Statement by
Delegation of Lao PDR on Victim Assistance
at Intersessional Meeting of States Parties to CCM

16 April 2012, Geneva

Co-Chairs,

On behalf of the Lao Delegation, I would like to express our appreciation to Austria and Bosnia and Herzegovina, coordinators for victim assistance for the hard work and contribution to advance the course of our convention.

As an affected country, Laos attached great importance to the issue of victim assistance and we view that victim assistance is an important part of our convention to help those unfortunate victimized by cluster munitions as well as persons with other disabilities. In this connection, let me update you on the work we have been doing with regard to victim assistance in our country since the Second Meeting of States Parties held in Beirut, Lebanon last year.

Coordinators,

As you may know that there is an average of around 300 casualties by UXO per year in my country after the end of the conflict. However, in the last few years, due to our intense efforts on mine risk education and good progress on clearance particularly clearance in the areas of most happened accidents, the number of casualties has fallen remarkably. In 2009 and 2010 the number of casualties was accidentally dropped to the same figure at 117. In 2011 the number of casualties has fallen further to 92. Details are as follows: there were 58 accidents in total with 92 victims of which 72 injured and 20 killed. Among them there are 9 women, 32 men, 48 boys and 3 girls. In my view the number of victims is still high and we will try our best to keep it as low as possible.

With regard to assistance services, all 72 survivors were received some assistance from the World Education/Consortium project in collaboration with Ministry of Health in terms of fund support to UXO victims for medical care, daily allowance and transportation at total cost of around over 22,300 USD. Survivors also received fund support for their family economic activities by World Education/Consortium of around 13,000 USD. COPE has provided 1200 prosthetic devices to disabled people of those around 300 devices are for
UXO survivors. Clear Path International has implemented a project on micro finance for UXO victims in 3 districts in Xiengkhouang Province with the total funding of 20,000 USD. Lao Disabled People’s Association, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and some other NGOs have organized Training and workshop on variety of disability-related issues such as employment, statistic, education, advocacy and leadership. Training on First Aids for village volunteers and also UXO contaminated community in Xaybuathong district, Khammouan province, was implemented by Catholic Relife Services. These are some of the services the Lao Government and NGOs have been doing to help those victims.

In my view, the assistance provided is still inadequate. We will try our best for a better service for victims. However, we foresee that funding is the most challenging issue if better service to be provided.

Last but not least, let me conclude by expressing our thanks and gratitude to all stakeholders that provide assistance and cooperation to us on victim assistance and wishing for continued support and assistance on this issue.

Thank you for your attention.