosocial support services to improve the quality of life for those affected by ERWs.

The establishment of the Regional VAN will serve as an invaluable information-sharing hub, aimed at facilitating faster, more coordinated responses to the needs of ERW victims and persons with disabilities across the ASEAN region. This collaborative platform is poised to play a significant role in streamlining victim assistance efforts, improving service delivery, and ensuring that no one is left behind in the region.

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1. INTRODUCTION



The National Consultative Meeting held on December 2, 2021, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, was a significant event in the implementation of the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States” project, coordinated by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC). This initiative, supported by the ASEAN–Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), aims to improve victim assistance services for individuals affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Southeast Asia.

The meeting gathered over 50 participants, including key stakeholders from government ministries, mine action authorities, international organizations, and ERW survivors, to discuss critical issues around victim assistance and the creation of a Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN). The primary goal of the meeting was to begin the process of establishing this regional platform, which will strengthen coordination, enhance information-sharing, and foster greater collaboration among ASEAN countries in supporting victims of landmines and ERW.

At the heart of this meeting was the shared recognition of the ongoing challenges faced by ERW survivors across ASEAN Member States. These challenges include limited access to medical care, rehabilitation services, and psychosocial support, as well as barriers to the socio-economic integration of survivors. With the goal of addressing these issues, the meeting focused on improving victim assistance programs, enhancing the coordination of services, and ensuring that survivors have access to a broad range of support services.

The meeting also provided an opportunity for ERW survivors to share their personal experiences, underscoring the need for a coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable approach to victim assistance. Through the discussions and insights gained, the meeting laid the foundation for the operationalization of the Regional VAN, which will help ASEAN countries coordinate their efforts and resources more effectively, ensuring that no victim is left behind.

2. BACKGROUND



The National Consultative Meeting held on December 2, 2021, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, was a significant event in the implementation of the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States” project, coordinated by the ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC). This initiative, supported by the ASEAN–Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), aims to improve victim assistance services for individuals affected by landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Southeast Asia.

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3. NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE MEETING OVERVIEW



This Summary Report specifically focused on the National Consultative Meeting held in Cambodia, one of the five landmine/ERW-affected countries targeted by the project. The meeting was organized in a hybrid format, combining in-person and online participation. The central purpose of the meeting was to foster the establishment of a Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) by bringing together relevant national networks and stakeholders actively involved in supporting landmine/ERW victims. Discussions during the meeting were guided by the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 13.10 and an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance.

The National Consultative Meeting provided a platform for key national victim assistance stakeholders to share their knowledge, best practices and challenges in implementing victim assistance programs. Participants also engaged in discussions aimed at mapping out roles, responsibilities, coordination mechanisms and communication strategies to facilitate the establishment of the Regional VAN. The meeting was conducted in English, with simultaneous translation into the national official language of Cambodia made available.

3.1 Timing and Venue

The National Consultative Meeting took place on Thursday, December 2, 2021, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The venue for the in-person component of the meeting was the Sokha Phnom Penh Hotel & Residence in Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

3.2 Key Sessions and Objectives

The National Consultative Meeting on the Establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) was structured around a series of thematic sessions designed to address the core objectives of the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States” project. The meeting aimed to generate national-level inputs and foster a collaborative environment for mapping roles, responsibilities, and coordination mechanisms essential for establishing a robust regional platform.

The sessions were designed to:

- Share National Perspectives on victim assistance services and current efforts in Cambodia.
- Present Global Frameworks, including International Mine Action Standards (IMAS 13.10) and the Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance.
- Showcase Good Practices by inviting key national and international partners to share experiences, lessons learned, and successful interventions in physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, and socio-economic reintegration.
- Capture Survivor Voices through a dedicated segment where ERW victims shared their lived experiences to inform more inclusive and needs-based programming.
- Foster Collaborative Discussion through breakout sessions where stakeholders examined institutional roles and developed recommendations for the structure, coordination, and communication strategies of the proposed Regional VAN.
- Promote Policy Coherence and Coordination by aligning efforts among government ministries, development partners, and NGOs working toward improving the quality of life for persons with disabilities, particularly ERW victims.

