

**Statement by Lao Delegation
on Victim Assistance
8th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster
Munitions
3-5 September 2018, Geneva**

Mr President,

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to Italy and Ireland for their work as coordinators on victim assistance and their comprehensive report to the meeting.

As one of the most affected countries by UXO, the Government of Lao PDR is committed in providing assistance to cluster munition victims and survivors of other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Besides the implementation of Article 5 of the CCM, the Lao PDR is also focused on the implementation of Protocol V of the Convention on Conventional Weapons, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other related instruments.

In order to fulfill its obligations, the Lao Government has adopted the Decree on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014 which has been an important framework for supporting person with disabilities including the victims of UXO. During the 2016 ASEAN Summit which was held in Vientiane, Lao PDR launched its national Sustainable Development Goal 18: Lives safe from UXO to emphasize the national commitment to address the UXO issue. The ambition is to eliminate UXO casualties, clear UXO from priority areas, and ensure health treatment and livelihood support to UXO survivors, all by 2030. In addition, the new policy on UXO survivors treatment has also been approved by the NRA last month.

The number of UXO victims fell from 302 in 2008 to 41 in 2017 and 14 people in the 9 months of 2018. Such decline is due to the survey, clearance and risk education efforts of all stakeholders involved in the UXO sector. In addition, almost ten thousand survivor profiles were recorded into the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. This information has been used by various stakeholders to adequately address victim needs in order to improve the work of victim assistance in the country. In addition, the Survivor Tracking System was also established in order to provide an accurate picture of

survivor needs and the provision of services, which is an essential step in ensuring that the needs of cluster munitions survivors are addressed. In fact, more than seven hundred UXO survivors have benefited from immediate medical care, physical rehabilitation, and socio-economic support to aim at providing income generation opportunities.

Mr President

Despite such progress, we still face a number of challenges. Victim assistance is the area that require time, resources and support extensively. Given that the UXO accidents keep happening until all the bombs will be cleared from our territory while there are thousands of victims waiting for support and assistance in their daily lives, victim assistance is, unfortunately, an area that is significantly underfunded.

The Lao PDR is doing its utmost and will continue to do so with a view improve the quality of life of UXO survivors/victims. We wish to express our sincere thanks to donors, international organizations and civil society organizations for their valuable support and assistance, and hope that such cooperation, support and assistance will continue in order to enable Lao PDR to fully achieve the victim assistance goals within the broader disability and development frameworks.

Thank you Mr. President.