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Statement by H.E Ambassador Kham-Inh KHITCHADETH,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative,
Head of Delegation of the Lao PDR
At the Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
(Virtual Meeting: First Part 25 – 27 November 2020)

Theme: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Allow me to begin by thanking the Netherlands and Montenegro for their dedication as the coordinators on International Cooperation and Assistance.

Lao PDR strongly believes that International Cooperation and Assistance remains the core of achieving the CCM objectives, particularly for the most affected country like us. We highly value the partnership between ourselves and all stakeholders taking part in this endeavor to end this catastrophic war legacies.

Guiding by the Dubrovnik Action Plan, the Lao PDR has taken ownership integrating the CCM obligations into our National Strategy for the UXO sector called “The Safe Path Forward II” and initiating the national Sustainable Development Goals called “SDG 18: Lives safe from UXO” assisted by UNDP. As a result, these concrete policies, together with the international cooperation and assistance, and the Lao Government in-kind contribution of 6.5 million during the past five years, have reinforced our commitment to significantly meet the CCM obligations in term of clearance, risk reduction and victim assistance.

Moreover, through the UNDP Programme, we have closely collaborated with the agency on implementing the project entitled “Moving toward achieving SDG 18: Removing the UXO obstacle to development in Lao PDR”. This project has proven to enhance our partnership and provide assistance to meet the needs of the affected communities.

Mr. President,

From 2016 to 2020, 49 UXO Actions Programs have been completed while 13 programs are still ongoing. Notably, remarkable progress has been made via the valuable support from international community where the Lao PDR received financial assistance approximately 150 million US dollars from our friendly countries namely Australia, Canada, EU, Ireland, Japan, Republic of Korea, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, the UK and the U.S. We also received assistance from INGOs namely HALO Trust, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), JMAS, MAG, NPA and World Education. Seizing this opportunity, the Lao PDR wishes to express our heartfelt gratitude to all countries and international organizations for their support and assistance and we look forward to their continued support and further enhanced partnership.

Following our productive discussion hosted by the previous Coordinator, the Netherlands and Peru, from the last Meeting of State Parties (9 MSP) in 2019, we have begun to create the Country Coalition initiative by modifying the existing mechanism through the Round Table Meeting process. Unfortunately, the progress has been delayed by the outbreak of COVID-19.

Mr. President,

As we are all aware, we are living in an unprecedented challenging time, the “business as usual” could not keep up with the emerging crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore our next five-year action plan should lay down the strong foundations for strengthening international cooperation and assistance to overcome the perpetual change of global challenges.

Against this back drop, a stronger and enhanced collaboration between all stakeholders are needed like never before and we urge all friendly countries to reiterate their commitment to enhance international cooperation and assistance so that no one will be left behind in meeting our obligations under the CCM.

Lao PDR will continue to promote consistent dialogue between affected states, donor states and relevant stakeholders to uphold our commitments to work together in order to ensure all lives are safe from Cluster Munitions.

I thank you.