The overarching objectives of the meeting were to:

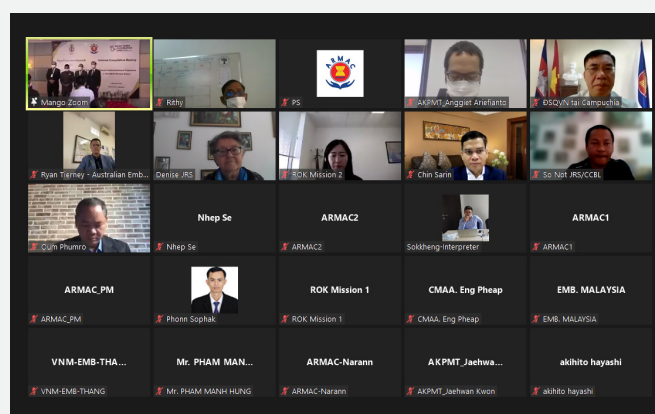
1. Initiate Stakeholder Dialogue on the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN), including potential roles, functions, and mechanisms for collaboration.
2. Strengthen Knowledge Exchange among national and international stakeholders working on victim assistance in Cambodia.
3. Consolidate Actionable Recommendations and country-level inputs that will inform the development of the initial draft Blueprint and Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Regional VAN, serving as a foundation for further consultation and endorsement across ASEAN Member States.

3.3 Participants

The National Consultative Meeting brought together a diverse group of representatives from key institutions and organizations directly involved in victim assistance. These participants included:

- ASEAN-Korea Programme Management Team (online)
- Government ministries and agencies
- National mine action authorities and centers, specifically the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)
- International and national nongovernment organizations (NGOs)
- U.N. agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- Research and academic institutes
- Representatives from the Embassy of Brunei Darussalam to the Kingdom of Cambodia
- Representatives from the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Cambodia
- ERW beneficiaries who shared their personal experiences

Over 50 participants attended the meeting, both in-person and online. The comprehensive representation ensured a multifaceted discussion on victim assistance implementation in Cambodia.



3.4 Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony of the National Consultative Meeting commenced with a welcome to all participants by the Master of Ceremonies (MC). This was followed by welcome remarks from several high-level dignitaries.



Welcome Remarks by H.E. Mr. Pengiran Kasmirhan Pengiran Tahir

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of Brunei Darussalam to the Kingdom of Cambodia and Chair of the ARMAC Steering Committee

H.E. Mr. Pengiran Kasmirhan Pengiran Tahir delivered the opening welcome remarks at the National Consultative Meeting. In his capacity as Chair of the ARMAC Steering Committee, he expressed his great pleasure in welcoming stakeholders to the inaugural National Consultative Meeting on enhancing victim assistance within ASEAN.

He emphasized that the project aims to address the humanitarian consequences of landmine and explosive remnants of war (ERW) contamination by supporting the reintegration of ERW victims into mainstream society. He also conveyed his sincere appreciation to the Republic of Korea for its generous financial support through the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund (AKCF), which has been instrumental in making the project a reality.



Remarks by H.E. Mr. Park Heung-kyeong

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Embassy of the Republic of Korea to the Kingdom of Cambodia

H.E. Mr. Park Heung-kyeong highlighted the importance of victim assistance as an essential pillar in restoring and securing the mental and social well-being of landmine and ERW victims. He emphasized that strengthening victim assistance directly contributes to enhancing human security and ensuring sustainable development throughout the region. He reaffirmed the Republic of Korea's commitment to continuing its support for mine action cooperation in ASEAN.



Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Ly Thuch

Senior Minister and First Vice President of the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA)

H.E. Mr. Ly Thuch expressed his delight and honor in attending the meeting. He extended heartfelt thanks to the government and people of the Republic of Korea for their financial support, and to ARMAC, CMAA, and relevant partners for organizing

the event. He acknowledged the progress made since the establishment of ARMAC and noted its evolution into a credible center of excellence in the region.

In his remarks, H.E. Ly Thuch addressed the enduring challenges posed by landmines and ERW in Cambodia, which have caused more than 60,000 casualties since 1979. He shared the story of Mrs. Sang Soth, a landmine survivor, as a powerful example of the physical and psychosocial hardships faced by victims, and underscored the need for continued and coordinated support. He emphasized the importance of multi-sectoral efforts in ensuring that ERW victims and their families have access to necessary services and are not left behind. He expressed hope that the meeting would serve as a platform to address current service gaps and strengthen alignment with IMAS 13.10 and the Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance.

