

# **Sudan National Mine Action Standards – SNMAS 09.02**

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## **Victim Assistance (VA)**

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## **1. Introduction**

Victim Assistance (VA) is one of the five pillars of Mine Action and an obligation placed on the government by the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty. As a State Party to the Mine Ban Treaty, Sudan has made commitments to assist victims of mines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs) in the country. Sudan National Mine Action Centre (NMAC) as coordination body for mine action in Sudan is responsible to regulate mine action activities in Sudan which include VA as well. The same as for other pillars of mine action, it is important to establish standard guidelines and requirements for the VA services and activities within mine action context in Sudan.

Victim Assistance (VA) is the combination of activities and efforts to provide adequate age-and-gender sensitive supports to victims; with the purpose of reducing the physical and psychological implications of their trauma, and overcoming their economic loss, social marginalization or the impairment of the realization of their rights. The aim of VA is to bring about lasting improvements in the daily lives of people injured by a landmine or explosive remnant of war (ERW).

Effective VA is characterized by systematic programming that improves physical accessibility, physical rehabilitation, enhances individual empowerment, raises community awareness and ensures the rights of people with disability through advocacy efforts. Accessibility eliminates obstacles and barriers to schools, housing, medical facilities, workplaces, government and public buildings, and places of worship. Empowerment includes the provision of physical rehabilitation, peer support, social inclusion and economic reintegration. Community awareness ensures the rights and capacities of landmine and ERW survivors are known, realized and respected by society as a whole.

Successful VA supports are ensured through properly understanding the number, the type of disability and the specific needs of survivors, and comprehensive analysis, proper programming, planning and projects' design, effective implementation and management of VA activities and projects including their proper monitoring and evaluation.

## **2. Scope**

This SNMAS provides standard guidelines and requirements for the provision of VA services within the mine action context of Sudan and specifically refers to services designed for landmine/ERW victims. However, it is also acknowledged that VA activities are provided within the larger context of disability in Sudan.

## **3. Reference**

The United Nations Policy on Victim Assistance in Mine Action, Government of Sudan's Strategy on VA and Disability and the provisions of APMBC.

## **4. General Requirement**

This SNMAS applies to all VA organizations working in Sudan, provision of VA is one of the five fundamental pillars of mine action, it is therefore, put as a requirement that all mine action programming in Sudan shall ensure that assistance for victims is included in all aspects of mine action including prioritization, planning, design, development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation.

The NMAC Sudan has established a dedicated department for the coordination and management of Victim Assistance and support to disability in Sudan. All VA organizations working in Sudan shall coordinate their activities with NMAC and related government ministries and institutions.

## 5. Terms and Definitions

### 5.1 Terms and Definitions Related to Victims Assistance

- a) The term **Victim** refers to a person who has suffered physical, emotional and psychological injury, economic loss or substantial impairment of his or her fundamental rights through acts or omissions related to the use of mines or the presence of ERW. Victims include directly impacted individuals (including survivors), their families and communities affected by mines, ERW or other explosive ordnance following conflict.
- b) The term **Survivor** refers to any individual directly injured by a landmine or ERW or other explosive ordnance explosion that survives the accident.
- c) The term **Victim Assistance** refers to all adequate age-and-gender sensitive support provided to victims with the purpose of reducing the physical and psychological implications of their trauma, and overcoming their economic loss, social marginalization or the impairment of the realization of their rights. Victim Assistance includes all aid, relief, comfort and support provided to victims with the purpose of reducing the immediate and long-term medical, economic, social and psychological impacts of their trauma or stress.
- d) The term **VA organization** refers to any organization that provides oversight of or direct support to landmine/ERW victims.
- e) The term **Accident** refers to an undesired event, which results in harm.
- f) The term **Advocacy** in the context of mine action refers to public support, recommendation or positive publicity with the aim of removing, or at least reducing the risk from, and the impact of, mines and ERW.

### 5.2 Medical Terms and Definitions

The following medical terminology is used in this SNMAS:

- a) Orthotics. Specialized mechanical devices used to support or to supplement weakened or abnormal joints or limbs.
- b) Prosthetics. Artificial devices or body parts that replace missing body parts. Prosthetics may also be described as biomechanics.
- c) Mobility Devices. Walking aids including canes, crutches and walkers, or wheelchairs that substitute for walking by means of a wheeled device upon which the user sits.
- d) Physical Rehabilitation. The therapeutic and clinical services that support people with injuries and impairments so that they may achieve maximum functional capacity. Physical Rehabilitation may include Physical Therapy (physiotherapy), Occupational Therapy, gait training, teaching for adaptation to mobility devices, and education about functionality, recovery, or adjustment to an impairment.

