

Statement
by H.E. Mr. Ta Van Thong
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam to the Kingdom of Norway
(11 September 2012)

Mr. President,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Vietnamese Delegation, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I am confident that, under your able chairmanship, the Meeting will come to a successful ending. I would also like to take this opportunity to express my profound appreciation to the Government and people of the Kingdom of Norway for hosting this Meeting in the beautiful city of Oslo and for their kind hospitality accorded to us all.

Mr. President,

The past twelve months since the Second Meeting in Beirut have seen encouraging progress in the implementation of the Convention, as reflected in the Oslo Progress Report. We take note of the increasing number of States that have become Parties to the Convention, the actions taken in accordance with the Vientiane Plan of Action as well as the challenges identified in the progress report.

Coming from a country which is among the most affected by bombs, mines, unexploded ordnances (UXO), including cluster munitions, my Delegation wishes to express our strong support for the humanitarian goal of the Convention which, since its inception, help strengthen international cooperation on minimizing the effects of cluster munitions.

Viet Nam is one of a few countries most affected by cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnances left over by wars. It is estimated that there are nearly one million tons of cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnances impacted a total area of about 66,000km², of which the extent of cluster munitions remnants is considered extensive. Viet Nam, Therefore, would not be in a position to complete clearance under the Article 4 deadline of ten years. The deadline should be extended many times for fulfilling all clearance obligations. Currently, we are conducting a nation-wide survey on areas contaminated by cluster munitions with the assistance of the Norwegian People's Aid and when the survey is completed we will be in a better position to develop a plan that would better identify the total time needed for clearance.

Mr. President,

However, a number of important obligations under the Convention present great difficulties to the implementation. As a victim State, Viet Nam encourages those user states, both in the past and present, to provide assistance to those states where cluster munitions were used. This is an issue the Convention has not yet addressed. We are of the view that states who have produced, used or abandoned cluster munitions must be accountable for the implementation of obligations under the Convention, including the clearance and destruction of cluster munitions.

Although, Viet Nam is yet to be a State Party to the Convention, but our policy is already in line with many of its provisions. We do not produce, store, use or encourage to use cluster munitions. We are actively conducting clearance activities in relation to cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. We welcome and facilitate international cooperation and assistance for clearance activities and victim assistance. Over the past years, many projects have been carried out in the most affected provinces, namely Quang Tri, Thua Thien – Hue, Quang Binh and Ha Tinh, with partners such as NPA, VVAF, MAG, SODI, UNICEF and others. We would like to take this opportunity to express our highest appreciation to all international partners that have made valuable contributions to this noble and humanitarian endeavor. We look forward to further receiving supports from our partners for clearance and victim assistance as well. For our part, we are prepared to cooperate and share technical expertise with other countries and ready to offer our experts to help if needed.

Mr. President,

As instructed by Prime Minister, the related agencies of Viet Nam are actively studying all aspects of the Convention with a view to acceding to it in due course. In the mean time, we look forward to working closely with all countries and partners to help clear this dangerous weapon.

I thank you for your attention.