

Lao People Democratic Republic
Peace Independent Democracy Unity Prosperity



National Regulatory Authority for
UXO Action Sector in Lao PDR
Office

No. /ONRA
Vientiane, Date:

Meeting Minute
Q2 2024 Victim Assistance Technical Working Group Meeting

To : **Acting Director of NRA**
Subject : **Reporting Minute of Q3 2023 Victim Assistance Technical Working Group Meeting**

- Referring to the Prime Minister's Agreement No. 152/PM dated 08 December 2023 on NRA Structure and Mandates.
- Referring to Q2 2024 workplan of Victim Assistance Unit.

I. Objective

This activity will contribute to accomplishment of Output 3 for Project Document: *Improved capacity of the NRA in strategic direction for the sector, supervision, data use and resource-mobilization including discourse on alternative financing modalities*. More specifically, the VA TWG will enable UXO stakeholders and concerned line ministries to better coordinate the provision, planning and prioritization of UXO Victim Assistance, as well as the improvement of the Victim Assistance Database and National Standard on Victim Assistance.

Major agenda of this activity was as follows:

- Update on the progress of implementing action plans agreed in the last TWG Meeting
- Achievements in Q1-2024 Victim Assistance compared to the 9th NSEDP 2021-2025 (# of victims VA unit shall support) and SPFIII 2021-2030 targets (integration)
- Progress and results of VA Operators' information management
- Victim Assistance Project Implementation in Xeingkhouang and Hauphan Province
- War Victim Medical Fund situation
- PRAs' presentations on victim assistance issues
- Process of VA National Standard Revision
- Presentation on VA TWG Meeting TOR
 - Results of VA TWG Meeting conducted
 - Challenges of conducting VA TWG Meeting and Plan in the future
- Discussion, Questions and Answer and additional clarify by operators if require
- Any Other Business (AOB)
- Summary and Closing Remarks

II. Participants

The meeting was chaired by NRA Deputy Director Mr. Douangsy Thammavong and 35 participants (9 female, 26% and 2 PWDs 6%) including by online participation of XKH, HP, VTE province and SVK provinces' PRAs.

The participants included NRA staffs, INGO department DoFA, Policy for The Devotees, Disability & The Elderly Department MLSW, Inclusion Education Center MoE, Center of Medical and Rehabilitation (CMR), Department of vocational development training Lao Youth Union, Skill Development Center Vientiane Capital LSW Department, Xiengkhaung PRA, Haouphan PRA, Savannakhet PRA and VTE Province PRA, UNDP, KOICA-PIU, UXO Lao, Humanitarian Inclusion (HI), COPE, Halo Trust, World Education, Quality of Life Association, Lao Disable People Association.

III. Summary

NRA Deputy Director Mr. Douangsy Thammavong welcome and thanks for all participants and opens the remark and informs to the VA TWG as followings:

- The TOR of the TWG will change in the near future to reflect the current situation.
- Improving the NS. In particular the four priority chapters.
- Work transferred to MOFA, so mechanisms have to be updated.
- VA is quite broad and connected to many agencies.
- In the past we did not have CSOs operating in the VA sector, only INGOs. Victims now have access to CSOs and INGOs.
- After the transition to MOFA there are many documents for implementation. Last September the NRA announced the notice of implementation activities. At the district level the MOLSW took the first action. Now the Office of Public of Security are directly responsible for making the first reports. The VA notifications now come under the MOFA umbrella.
- Communication is important for implementation at the local level.
- This was a sad quarter for UXOs, as every month there were victims of UXOs at an increased rate. We need to understand why this was the case, was this because of EORE or another reason.
- SPF III: Indicators are clearly identified. Activities are quite minimum to report to the government; the number of training activities are quite a small number. Dissemination of the rights of disabled people may not be sufficient. We do not have accurate information. The NA ask every year why the sector is not meeting the targets. The indicators of the SPF III are not possible to be met, in terms of clearance. We have requested the target to be reduced from 10000 to 7000.
- We need to discuss why some information is not captured in the IMSMAS system.
- VA is to rescue life. This involves both mental and physical matters, requiring human resources in each of these skill sets. We have limited budgets. We have been working with donors for the transfer of budget to the VA sector to be prepare when accidents happen.
- A long-term plan is yet to be approved. We require funding for long term strategy in VA sector. To support SPF III.

