

**Statement by the Delegation of LAO PDR on Victim Assistance
Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

September 2012, Oslo, Norway

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout the 1964 to 1973 Second Indochina conflict, Lao PDR suffered intensive aerial bombardment and heavy ground fighting. Records indicate that approximately one ton of ordnance was dropped for every man, woman and child, including more than 270 million cluster sub-munitions, commonly referred to as "bombies".

Because of their wide-area effect and high failure rate, there has been terrible and ongoing impact on our people and our country. In addition to many thousands of civilian casualties during the war, up to 30% of cluster munitions failed to detonate upon impact and remain very dangerous.

There have already been more than 20,000 additional UXO victims since the war ended and cluster munitions continue to deny access to valuable land that could be used for agriculture and development projects.

It has been determined that there have been 675 UXO/Mine Victims from 2008 to 2012. Of these, 43.5% were children.

However, progress is being made. The number of new victims has dropped from an average of 300 per year just a few years ago to under 100 this past year. In 2012, to date, there have been 26 UXO/Mine victims injured and 10 killed.

Since Lao PDR reported to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Beirut in 2011, we have undertaken to continue to implement Phase 2 of the *UXO/Mine Accident and Victim Reporting System* for Laos PDR.

We have designated District and Provincial Focal Points to respond to accidents and the needs of victims throughout the country and are collecting information through the completion of detailed victim and accident surveys. Relevant information is input into the IMSMA database.

By the end of 2012, more than 15,000 UXO Survivors will be tracked through the *Survivor Tracking System*. Data will be collected on the needs of identified UXO/Mine survivors from the 10 heaviest UXO contaminated provinces: Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet, Khammaun, Champasak, Salavan, Sekong, Attapu, Laungprabang, Xiengkhaung and Hauphan province.

Once analysis of Survivor needs is complete, the data will be available to Ministries, local and international NGOs and donor countries. The Survivor Tracking System will provide Laos PDR with an accurate picture of survivor needs, an essential step in ensuring that the needs of cluster munition survivors are addressed in compliance with our UXO Sector Strategy "Safe Path Forward II", our MDG9 and Article 5 of this Convention.

Continued coordination of the Victim Assistance Sector has occurred through quarterly meetings of the Technical Working Groups and awareness raising activities were organized during the celebration of the Entry into Force of the CCM. These activities were attended by a large cross section of Government, NGO's, INGO's and hundreds of others.

To address the challenges of Cluster Munitions Victim Assistance in the context of a broader Disability sector, a comprehensive, inter-ministerial, and inter-sectoral approach is required. The NRA is currently developing a 2012 draft Victim Assistance Strategy that addresses the following 6 pillars;

- Data collection
- Emergency and Continue Medical Care
- Physical Rehabilitation support
- Psycho-social support
- Economic and Vocational rehabilitation
- Legislation, policy and coordination:

The Victim Assistance strategy will be adopted and implemented by next year and we look forward to reporting on further progress at that time.

Thank you for your attention.