- Exploring the practical application of IMAS 13.10 and the Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance; and
- Understanding the national context and perspectives on victim assistance implementation.

He also expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Korea, CMAA, and Humanity and Inclusion for their valuable contributions in co-organizing the meeting. Mr. Prum voiced hope that ERW survivors' voices would resonate throughout the sessions and help shape future interventions.



Meeting Overview by Mr. Prum Suonpraseth

Executive Director, ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center (ARMAC)

Mr. Prum Suonpraseth welcomed all participants and presented an overview of the meeting. He outlined the key objectives, which included:

- Sharing best practices and experiences in victim assistance in Cambodia;
- Defining the roles and responsibilities of national stakeholders in establishing the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN);



Following the remarks, all participants gathered for an official group photo to mark the opening of the event.

4. KEY DISCUSSIONS AND HIGHLIGHTS



4.1 Victim Assistance Programs & Services

This session provided an overview of the current status of victim assistance programmes in Viet Nam, with presentations from government and non-government stakeholders.

Ms. Chanthana Sengthong, project manager of ARMAC, provided an overview of ARMAC and the Victim Assistance Project, including its objectives, mandates, functions, activities and next steps.

Ms. Edith Van Wijngaarden, country manager of Humanity and Inclusion in Cambodia, offered guidance on an Integrated Approach to Victim Assistance and shared best practices and challenges in implementing an integrated country approach. She emphasized that "Mine free does not mean victims free." She highlighted that Victim Assistance is a set of activities addressing the needs and rights of EO victims, with the ultimate responsibility resting on States. She explained that an integrated approach involves both broader efforts in areas like health and education that reach victims, and victim assistance-specific efforts implemented nondiscriminatorily. She outlined

HI's role in Cambodia, focusing on rehabilitation, socioeconomic inclusion, psychosocial support, promoting inclusion, advocacy, technical assistance and data collection. She identified challenges such as insufficient funding, complex data collection, difficulties in reaching rural areas, limited trained personnel and constraints in implementing existing laws inclusively. Opportunities include the new IMAS 13.10, ARMAC's VA project and the increasing emphasis on inclusive projects by donors. She stressed that victim assistance is a long-term commitment.



Mr. Marc Zlot, physical rehabilitation program manager, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), discussed ICRC's physical rehabilitation program in Cambodia, which aims to improve access, quality and long-term availability of services for people with physical disabilities and promote their social inclusion. Objectives include accessibility (materials, incentives, outreach), quality (training, guidelines, center management), sustainability (partnerships, sponsorship, new education programs, professional body) and social inclusion (education support, vocational training, micro economic initiatives, employment support, sport). He also highlighted the needs of landmine victims identified by the MoH and challenges faced by PWDF. He emphasized the risk of discontinuation of rehabilitation services in the near future due to staff retirement and contract-based employment, stressing the urgent need for civil servant status for all PRC employees.



Ms. Suyeon Yang, project coordination officer, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), presented on the Victim Assistance component of the Clearing for Results IV (CfR IV) project. CfR IV aims to support Cambodia toward becoming mine-free by 2025 while aligning mine action with national development policies. The Victim Assistance component focuses on raising awareness, reducing fatality rates, enhancing national capacities in policy and data management, improving survivors' access to rehabilitation and chronic pain treatment, and enhancing their well-being. Activities include coordinating VA efforts, improving the database system, conducting Quality of Life Surveys, supporting national VA policy development (CMAS-VA), providing first aid training, mirror therapy for amputees, and supporting physical rehabilitation outreach and socioeconomic inclusion programs through partnerships with TCF, PWDF and CDPO. Successes include the implementation of mirror therapy training and support to the CMAA VA database and

QLS. Challenges include the impact of COVID-19 on project implementation. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of collaboration with local authorities.



Sister Denise Coghlan, country director, Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), shared JRS/Cambodian Campaign to Ban Landmines (CCBL) perspectives on integrated victim assistance. Their goal is to accompany, serve and advocate for survivors so that their rights are upheld and needs are met. They work in remote villages providing psychosocial support, socioeconomic integration (income-generating grants, farming support), rehabilitation and medical referrals, and advocacy at various levels. Successes reported by survivors include peer encouragement, new ideas from meetings, the utility of wheelchairs in villages and the impact of their voices at ICBL meetings. Challenges in 2021 included disruptions to rehabilitation services due to COVID-19, the vulnerability of severely disabled individuals and concerns that the dialogue partner emphasis on inclusive development sometimes excludes the specific needs of victims. Good news included the positive impact of the ID poor card and increased understanding of disability rights.

