

## **Provision of Continued and Comprehensive Assistance for Landmine Survivors in Sri Lanka A Survivor Centered Approach**

Mr. President.

Sri Lanka has made a clear success in drastically reducing landmine injuries since the end of the conflict in 2009. As per 2022, it is estimated that Sri Lanka will have over 1000 landmine survivors. An island wide survey on the survivors is reaching completion.

Sri Lanka is committed towards the provision of best possible assistance for landmine survivors, as per its obligations enshrined in the actions 33-41 under the Oslo Action Plan. The draft Sri Lanka National Mine Action Completion Strategy 2023-2027 also has placed significant emphasis on the provision of continued and comprehensive assistance for landmine survivors as well as their families.

Sri Lanka has moved 13 years since the end of the conflict. A couple of landscape changes have occurred on survivor assistance, including the current economic turbulence.

Firstly, there is a need to integrate the provision of comprehensive and continued assistance through the existing health and social support systems offered by the government and other stakeholders. This has become timely since donor assistance in the aftermath of the conflict on such areas have largely depleted by now.

Secondly, there is a need to strengthen need-based psychological and socio-economic support beyond the acute and subacute stages of the injury. This can minimize the burden on the survivors and their families to look after these needs by themselves once the attention is lost few months after the incident.

Thirdly, surveillance of landmine related injuries needs to be strengthened through the routine injury surveillance system within the country. As the country is targeting the completion of the removal of landmines in 2027, this is especially important to keep track of possible injuries that could occur beyond that.

Fourthly, based on the surveillance results, there is a need to conduct targeted mine risk education programs.

Finally, the pre-existing socioeconomic vulnerabilities of the landmine survivors could further be aggravated during the current economic turbulence. Hence, targeted interventions are needed to benefit the needy landmine survivors.

To address the aforementioned dynamics in the survivor assistance landscape, the National Mine Action Center of Sri Lanka, is working with the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division of the Ministry of Health along with other stakeholders to implement a four-tiered approach for the provision of continued and comprehensive assistance for landmine survivors in Sri Lanka.

1. Mapping of the needs of survivors, creation of a database and sharing the gaps to be met with partners.
2. Establishing a multistakeholder case management mechanism.
3. Establishing a Survivor Centered Support Grants System
4. Strengthening landmine injury surveillance and mine risk education

The first tier, the survivor centered approach should have the needs of the survivor at its heart. The whole mark of this approach would be taking a stock of all landmine survivors of the country and conducting a baseline assessment of their comprehensive needs. This will help the country to create a database of survivor needs and to share the gaps with partners.

In parallel, the second tier, the multistakeholder case management mechanism will be strengthened to improve the quality of life of survivors, through a needs-based survivor centered approach. This would be done using the range of divisional and field level government officials already in place along with the partner counterparts from the civil society organizations.

Thirdly, the Survivor Centered Support Grants Fund would be an innovative mechanism to provide needs-based, flexible, funding to deliver targeted small-scale interventions at household level to improve the quality of life of the survivors. The Survivor Centered Support Grants Fund will be established at National Mine Action Center, and the National Mine Action Center will mobilize national and international funding support to establish it and maintain it. The Divisional Case Management Committees through their survivor centered case management approach will identify and submit recommendations for Survivor Centered Support Grants Fund assistance to high priority survivors.

Measures will be taken to capture landmine injuries as a distinct category within the existing injury surveillance mechanism of the Ministry of Health. This is very important towards the completion of the removal of landmines from Sri Lanka. Based on the surveillance data, targeted mine risk education activities will be carried out.

Sri Lanka requests the states, and partners who have always been with us to invest on the proposed mechanism to strengthen the Continued and Comprehensive Care for Landmine Survivors in Sri Lanka. Such assistance is much needed given the economic turbulence observed now in the country. Assistance is sought in the areas such as strengthening infrastructure for establishing the survivor needs data base and carrying out the needs mapping, financial support for the establishment and sustenance of the Survivor Centered Support Grant fund, and to support targeted mine risk education programs.