

**Statement by Viet Nam on Victim Assistance
at 2nd Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Beirut, 12-16 September 2011

Madame President,

Viet Nam is among the countries most affected by cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war. Since the end of the wars in my country more than three decades ago, some 40,000 people have been killed and 62,000 people injured by ERWs, including cluster munitions. As such, provision of assistance to victims of ERW is of great significance.

Viet Nam has signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and adopted a Law on Persons with Disabilities, which provides an important legal framework for the care for and assistance to victims of ERW. Also, an essential and integral part of the National Action Plan to address the post-war consequences of bombs and mines, is to provide support and assistance to victims of ERW. On that basis, the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs, as the focal point for the nation-wide efforts, is developing a Victim Assistance Action Plan and Standard Guidelines on Victim Assistance.

While we create the legal and policy framework, we continue in practice to provide the necessary assistance for victims, including emergency, physical and psychological treatment, rehabilitation, provision of prosthetic limbs and re-integration of victims into social and economic activities. Nine Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Limbs Centers have been established to provide such services to survivors. And importantly, Viet Nam continues to rigorously implement its poverty reduction and socio-economic development programmes, which helps reduce the probability of people getting in contact with ERW.

For these programmes and activities to yield results, resources are indispensable. Viet Nam has made use primarily of its state budget and also mobilized community contribution. We appreciate and value the assistance provided to Vietnamese victims by the many international partners, including the International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, UNICEF, international NGOs like Peace Trees, VVAF, SODI, Clear Path International, and many bilateral donors. I take this opportunity to thank you for your generous support. I also call on all donors, international organizations and NGOs to continue and increase your cooperation with and assistance to us in this daunting task.

Madame President,

Victim assistance can and should in no way be separated from other aspects of addressing consequences of cluster munitions. It is of utmost importance that we deal with the very root cause of the matter, that is to put an end to the use of cluster munitions. It is also important that clearance activities are strengthened. From our own experience, thanks to the active clearance programme, which in 2010 alone cleared some 610 million square meters, the number of victims have been reduced significantly, to around 40 victims per year.

Finally, Madame President, cluster munitions and other ERWs are indiscriminate in nature. Hence, our efforts to address their consequences, including victim assistance, should also be indiscriminate. A survivor of any unexploded ordinance, in any country must receive the assistance he or she needs. And in the case of Viet Nam, as we seek to provide more and more assistance to survivors of cluster

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munitions and other ERWs, we cannot lose sight of the other more than 1 million victims of wars, including the hundreds of thousands of victims of agent orange/dioxin.

I thank you, Madame President.