The presentations are delivered by VA Unit to the VA TWG Meeting as followings:

➤ Assistances provided Q2 2024

- Updated on progress of follow up issues raised from Quarter one to ensure all issues are solved.
- The UXO/Mine accidents occurred with large numbers 18 accidents with 37 casualties (5killed).
- 603,970,200 kip provided support to 14 survivors received medical treatment support, 61 survivors received mental health consultation support, tow killed victims' families received funeral support, and five casualties received fund for doing religions.
- 267 direct and indirect victims received physical rehabilitation environment supports.

- 67 victims (31female) received marketing and financial accounting training.
 - 305 victims (140 female) received tools and equipment to continue their business in regarding to their training courses.
 - 60 (34 female) victims received financial support to continue their business.
 - 907 people attended the awareness of right of PWD.
- **Assistances Provided to UXO/Mine Victims compare to the 9th NSEDP's indicators (2021-2025)**
1. 57.20% of Medical treatment support.
 2. 63.30% of Physical rehabilitation support.
 3. 79.50% of Vocational training and livelihood support.
 4. 30.80% of Mental health support.
 5. 111.80% of Advocacy on Right of PWD attendants.
- **War Victim Medical Fund**
- The funding for medical treatment support has been already spent prior the date of the MOA end due to there have been large of accidents and victims, therefore, NRA request USD 20,000 from Tetra Tect to support while WE request new phase funding approval.
 - The local authorities were inform and advised to work closely with the casualties and their family due to on the way of the process of approval TT funding.
 - Those who manage money have to report in advance. Many in the district level do not understand the delay. However, currently we are awaiting for approval from Washington.
- **NRA VA Q3 Work-Plan**
- Conduct field missions to follow-up and collection data on new UXO/Mine accidents and provide support for UXO/Mine victims in provinces across the country.
 - Conduct VA coordination with Provincial and district and village in Baulapha district Khammaou province.
 - Conduct VA TWG meeting.
 - Conduct the monitoring and evaluation of previous supported UXO/Mine victim in XKH, HP, SVK and SLV province.
- Mr. Patrick Mathews Programme and Partnership Specialist presented update on National Standards presentation
- For the VA national standard drafting the meeting assigned World Education to lead on drafting before circulation to the sectors.
 - NRA VA Unit will be a focal point to receive the recommendations from the stakeholders and operators.
- Recommendations from Province Regulation Authority (Xeingkhoang, Savannakhet, Vientiane Province,
- More land use may result in more accidents.
 - Coordination has faced difficulties.
 - We do not have the budget to provide for district to investigate the accidents.
 - Work with DOFA is quite new so we need training from central level in VA.
 - The information collection form is being updated
 - Agree on need for vocational training for victims.
 - More accidents because of increasing opening of land; second reason is the use of scrap metal; also children playing with UXO.
 - In many cases victims are from already poor backgrounds. No money for treatment so we rely on the national budget level. We are seeing difficulties in providing medical treatment fee support.

- Request more speedy support to victims, in the form of proper documentation being made available when required.
- Request NRA to consider as fast as possible to approval of WVMF to support UXO Victims.
- Propose to NRA as followings:
 - We propose to the NRA, we would like to get training on the coordination mechanism, as authorities are not well aware of the mechanisms for victim support.
 - Need IT equipment, such as notebooks to support activities.
 - Need help from NRA to families to recover budget, because they are poor families

➤ **Respond from NRA Deputy Director Mr. Douangsy Thammavong:**

VA is a very technical matter, also EORE is also very technical. We are happy to receive the interest from the provinces in training, in line with the national standards.

- Important to put the clearance priority into the MOU, EORE also has to be put into the plan.
- Identification of clearance priority areas for MOU, MOU also includes VA.

NRA will organize response to the provinces. In the past equipment was provided by MOLSW. We are trying to supply equipment to DOFA bit by bit. Concerning some of the matters about providing assistance, in particular I will go point by point on issues that are pending:

- Training on data entry. When the IM are training, can we include VA training?
- Budget not yet provided for victims to receive refund for treatment received. What is the mechanism? In collaboration with World education, what is our plan?