Ms. Kheng Sisary, country director, Exceed Worldwide, presented the organization's national perspectives on victim assistance implementation. Exceed Worldwide focuses on prosthetic and orthotic schools and physical rehabilitation centers in Asia, including Cambodia. They provide prosthetic and orthotic services, children support to school, community services (repairs and delivery), and vocational training and small business support. Achievements include developing local expertise, standard operating procedures, serving approximately 5,000 people with disabilities annually, supporting children in education, coordinating data collection and obtaining international certifications.

Program challenges include the withdrawal of international funding, handover of responsibilities to the local government, staff turnover and ensuring the sustainability of quality and accessible services. Lessons learned emphasize collaboration, responding to local needs and the unsustainability of dialogue partner reliance. Next steps include advocating for multi-dialogue partners and government funding for rehabilitation services and the recognition of rehabilitation professionals within the government system.

Mr. Mom Phireak, program manager, Cambodian Red Cross (CRC), discussed the Safer Rural Community Program (SRCP) and CRC's involvement in mine action and victim assistance. CRC provides mine risk education, microloans to mine victims, emergency support, and assistance with access to physical rehabilitation and socioeconomic reintegration. SRCP activities include mine risk education, dissemination of MRE materials, risk reduction through microloans, victim assistance for quality of life (emergency assistance, healthcare access), and social and economic reintegration support. They also focus on disability inclusion and water sanitation and hygiene. Progress includes improved food security, education, shelter and health among beneficiaries, as well as safer behaviors. Key stakeholders include CMAA and funding partners. Challenges include limited funding and the ongoing risk-taking behavior of the population in contaminated areas. The SRCP goal for 2020-2025 is to enhance safety and resilience in rural communities.

Ms. Mak Monika, executive director, Cambodian Disabled People's Organisation (CDPO), presented CDPO's national perspectives on victim assistance implementation. CDPO is a membership-based organization run and governed by people with disabilities, representing all types of disabilities in Cambodia. Their focus is on promoting disability inclusion, cooperating with stakeholders to implement laws and policies, providing disability inclusion training, contributing to disability research, consolidating their DPO network and developing public information services. Their programs and services include emergency response (COVID-19), drafting return-to-work policies, inclusive commune investment programs, disability inclusion in social protection, providing disabilities training, developing public information services, inclusive WASH, developing evidence-based practices, working on disability data application, disability-inclusive employment

and multicountry inclusive education studies. Successes include collaborations resulting in built ramps and provision of food and other support to PWDs. Challenges include limited private sector recruitment of PWDs, limited capacities of DPO staff, lack of funding support and the impact of COVID-19. Lessons learned emphasize good collaboration with the government and the role of DPOs, while next steps include strengthening focal points on disability, increasing coordination, improving service quality, promoting disability law and advocating for the rights of PWDs.



4.2 Challenges and Solutions

The session then focused on national perspectives on victim assistance implementation, specifically addressing the availability of services, challenges, roles and responsibilities within an integrated approach. Representatives from various government stakeholders involved in victim assistance presented their perspectives.

Mr. Yeap Malyno, director of Welfare for Persons with Disabilities Department, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY), provided insights into the ministry's role in disability identification, the Disability Management Information System (DMIS), referral and intervention mechanisms, social assistance programs, inclusive vocational training and employment initiatives, COVID-19 related interventions, challenges faced and the way forward. The MoSVY is involved in data transfer from communes, data checks and verification at the provincial level, and final approval and issuance of disability cards. They also manage case complaints and monitor the disability data preparation process. Social assistance programs and inclusive employment are key focus areas. Challenges include slowdown in disability identification due to COVID-19 and limited funding.

Mr. Phonn Sophak, deputy director of Special Education, Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS), presented on the ministry's role in inclusive education for children with disabilities (CWD) within the framework of victim assistance. He highlighted the establishment of the Special Education Department and various models of inclusion. He mentioned the ministry's involvement in intensive medical care (early disability identification and referral), physical rehabilitation (referral services), psychosocial support (referral services), socioeconomic integration/education (enrollment and support), and the alignment with national and international laws and policies. Successes include CWD receiving inclusive and equitable education and gaining employment, while challenges include parents' awareness, curriculum modification and online learning during COVID-19. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of motivation, incentives and collaboration.

