

Statement

By the Delegation of the Lao PDR on Clearance and Risk Reduction

At the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

September 2011, Beirut

Mr.

Madam

~~Mr.~~ President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Between 1996 and the end of June this year the UXO Sector in the Lao PDR cleared a total of 304 square kilometers (including 24.4 square kilometers since the beginning of this year). In addition, UXO operators conducted 25,193 roving tasks leading to the destruction of 334,461 submunitions. The combination of roving tasks and full clearance led to the destruction of over 652,447 cluster sub-munitions (including 19,571 cluster sub-munitions since the beginning of this year). The big question though is **“What remains to be done for Lao PDR to comply with Article 4 of the CCM?”**

In recent months, the National Regulatory Authority for the UXO Sector in the Lao PDR (NRA) has been trying to better measure the actual size of the cluster munitions contamination in Lao PDR. Basing itself on an estimate of 70,000 individual cluster munitions target locations with each cluster munitions strike producing a footprint of up to 12 hectares, the NRA now estimates that cluster munitions contaminated areas in Lao PDR at the end of the war amounted to approximately **8,470 square kilometers**. (I must stress though that this new number only includes cluster munitions contaminated areas and does not reflect the full UXO problem.) In addition, recent research by Norwegian People’s Aid indicates that the average size of footprints could possibly be reviewed downwards in the future, which would obviously lead to another downwards review of the total estimate of cluster munitions contaminated areas.

This new estimate is important because the target of full clearance of cluster munitions in Lao PDR becomes a little bit more **achievable**. But more work is obviously required to refine these numbers further. That is why, the NRA and three operators, MAG, NPA and HIB, have just launched a District Focused Approach for the Management of the UXO Threat. Starting in three

districts, this district-based survey should then be expanded to cover the whole country and give us an accurate picture of what remains to be done.

Mr. ^{Madam}
~~Mr.~~ President,

As you know, the challenges facing the Lao PDR are huge. However, by working together with our government and civil society partners, we are convinced that we can make a big difference for affected communities and implement Article 4. The side-event we organized on Tuesday with some of the key operators in the Lao PDR may have given you an idea of the partnership approach that we are pursuing to implement the Convention. In recent weeks, we have done more work on a **CCM implementation plan** covering the years 2012 to 2020 and following a multiyear results framework. This plan should pave the way between now and 2020, when Lao PDR will face its 10 year deadline for clearance. This plan is also designed to demonstrate to States Parties our commitment to fully implement the CCM. To implement this plan, we view a growing commitment of Lao Government resources, as well as a substantial increase of clearance and risk reduction education operations supported by our generous donors and supporters from around the world. We particularly welcome the gradual increase of current operations, the arrival of new operators such as the International Committee of the Red Cross and, maybe most importantly, the trial of "all available methods for the efficient implementation of Article 4" as described in the excellent paper submitted by Australia and presented in our statement during the June Intersessional Meeting.

Before concluding, I would like, on behalf of the Lao Delegation, to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to donor countries and International organizations for their continued assistance and support to our clearance and risk reduction education programmes.

Thank you for your attention.