

Statement by Lao delegation on General Exchange of View
at Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

13 September 2011, Beirut, Lebanon

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Lao delegation, I would like to congratulate you for your election as President of the Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I am confident that with your able leadership our meeting will be guided to a successful conclusion. I would also like to express our thanks and appreciation to the Government and people of Lebanon for excellent organization of the meeting and a warm hospitality extended to us since our first arrival to this beautiful city of Beirut.

Mr. President,

Laos and Lebanon share the same fate and destiny of being heavily affected by cluster munitions. We know too well how great impacts of unexploded cluster sub-munitions have imposed on and hindered our socio-economic development. They have deprived hundred thousand of lives and injured score of our love ones, particularly women and children - a future generation of our nation. They have denied our fertile land for much needed agricultural production and for other purposes. Clearance of those contaminated areas proved to be much time consumed and huge fund needed; needless to say on the need for victim assistance. In order to avoid the repetition of the scourge of cluster munitions, the best way is to prohibit the use and production of cluster munitions, destroy stockpiles and clear the contaminated areas as soon as possible, including provide assistance to cluster munitions survivors for their rehabilitation and social reintegration. In this connection, Laos has placed a great deal of faith in Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Mr. President,

In order to fulfill our obligations under the Convention, particularly the Vientiane Action Plan adopted at the First Meeting of States Parties, we have explored the ways and means on how those goals and objectives could be met. Apart from the revision and improvement of our previous existing UXO strategy to make it more suitable to the current context of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which is now called “The Safe Path Forward II”, we have gone further step to draft a 10-year-plan for the implementation of the Convention, which lays out the concrete targets, indicators and fund needed to carry them out. The draft is in the final stage before submitting to the Government for approval. We have already planned to hold a seminar on this plan and on the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions the week after our meeting here, with participants from local authorities concerned, aimed at ensuring the Plan and the Vientiane Action Plan be effectively implemented.

Besides, we are also exploring and testing various techniques to improve the clearance rate, such as district survey and land release survey. We are also in the consultation process with Komatsu on the pilot project on using mechanical clearance scheduled to begin early next year. If it is successful the clearance rate should be improved dramatically and Laos could be free from cluster munitions sooner.

Mr. President,

The Oslo Convention is relatively young but it is growing and we are confident that with the humanitarian objective of the Convention and in combination with the strong support and effort from States Parties, International Organizations and civil society, it will continue to grow strongly in the future. In this regards, we welcome all new States Parties that joined the Convention since our First Meeting that make our members to 63 with Swaziland as the newest member. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate Swaziland for acceding to CCM. We also urge those signatories and non-signatories to consider ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible to ensure that the scourge of cluster munitions as in my country, in Lebanon and elsewhere would not reoccur again.

I hope that the Second Meeting of States Parties would be a venue to take stock of what have achieved in a relatively short time for the implementation of Vientiane Action Plan and what required to be done to help immediate start of implementation of the Convention aimed at all States Parties be able to meet their obligations under the Convention.

Last but not least, I would like, on behalf of the Government and Lao people to express our thanks and gratitude to donors countries, International Organizations and NGOs that provide generous assistance on addressing the UXO issues in my country and I hope that further assistance would be forthcoming.

I thank you for your kind attention.