Prof. Kim Savuon, deputy director, Department of Hospital Services, Ministry of Health (MoH), discussed the health sector's contributions to victim assistance. He provided an overview of the Ministry of Health and its programs aimed at improving health outcomes. He outlined the public health care facilities available in Cambodia, including those providing mental health services and physiotherapy. He described the Disability Management System, including the Technical Working Group for Disability and various councils for disability evaluation. He also mentioned stakeholder collaboration and identified challenges such as inadequate mental health services, limited resources, unmet demand for psychosocial rehabilitation and low investment in medical technology. Lessons learned highlight the importance of collaboration and the need to address complaints from people with disabilities. Next steps include expanding rehabilitation services and encouraging the participation of people with disabilities in prevention, treatment and care.

H.E. Mr. Mao Bunnhath, director of the Victim Assistance Department, Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), provided a comprehensive overview of CMAA's national perspectives on victim assistance implementation. He outlined the elements of victim assistance, including data collection, medical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socioeconomic inclusion, and laws and policies. He detailed CMAA's programs and services in data collection

through CMVIS and Quality of Life Surveys (QLS). He also discussed physical rehabilitation centers, emergency medical care provided with the Cambodian Red Cross, psychological and psychosocial support, socioeconomic inclusion initiatives (vocational training, small grants, job referrals), and the relevant national and international laws and policies. He highlighted successes such as establishing a national database for victim assistance and providing technical inputs into victim assistance guidelines. Challenges include the impact of COVID-19, limited financial support and information sharing limitations. Lessons learned emphasize collaboration and hybrid session formats, while next steps focus on resource mobilization and continued support to victims.

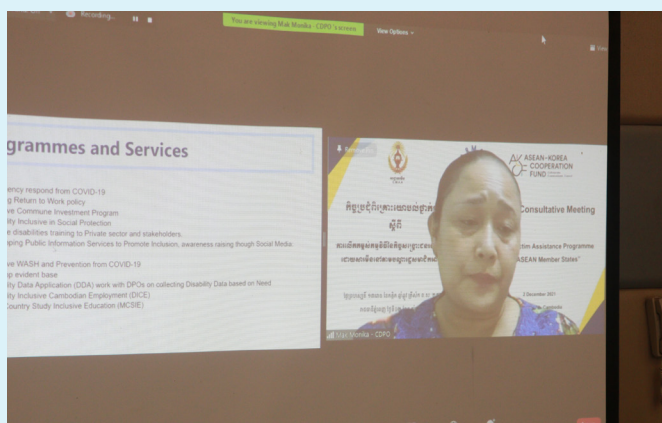
Mr. Eam Sarath, chief of department, Disability Action Council (DAC), also provided perspectives on the national coordination of disability issues.

Mr. Teav Samol, chief officer, Persons with Disabilities Foundation (PWDF), presented the foundation's overview, programs, services in physical rehabilitation and challenges. PWDF manages 11 physical rehabilitation centers and provides services to persons with disabilities, including mine/ERW survivors. They also produce and supply prosthetic and orthotic devices. Their mandate includes providing financial support for various programs benefiting persons with disabilities, promoting their well-being and supporting their integration into society. Challenges include limited utilization of rehabilitation services and low transportation allowances for service users. Lessons learned emphasize the importance of collaboration.

4.3 Voice of Victims (Testimonies from survivors)

A dedicated session provided a platform for ERW victims to share their personal experiences. Three ERW beneficiaries, Mr. Hab Chorn, Ms. Kuy Navy and Mr. Bou Rithy, shared their impactful stories.

Mr. Hab Chorn recounted stepping on an explosive device around 1989 and the limited information available on physical rehabilitation support services at that time, forcing him to build his own walking stick. He later learned about organizations providing prosthetic legs and expressed gratitude for the support that improved his family's livelihood and allowed him to regain independence.