### 5.3 Psychological Terms and Definitions

The following psychological terminology is used in this SNMAS:

- a) Trauma. An emotional reaction or response to being physically injured. Survivors may suffer immediate psychological trauma from an injury or experience symptoms later once physical injuries have healed or the survivor begins the process of adjustment, adaptation and reintegration.

- b) Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). A clinically defined condition that describes a delayed reaction or response to a stressful situation including danger, psychological harm, or physical injury. Landmine/ERW survivors may exhibit a range of PTSD symptoms that can inhibit adjustment, adaptation, or reintegration.

## **6. VA Principles**

The following principles should be considered and applied by VA organizations when providing VA services:

- 1) **A Rights-Based Approach:** Assistance to victims shall be about realizing the human rights of survivors and other victims in accordance with IHL and international human rights law. They should be entitled to the highest attainable standards of health, rehabilitation, inclusive education, work and employment, full participation and inclusion in society and the adequate standard of living and social protection.
- 2) **Non-Discrimination:** Victim assistance shall be non-discriminatory and fully accessible and participatory. Victim assistance efforts shall not discriminate against persons injured or impaired in another manner or against or between victims; all of them shall be guaranteed equal rights.
- 3) **Neutrality, Impartiality and Humanity:** Respect of the fundamental principles of neutrality, impartiality and humanity shall be mandatory and essential. Priority for services and treatment of victims shall be based on need, with no distinction being made based on their civilian or military status.
- 4) **National Ownership, and Comprehensive and Integrated Nature of Services:** Victim assistance in Sudan is primarily the responsibility of Government of Sudan (GoS). The United Nations aims at having victim assistance integrated into the frameworks of national and states public health, community-development, resilience and violence-prevention national strategies in Sudan. Victim assistance may be an entry point for working with communities at various levels and ensuring participation and leadership.
- 5) **Participation and Inclusivity:** Mine and ERW victims, survivors, VA organizations and Disabled People Organizations (DPOs), local communities and their leaders should be consulted in the planning, implementation and monitoring of victim assistance services.
- 6) **Age-and-Gender Sensitive Victim Assistance:** Age-and-gender specificity and sensitivity should be mainstreamed in all aspects of victim assistance planning and programming. This should be executed in accordance with the United Nations Gender Guidelines for Mine Action Programmes.
- 7) **Accessibility:** Mine and ERW victims shall have access to the services they require. Barriers to the access to those services, such as physical obstacles, lack of access to information and negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities, shall be systematically addressed.
- 8) **Training and Capacity Building:** VA organizations and relevant personnel should be provided with training to ensure victim assistance is conducted with the requisite sensitivity and relevant expertise, as well as to be understood within the broader frameworks of rights of persons with disabilities.

## **7. Victim Assistance Components**

Victim Assistance consists of eight complementary components as below:

### **7.1 Emergency and Continuing Medical Care**

Emergency medical care covers activities that support a landmine/ERW survivor's medical state from the moment an accident occurs to the provision of definitive care needed to stabilize his or her condition. Emergency medical care includes emergency assistance provided at the scene of the accident, transfer to hospital(s), surgery, and recuperation.

Continuing medical care is the ongoing medical care provided after a survivor's condition stabilizes and he or she is able to live in reasonable comfort given the injuries sustained. In some cases such medical care may be necessary throughout the survivor's lifetime.

### **7.2 Data Collection**

Data collection is essential in providing a basis for the prioritization and planning of effective and sustainable VA projects. VA organizations shall, therefore, include processes and procedures for gathering and managing information on accidents, survivors and victims. The data collection shall be age and gender disaggregated, and in addition to collecting data on the number, age and gender of survivors and victims, the mine action and VA organizations shall also collect data on the specific needs and requirements of mine/ERW victims and survivors. The VA data shall be properly reported to NMAC VA department and IMSMA section for the management and timely provision of information to related stakeholders and interested parties.

### **7.3 Physical Rehabilitation**

Physical rehabilitation includes physical therapy and patient education, the provision of prosthetic and orthotic devices, mobility devices including canes, crutches, walkers and wheelchairs, as well as the training in their use. Survivors may require transitioning between different devices and aids at different stages of their recovery and adjustment; each transition may require specialist support and rehabilitation. All surviving landmine/ERW victims require physical rehabilitation.

