

**Statement by the Delegation of the Lao PDR: International Cooperation and Assistance**

**Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**Oslo Norway, September 11-14, 2012**

**Mr. President,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**We wish to begin by congratulating and thanking Spain and Mexico for their excellent work in coordinating the working group on International Cooperation and Assistance this past year.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**For countries that suffer serious contamination from cluster munitions and other UXO, implementation presents a special and a daunting challenge.**

**Most contaminated countries, including Lao, are developing countries, which find it difficult - if not impossible - to meet treaty obligations without valuable outside assistance and support.**

**Fortunately, participants in the Oslo Process factored this into negotiations and built into the text of the Convention, Article 6 on International Cooperation and Assistance.**

**Even before the Convention was established, Lao PDR benefited from the generosity, experience and expertise of many donors and we are deeply grateful to all who have helped us over the years.**

**From 1996 to 2008, just under \$65M US was kindly invested in the UXO sector by a wide range of international donors. We have also benefited from**

**the technical support and facilitation of our work by UN agencies, international organizations and NGOs.**

**Contributions in 2009 were \$15M and this amount grew to \$19M in 2010.**

**This past year, for the first time, we calculated the amount invested in clearance by private commercial enterprises in order to pursue their business activities in Laos and have determined that it was an additional \$10M.**

**The full picture for 2011, then, was approximately \$31M in both domestic and international contributions to the sector, not including in-kind contributions by our Government at the national, provincial and district levels.**

**Although this is a significant amount, we wish to inform you today that our annual budget is not yet commensurate with our needs and our capacity to deliver.**

**As mentioned in other statements, it is part of our national Strategy to focus clearance activities on 41 of 46 sub-district areas that are contaminated and have been identified as priorities for development, while maintaining a rapid-response capability to address high risk situations anywhere in Lao.**

**It is also the hope of our Government to significantly accelerate the pace of clearance to protect our people and to meet our treaty obligations as soon as possible. We intend to do this in part by increasing the level of activity of our national operator, UXO Lao, and international operators, and also by engaging the Lao army to contribute to our national clearance efforts. This would be done under civilian oversight and to national standards that have been set for operational activities, which are consistent with international standards.**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**We believe that we can responsibly and expeditiously absorb an additional \$20M in external support in the short term. Our delegation has with us, 16 project proposals for approved, high-priority activities for the coming year by a range of national and international operators, and for the National Regulatory Authority that oversees their work. We ask all donors and**

**potential donors to please consider contributing to these. We also ask, if you are able, that you please consider multi-year, unearmarked contributions to the sector, which provides greater predictability for more effective planning and programming.**

**Lao PDR pledges to continue to put all funds to very good and responsible use.**

**Also, with the assistance of the UNDP, we will be conducting a full capacity assessment of the National Regulatory Authority to ensure that work throughout the sector continues to be done efficiently, effectively and to national and international standards.**

**We are also committed to improving our capacity for 'results-based' reporting, including better reporting on outcomes and impact, in addition to activities and outputs. We also seek to carry out more comprehensive cost-benefit analysis so we can determine and report upon the development benefits as well as the direct humanitarian benefits of our work in the UXO sector.**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, with your help, we will free our country of the terrible legacy of cluster munitions and other UXO.**

**The Lao delegation thanks you on behalf of our Government and our people.**