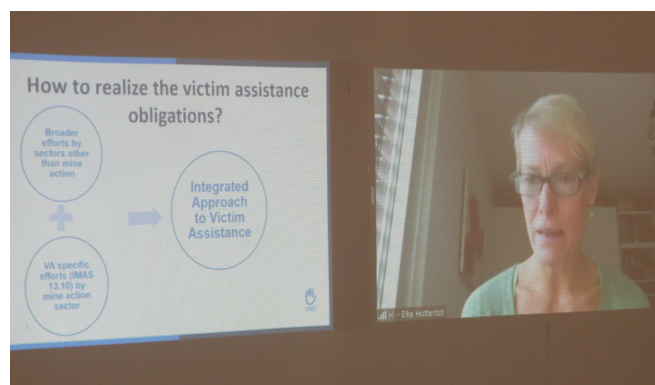


He urged governments and NGOs to strengthen their attention and support to ERW victims to regain confidence and promote nondiscrimination.

Ms. Kuy Navy shared her experience as a farmer who survived an EO explosion and received a prosthetic leg and sewing training, which improved her livelihood and enabled her to support her children's education. She also acknowledged the support from Humanitarian and Inclusion (HI) for herself and her family. Despite not having land for farming, she manages a small business. She deeply appreciated the support received and encouraged other EO victims to remain strong and not give up.

Mr. Bou Rithy, an ERW beneficiary and representative of the Legless Drivers Group, highlighted gaps in the Mine Action Field needing improvement for EO victims. He emphasized the necessity of providing loans along with job placements, sharing his own struggle to find employment despite work experience. He urged organizations and government bodies to consider providing loans for small businesses and job opportunities for EO victims and to communicate with them with encouragement.

These testimonies underscored the profound and long-lasting impacts of landmines and ERW on individuals and their families and highlighted the critical role of victim assistance programs in their recovery and reintegration into society.



4.4 Global Perspectives on IMAS 13.10

Ms. Elke Hottentot, Humanity & Inclusion policy lead armed violence reduction, Handicap International Federation, provided a global perspective on victim assistance and introduced the International Mine Action Standard (IMAS) 13.10 on Victim Assistance in Mine Action. She outlined who is involved in victim assistance and discussed the integrated approach, encompassing both VA-specific efforts within the mine action sector and broader efforts by other sectors. IMAS 13.10 details the mine action sector's engagement in VA, including information management, identification and referral, promotion and monitoring of multisector engagement, and supporting the development of national action plans and coordination mechanisms. She explained the concrete implications for National Mine Action Authorities, such as developing national standards (NMAAS 13.10) and ensuring the use of referral mechanisms. For Mine Action Operators, this includes collecting disaggregated casualty data and data on existing services, and facilitating access to emergency medical transport. She also outlined the process for developing NMAAS 13.10, involving stakeholders and working groups.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF REGIONAL VICTIM ASSISTANCE NETWORK (VAN)



Following an afternoon tea/coffee break, the meeting transitioned into breakout sessions focused on discussing the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN). The objectives of these sessions were to discuss and identify roles, responsibilities, coordination mechanisms and communication strategies for the proposed network.

Participants were divided into two groups based on their stakeholder category:

Group 1:

Government stakeholders

(Ministerial bodies, National Authorities and Centers)

Group 2:

Non-Government stakeholders

(Service providers, NGOs, Victims and Communities)

Each group engaged in focused discussions based on guiding questions provided by the ARMAC Victim Assistance Project Team. The outcomes of these breakout sessions were then presented and discussed in a plenary session involving all participants, allowing for feedback and questions. These discussions aimed to synthesize inputs from various stakeholders at the country level to develop an initial draft of the Regional VAN Blueprint, including its Terms of Reference. These documents were intended for further discussion at the subsequent Regional Consultative Meeting and finalization at the first Regional Workshop.



Group 1: National Government and Local NGOs

Group 1 emphasized the importance of a Victim Assistance Network (VAN) as a regional connection mechanism within ASEAN that would enable budget and technical resource sharing, knowledge exchange, and networking opportunities. They suggested that VAN could support ERW victims through encouragement, quality of life improvements, vocational training, loans, empowerment, job placement, inclusive education, capacity building, and service provider connections.

The group identified key institutional roles within VAN including data collection, policy development, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, medical care, socio-economic integration, and legal framework development. They recommended that VAN should include diverse stakeholders: government ministries, NGOs, donor agencies, private sector, survivors/PWDs, UN agencies, religious communities, and mine action operators.