There is a conflict of understanding between MOFA and MOSLW, MOLSW say “that everything has been transferred to MOFA and this is known by the district governor”, and this is making the coordination not so smooth in some districts.

- Most of the issues seem to be at the local level on coordination.
 - ❖ We need to get more clarity on what we can do to improve coordination.
 - ❖ We need one more round of training on what to from the moment of accident. What are the reporting lines etc.
 - ❖ Clear mechanisms must be identified.

➤ **Rebecca from World Education**

- Wanted to make a comment to MOFA.
- One of our big concerns is that coordination is beginning to fall after MOFA switch.
- Concerned that police now doing investigations. Car accidents and UXO are very different.
- Cannot support unless UXO is proven. Understanding that there hasn't been training for police on UXOs. Ask that you take this to MOFA.
- Many NRA trainings on data collection. Need plan on how police will collaborate in the future.

HALO Trust:

- Discussed case of leg injury and asked why no treatment of fragments in the leg joints.
- We don't know whether to go to district or provincial level.
- Reported landmine accident where they lost a leg. Needed a wheelchair and prosthetic.

Ms. Rebecca Derry:

- Best case practice is not to remove fragments.
- If there are older cases of UXOs WE can still follow-up, please send requests.
- Understand that culturally people don't like to have fragments in their body.
- Not usually tetris risk due to heat of items entering the body.

- Hope to continue support in August once funding secured.

Mr. Bernard:

- In Cambodia there are laws against intentional handling which reduced the number of reported cases.
- We all recognise that we have improvement to do in health system for rehabilitation after discharge.
- MOH need to strengthen the rehabilitation system.

Mr. Douangsy Thammavong

- Regarding to the measure related to the UXO is Prime Minister Order No. 039/PM. on intentional handling, they can't get payment. There is a definition for commercial dismantling, including stock of scrap metal. For non-commercial handling we do provide support.
- Police if unaccompanied they may not know our procedures. We will try to work hand in hand with the police.
- Encourage World Education to integrate results into data entry system.
- Also look forward to working together on NS.

Patrick Mathew:

- Reiterated concerns on intentional handling affecting farmers and parents and lead to underreporting if police are first response. This is a public health issue not a security issue.

Mr. Bernard:

- WE signed an MOU with MOLSW for the second phase of OKARD province – five district expansion – 2 in XKH.
- UXOs and other types of disability.
- Working with Lao army in Savannakhet for survivors.
- Pillar on policy support.
- New project on internship of 6 months in the private sector.
- Also signing a MOU with MOFA and MOH to improve rehabilitation. Supporting COPE to provide prosthetics.
- We will spread information at the local level on rights of persons with disabilities.

MoFA Department of International Organizations

- Notification number 012/NRA dated May 19 2024: actual implementation is supposed to be by Ministry of Health and MOLSW according to their mandate. MOFA coordinate reporting.
- On involvement of police during accidents, police will report directly to MOFA department or NRA to address the problems.

In conclusion by Mr. Douangsy Thammavong:

- NRA will work with MOFA on coordination.
- We will update again after discussing with MOFA.
- Thanks those in attendance.
- We want to have this in the database once we have the sectoral meeting.
- Need to capture all information to meet the NSEDP targets.
- Request KOICA to inform NRA of achievements so that lessons can be learned.

- Await funding from Washington to pay outstanding victim assistance payments.
- There will be revision of the TOR of the VA TWG, not updated since 2008. We may communicate by email to receive feedback on TORs.
- The PRAs provided proposals for improvements, including human resource development.
- The provincial level do not have the budget. Everyone use their own vehicles, and we need to consider this. Gasoline allowance and per diem.
- We acknowledge their support to those who need it. They care about their work, because of them the work is going well.
- There are delays of going through procedures. We need to go through these steps, for clarity. We need to discuss what we can change to improve. E.g., the hospital need a lot of documents.
- Everyone has to respect the rules of financial management.
- NRA are overseeing the enforcement of notification number 12.
- On police involvement in UXO, we need to look at police training, for example decree 039. Because for victims we don't need to present them with double difficulties.