### **7.4 Psychological Counselling and Peer Support**

Psychological counselling and peer support include the counselling and advisory support provided to landmine/ERW victims and their families in order to assist them in adjusting to their new status and coping with their new circumstances. Counselling or peer support may be provided on an individual basis or in groups and may be of short, medium, or long-term durations. All survivors require psychological counselling or peer support. However, such support should be provided to families of victims that do not survive a mine or ERW accident.

### **7.5 Social Inclusion**

Disability and dependence resulting from landmine/ERW injuries may result in social exclusion and survivor isolation. The negative feelings directed toward those with disability shall be overcome from both the survivor's perspective as well as that of their family and the community in which they live. Social inclusion for landmine/ERW survivors promotes cultural or social participation within the family and within the community where the survivor lives. Assistance with social inclusion may also be provided to families of victims that did not survive a mine and ERW accident.

## **7.6 Economic Reintegration**

Economic reintegration involves activities such as vocational training, support for livelihoods development, and job placement all designed to provide economic independence for victims and their families. In many cases adaptations may be required for mine/ERW survivors to participate in mainstream training programs or benefit from livelihoods development. In some cases, specific industries or businesses may be established to provide employment to victims or support for small business start-ups or home-based enterprises.

## **7.7 Advocacy for the Rights of Mine/ERW Victims and Dependents**

People with disability may be marginalized dependent to the society they live in, and shall therefore, be legally protected from discrimination and provided assurance of an acceptable level of care and access to services. In order for this to be realized, advocacy for the rights of landmine/ERW victims shall be actively carried out.

Sudan has a National Disability Law but some or most of the new landmine/ERW survivors may not be familiar with and as such may not be comfortable in advocating for their own legal rights. Advocacy for enforcement of the National Disability Law ensures both People with Disability and landmine/ERW survivors are protected from discrimination.

## **7.8 Physical Accessibility**

There is possibility of presence of infrastructure that remains inaccessible to the people with physical disabilities. Resolving physical impediments to buildings and key public sites is therefore critical to ensuring both mine and ERW survivors and other People with Disability are able to fully participate in community life. Schools, parks, hospitals, clinics, training sites, markets, government and public buildings and places of religious worship shall be made accessible and physical barriers either removed or corrected that provides easy and comfortable access to the People with Disability.

## **8. Victim Assistance Approach**

Due to different factors including age and gender of the mine and ERW survivors, the types of their disability, their family resources, local conditions, local security, level of community supports and awareness, availability to and the degree of access to basic support and services facilities within the local context; they need different VA services. The scope of VA should therefore not be fixed or limited to a kind of assistance support, a place or time; rather, it shall reflect flexibility, creativity, and dedication to supporting the victims and survivors based on their needs and requirements, while planning and implementing VA projects.

All VA organizations, in consultation with NMAC VA department, shall plan and implement their VA activities based on the need analysis, and take into account the specific requirements of mine and ERW survivors and victims. The strategic goals and objectives of the Sudan national strategic framework for victim assistance shall also be considered.

## **9. General Responsibilities of VA Organizations**

VA organizations, NMAC and government institutions that are working in VA and wider disability aspects have certain responsibilities in relation to the promotion and support of VA in Sudan. The responsibilities of VA organizations and NMAC are outlined below.

### **9.1 Information Gathering**

All VA organizations have a responsibility for gathering, analysis and reporting to NMAC the accurate and timely information on mine and ERW accidents, number of victims and survivors, type of disabilities and the needs and requirements of mine/ERW victims and survivors. NMAC shall manage and maintain all VA data as part of the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA). The VA data shall include information about the individual victims and survivors in Sudan, the types of their disability, their needs, locations and contact details and other local conditions. Such information shall be shared with VA organizations and stakeholders for planning, prioritization, and implementation purposes of VA projects.

### **9.2 Strategic Planning**

Strategic planning of VA aspects within the mine action context of Sudan requires meeting both the provisions and requirements of national legislation on disability, and Sudan's obligations in relation to compliance with APMBC. Strategic planning for VA shall be carried out by NMAC with technical support of UNMAS, and in consultation with relevant government institutions, mine action stakeholders and organizations.

### **9.3 Design and Development of VA Projects**

Design and development of VA projects or long-term programming shall conform to the following criteria:

- a) Specific. All projects require written plans and shall be responsive to local VA needs as identified through comprehensive study, assessment and analysis of VA data. Project objectives shall reflect specific VA accomplishments rather than merely describe the activity the VA organization intends to pursue. Objectives should be detailed enough that all program staff assigned to the project clearly understand them and the related action plans and activities to achieve them. The intended beneficiaries should be directly involved in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of VA projects.
- b) Measurable. There should be clear and well defined indicators to support measuring and reporting achievements of the projects' objectives.
- c) Attainable. As standards of achievement, project objectives should be ambitious but should not be impossible. Project objectives shall also be consistent with the actual resources available to the implementer.
- d) Results-Oriented. Project objectives should be specified in terms of results. In most cases, this means recording a positive change in the life of the victims and survivors, their family and community.
- e) Time-Bound. Proposal objectives should be completed in a specified timeframe. Attention shall be given to project timing to assure that the stated objectives can be achieved within the period of performance proposed.



