

UGANDA
Herbert
Iwv Baryayebwa



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**National efforts to address and guarantee
the rights of landmine/UXO survivors: the case for
Uganda**

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By: Mr. Herbert Baryayebwa

Commissioner/Disability and Elderly

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

P.O. Box 7136

Kampala.

+256-414-252-952

+256-772-593920

E-mail: baryayebwah@yahoo.com

The chairperson,

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and gentleman,

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to provide an update on Uganda's efforts to address the needs and guarantee the rights of landmine/UXO survivors.

First of all, the rights of persons with disabilities including landmine survivors are enshrined in the Uganda constitution: Article 35(1) stipulates "**Persons with disabilities have a right to respect, human dignity and the state and society shall take appropriate measures to ensure that they realize their full mental and physical potential.**

(2) "Parliament shall enact laws appropriate for the protection of persons with disabilities."

The National Policy on Disability which is rights based provides a broad framework to guide different stake holders in the implementation of programmes for persons with disabilities including landmine and ERW survivors. The guide lines to implement the policy on disability have been developed and these spell out the roles and responsibilities of each stake holder in the implementation of programmes for persons with disabilities.

Uganda as one of the landmine and ERW states carried out a consultative workshop in 2008 and as a result came up with a comprehensive plan on victim assistance 2008-2012 to guide the implementation of activities for landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities. The comprehensive plan is based on the Nairobi Action plan of

2004. The plan with its SMART objectives covers the six thematic areas. The plan takes a right based approach and takes into account the principles of inclusion, empowerment, multi-sectoral collaboration and victim assistance as a development issue.

With support from the Government of Austria, Australia and Ireland, Uganda has been implementing the comprehensive plan and the following have been achieved.

- Baseline survey on landmine and ERW survivors has been carried out . -_community based management information system has been developed.
- Data which was scattered in different line ministries is being consolidated.
- A data collection tool has been developed for continuous collection of information from the field.
- A training manual on psychosocial support has been developed.
- Land mine and ERW survivors have been assessed and provided with orthotics and prostheses.
- Assistive devices have been purchased and distributed to survivors.
- In collaboration with NGOs, income generating activities for landmine survivors have been started.
- Community based rehabilitation has been extended to 16 districts
- Survivors have formed associations through which support is extended to them.

The ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development as the lead agency in disability issues is working closely with the office of Prime Minister, Ministries of Health, Education, and sports and disabled persons organizations in the implantation of the plan through the Mine Action Victim Assistance Project, with support from UNDP.

The intersectoral committee which brings together all stakeholders on

quarterly basis helps in information sharing and harmonizing implementation strategies.

Uganda takes seriously the slogan "**Nothing about us without us**". Land mine survivors and other persons with disabilities are involved in planning processes at all levels of government within the framework of the decentralization policy through to the parliament. The principle of bottom-up planning is emphasized and priorities are set right from village levels. [Two PWDs, male and female represent them in local councils at each level. There are five Pwds representing them in parliament.]

There are currently over 156,000 persons with disabilities, including women with disabilities, participating in the decision making processes at various levels of Government. This is to ensure that their rights and needs are addressed at that levels. Uganda's ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities and its Protocol will enhance our efforts in the disability sector.

Although progress has been realized in a number of areas, it is important to note that Uganda faces many challenges in its efforts to address the rights and needs of persons with disabilities, including mine survivors. These challenges among others include include:

- Inadequate resources to generate comprehensive data on landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities
- Inadequate resources to provide vocational skills training to enable landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities to live an independent life
- Inadequate resources to provide assistance to mine survivors and other persons with disabilities in all mine/ERW affected districts of Uganda
- Reintegration of land mine survivors and other persons with disabilities is still a problem due to negative attitudes towards them by community leaders

- Long distances to physical rehabilitation services limit access to landmine survivors
- Some service providers including CSOs have limited understanding on disability issues

Proposed interventions to address these challenges in the period 2010 to 2014 include

- Review the comprehensive plan on victim assistance to address the changing needs of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities.
- Strengthen collaboration with development partners for increased funding to the mine action victim assistance project.
- Build the capacity of service providers to effectively implement programmes for land mine survivors and other persons with disabilities
- Strengthen vocational training for landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities
- Strengthen the referral mechanisms for land mine survivors to improve access to physical rehabilitation
- Expand community based rehabilitation to land mine/ERW affected districts
- Increase involvement of landmine survivors and other persons with disabilities in decision making processes at all levels of local government

To conclude, I would like to extend gratitude and appreciation to the governments of Australia, Austria and Ireland for extending financial support to implement the Mine Action Victim Assistance Project through UNDP.

I would like to urge other donor community to support our efforts to enhance the implementation of the comprehensive plan on victim assistance so as to meet the obligation of addressing the rights and needs of all landmine / ERW survivors and other persons with disabilities.

Thank you for your attention.