For VAN's structure, they proposed a rotating country representative system with members, sub-committees, terms of reference, and social media communication channels, with ARMAC coordinating the victim assistance system throughout ASEAN.



Group 2: International NGOs

Group 2 highlighted VAN's importance in giving survivors a voice, sharing support ideas, improving coordination, representing victim needs to governments and donors, providing contact points for survivors, facilitating service referrals, and coordinating funding. They suggested VAN could contribute by advocating for Cambodian Mine Action Standards on victim assistance, monitoring implementation of national standards and disability rights conventions, and coordinating activities to avoid duplication.

The group recommended including survivors, government agencies (health, social affairs, labor, education), private sector, donors, CMAA, ARMAC, UN agencies, foundations, and both international and local NGOs, with a distinction between active members who lead activities and non-active observers.

For VAN's structure, they proposed a three-tier system with ARMAC and CMAA as national-level coordinators, provincial-level entities connecting national and local levels, and village/community representation at the local level. They also suggested creating subject-specific working groups and using social media and hybrid meetings for communication.

6. OUTPUTS AND NEXT STEPS

The National Consultative Meeting was expected to collect valuable inputs at the country level, which would be synthesized to develop an initial draft of the Regional VAN Blueprint and its Terms of Reference. These foundational documents would then be refined through further discussions at the Regional Consultative Meeting and the first Regional Workshop.

The establishment of the Regional VAN is anticipated to create an information-sharing hub for ASEAN stakeholders. This platform would facilitate connections and the exchange of relevant information, materials, documents, events and networks to expedite needed support for landmine/ERW victims and PWDs.



6.1 Cambodia Commitments and Challenges

Cambodia has made significant commitments to providing victim assistance through the Mine Ban Treaty and ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2012. Despite ongoing efforts, several challenges persist:

- Lack of clear division of roles and responsibilities among government units with disability responsibilities, hindering coordination.
- Limited commitment to ensuring the meaningful participation of disabled people's organizations (DPOs) and civil society organizations.
- Relatively low levels of funding for both government and private sector agencies involved in disability support.

- A lack of reliable and integrated data on disability and victims/survivors, hindering targeted interventions.

6.2 Action Points Identified

Despite the ongoing work, the meeting highlighted several key action points needed to further enhance victim assistance in Cambodia:

- **Promote close collaboration among all VA stakeholders, especially government entities, to ensure a coordinated and integrated approach meeting both dialogue partner and victim/survivor requirements.**
- **Standardize management systems and improve the sustainability and accessibility of the physical rehabilitation sector in coordination with international and national mechanisms.**
- **Devote resources to reach survivors in remote and rural areas who face significant obstacles to accessing assistance.**
- **Increase socioeconomic opportunities for survivors and persons with disabilities, and develop appropriate education and training opportunities, particularly for those lacking education, literacy, work or land.**
- **Improve the physical accessibility of living and working environments.**
- **Provide quality psychosocial support services and training, which are currently limited.**

The establishment of a VA network at both the country and regional levels is considered critical to realizing these actions and providing comprehensive support to victims in Cambodia and the wider ASEAN region.

7. SUCCESSES AND ACHIEVEMENTS



The National Consultative Meeting achieved several significant results:

- 1. Enhanced Knowledge Sharing:** The meeting created a valuable platform for the exchange of knowledge, best practices and challenges in victim assistance implementation among diverse stakeholders.
- 2. Survivor Voices Amplified:** The dedicated session for ERW survivors provided crucial first-hand perspectives that will inform the design and implementation of future victim assistance programs.
- 3. Identified Gaps and Challenges:** The discussions highlighted specific gaps in existing services, including coordination issues, limited funding, accessibility barriers and inadequate psychosocial support.
- 4. Conceptual Framework for VAN:** Initial inputs were gathered for developing the Regional VAN Blueprint and Terms of Reference, including potential roles, responsibilities and coordination mechanisms.
- 5. Increased Awareness of IMAS 13.10:** The presentation on IMAS 13.10 enhanced understanding of international standards for victim assistance and their practical implications for national authorities and operators.
- 6. Strengthened Multisectoral Collaboration:** The meeting facilitated connections between government agencies, NGOs, U.N. bodies, donors and survivors, promoting a more integrated approach to victim assistance.
- 7. Documented Action Points:** Specific action points were identified to address the challenges facing victim assistance in Cambodia, providing a roadmap for future interventions.