## **10. Resource Mobilization and Allocation of Resources for Victim Assistance**

UNMAS should assist NMAC in identifying resources that are available at local, national and international levels to implement national plans of action for victim assistance. UNMAS should assist Sudan mine action programme with this undertaking by, among other activities and when appropriate, promoting the integration of resource mobilization efforts within broader assistance appeals, and engaging with potential donors. Ideally this should be done in coordination with relevant United Nations entities and other actors involved in victim assistance. Communicating financial requirements related to victim assistance to donors is of particular importance when victim assistance has not yet been integrated into broader health, disability, humanitarian or development programmes and where mine and ERW victims are reliant on victim assistance dedicated funding.

UNMAS should identify where the inclusion of those needs and rights may be promoted, so that resources are allocated to priority areas. Prioritization also depends on the specific context of Sudan including humanitarian emergency, recovery or development. Addressing the human rights of mine and ERW victims is a long-term endeavour requiring sustained financial support, provided through national and international resources and commitments.

Financial and technical support provided for the implementation of the CRPD by Sudan as States Party to this convention has the potential to promote the human rights of mine and ERW survivors. UNMAS should advocate for the inclusion of mine and ERW survivors as direct beneficiaries of international cooperation and assistance in support of persons with disabilities, within and outside the realm of the CRPD.

## **11. Accreditation of VA Organizations**

All organizations intending to carry out VA services in Sudan under the coordination of NMAC should be accredited by NMAC as VA organizations in accordance with the requirements of this SNMAS and SNMAS 07.02, prior to initiating any VA activities and projects in Sudan.

## **12. Monitoring and Evaluation of VA Activities and Projects**

### **12.1 Monitoring**

Organizations implementing VA projects shall use internationally recognized tools (Quality of Life Surveys, Activities of Daily Living Surveys) to appropriately monitor the services provided. Such monitoring shall track progress in project implementation, compliance with project standards and any changes in the environment under which project outputs are delivered. Monitoring shall be carried out on a regular basis and thoroughly documented.

When monitoring identifies significant changes in the environment under which a project's outputs are delivered, the implementer should review and, if necessary, amend their project plan in consultation with NMAC to ensure that the VA activities originally offered remain relevant.

The NMAC shall conduct external monitoring of the Victim Assistance activities and projects based on the requirements of SNMAS 07.03 and implemented through VA organizations.

### **12.2 Evaluation of VA Projects and Programs**

NMAC may engage qualified third-party evaluators to review and assess VA projects and programs conducted under its coordination. Such evaluations should assess:

- a) Effectiveness. The extent to which the project or program achieves its medium-term objectives and goals (project outcomes);

- b) Impact. The long-term direct and indirect benefits of the VA projects on the beneficiaries;
- c) Relevance. The extent to which the project meets particular needs, expectations and priorities of the beneficiaries, government authorities, and funding bodies;
- d) Efficiency. The extent to which the project has achieved its 'outputs' (deliverables) in relation to its 'inputs' (resources invested); and
- e) Sustainability. The probability project benefits will continue once initial inputs such as external funding or assistance cease.

### **12.3 Corrective Action**

When monitoring and or evaluation identify a deficiency associated with the management or implementation of a VA project, the implementing organization shall be immediately notified to take immediate actions to address the issues. Further re-audit visits should be conducted by NMAC to ensure appropriate and effective remedial actions are taken and implemented.

### **13. Reporting VA Activities**

VA organizations shall submit regular monthly progress reports on their activities to the NMAC using standard forms that are developed and issued by NMAC VA department. NMAC shall compile records of VA activities collected as part of its role in managing mine action data through IMSMA.

### **14. Information Management**

NMAC manage and maintains IMSMA containing data relevant to VA; specifically mine/ERW accidents and victims and survivors information. Information from IMSMA shall regularly analyzed and made available to all mine action organizations including organizations providing VA assistance to mine/ERW victims and survivors. NMAC should ensure that IMSMA meets all mine action and especially VA information requirements of VA stakeholders, and provide essential and reliable inputs to national planning and prioritization aspects of VA in Sudan.