8. LESSONS LEARNED



The National Consultative Meeting highlighted several key lessons learned in the process of developing and implementing victim assistance programs across the ASEAN region. These insights are critical to enhancing the effectiveness and sustainability of such programs in the future:

1. Community Engagement:

One of the most important lessons was the value of involving local authorities and community leaders. Their active participation is crucial in ensuring the accessibility and sustainability of victim assistance programs, particularly in remote and underserved areas. Engaging the community fosters a sense of ownership, enabling local stakeholders to better support the programs and increase their impact.

2. Flexibility in Programming:

The meeting emphasized the importance of adapting to changing circumstances. For instance, the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated the adjustment of activities, such as transitioning to online training and small group sessions, to continue providing services despite restrictions. This experience reinforced the need for flexibility and innovation in programming to overcome unforeseen challenges and maintain program continuity.

3. Integration of Disability Services:

A key takeaway was the need for stronger coordination between the disability and victim assistance sectors. A more integrated approach would provide holistic support to survivors, addressing not only their immediate needs but also ensuring long-term integration into society. This requires coordinated efforts across health, rehabilitation, education, and employment services.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

Following the National Consultative Meeting, several key steps have been outlined to advance the establishment of the Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) and enhance victim assistance efforts across the ASEAN region. These steps include:

1. Develop Initial Draft of VAN Blueprint

ARMAC will synthesize inputs from the National Consultative Meeting to develop an initial draft of the Regional VAN Blueprint and its Terms of Reference. This foundational document will guide the structure and operations of the Regional VAN.

2. Conduct Similar Consultations in Other Affected AMS

National Consultative Meetings will be organized in the other four most affected ASEAN Member States (Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam) to gather country-specific perspectives and ensure a comprehensive understanding of regional needs.

3. Organize Regional Consultative Meeting

A Regional Consultative Meeting will be convened, bringing together representatives from all ASEAN Member States to discuss and refine the draft Regional VAN Blueprint, ensuring it is aligned with the unique needs of each country and the region as a whole.

4. Finalize VAN Blueprint at Regional Workshop

The first Regional Workshop will be held to finalize the VAN Blueprint and establish its operational framework, solidifying the structure and governance for the Regional Victim Assistance Network.

5. Implement Identified Action Points

Relevant stakeholders will begin to implement the action points identified during the meeting, focusing on improving victim assistance programs and ensuring that survivors' needs are met, particularly in Cambodia.

6. Develop National Standards

National authorities will work toward developing national standards (NMAS 13.10) for Victim Assistance, in alignment with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), to ensure a consistent, high-quality approach to victim support across ASEAN.

7. Mobilize Resources

ARMAC will work to secure additional funding and resources to support comprehensive victim assistance programs, especially focusing on reaching survivors in remote areas where access to services is often limited.

8. Establish Information-Sharing Mechanisms

Initial steps will be taken to create an information-sharing hub that will facilitate connections and the exchange of relevant information, materials, and best practices among ASEAN stakeholders.

CONCLUSION



The National Consultative Meeting held on December 2, 2021, in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, marked a significant milestone in the “Enhance Victim Assistance Programme in the ASEAN Member States” initiative. The meeting successfully brought together a diverse range of national and international stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, UN bodies, donors, and, most importantly, ERW survivors, to discuss key challenges, share best practices, and explore opportunities for advancing victim assistance efforts across the ASEAN region.

The meeting facilitated valuable knowledge-sharing and identified the most pressing challenges and gaps in victim assistance services. It also provided an important platform for addressing the urgent need for a Regional Victim Assistance Network (VAN) to strengthen coordination and collaboration among ASEAN Member States.

The active participation of ERW survivors played a pivotal role in shaping the discussions and ensuring that their voices were central to the development of future victim assistance programs. The meeting’s outcomes, particularly the identification of critical action points and the commitment to developing the Regional VAN, represent important steps forward in enhancing the support and integration of landmine and ERW victims within Cambodia and across the ASEAN region.

The efforts that follow this meeting will contribute significantly to the development of the Regional VAN Blueprint and pave the way for more coordinated, inclusive, and effective victim assistance initiatives in the future, ensuring that no survivor is left behind.

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