

**Statement by the Delegation of the LAO PDR: National Implementation  
Measures**

**Third Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**Oslo Norway, September 11-14, 2012**

**Mr. President,**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Our delegation wishes to begin by congratulating and thanking New Zealand for its excellent work in leading the Working Group on National Implementation Measures over this past year and we are pleased that New Zealand will continue in this capacity to the end of the Fourth Meeting.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Lao PDR was extremely happy to be the second country to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions, after Norway, to whom we are deeply grateful for initiating the Oslo Process that led to this Convention.**

**From the start, Lao PDR was aware of the strong commitment that would be required by our nation and by the international community in order to meet the many obligations contained in the Convention. I wish to assure distinguished colleagues that we remain fully committed to all the provisions of this Convention and to take this opportunity to report on some of the national measures we have taken towards its implementation and our plans for the future.**

**In June of this year, the Government officially approved a new UXO Sector Strategy entitled *The Safe Path Forward II (SPF II)* that will guide work in the UXO Sector through to 2020. SPF II is aligned with the most recent 5-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDV VII) and will bring together humanitarian and national development priorities for the UXO sector to a far greater extent than in the past.**

We seek to achieve an end state where people from the most highly impacted communities live free from the effects of UXO, while, at the same time, targeting 41 of 46 sub-district areas that have been identified as priorities for national development in 10 provinces. This will help us achieve our Millennium Development Goal 9, which our Government developed specifically for the UXO sector, and to advance progress in other MDGs. It will also help Lao PDR to reduce poverty and to meet another major national aspiration, to graduate from the list of Least Developed Countries by 2020.

For maximum efficiency, clearance operations will continue to combine pre-planned, systematic activities with roving clearance operations that can address high risk situations on a rapid-response basis, when and wherever they emerge.

At this time, there are approximately 2,500 clearance personnel working full time, around 15 % of which are women. The cadre of female clearance personnel will continue to grow over time.

Since the beginning of this year, Lao PDR has cleared approximately 31.57 square kilometers of land and destroyed approximately 571,929 submunitions, through the efforts of national and international operators in both regular and roving clearance activities.

We continue to implement a District Focused Approach, which includes non-technical and technical surveys. Among other things, this is producing much more accurate and detailed data on contaminated areas. The DFA process will eventually be implemented in all relevant districts and, over time, we will be able to get a very clear picture of the nature and full extent of the UXO contamination problem, in order to more effectively target clearance and other efforts.

With an estimated 8,470 km<sup>2</sup> still contaminated by cluster munitions and an area potentially up to ten times larger contaminated by UXO of various types, Lao PDR has a long way to go. For this reason, we wish to expand and accelerate our survey and clearance activities.

Like clearance, victim assistance requires more attention. On the positive side, clearance and risk education activities have helped to reduce the number of victims to fewer than 100 last year from an average of 300 just a few years ago. However, approximately 20,000 survivors remain in need of some form of support.

Lao PDR has put in place a Survivor Tracking System in order to gather detailed information on their injuries, to direct them to appropriate service providers and to track their progress. Eventually we hope to complement this with a systematic victim survey as part of the District Focused Approach.

The Technical Working Group on Victim Assistance continues to meet on a regular basis and we are now in the process of finalizing a sub-sector strategy on Victim Assistance.

Last year the sector effectively utilized \$31M and we believe that we can reasonably quickly and responsibly scale activities upward to \$50M per year, if sufficient resources can be mobilized – and we hope that the international community, to whom we are most grateful, will help in this regard.

In order to ensure that all funds continue to be put to good use, with the support of the UNDP, we will conduct a comprehensive capacity assessment of the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) and will take any necessary measures to ensure that we continue to be able to oversee and ensure the performance of national and a growing number of international operators in all three main areas of activity - clearance, risk education and victim assistance.

At the policy and legal level, though a full State Party, Lao PDR has yet to put in place legislation that will impose legal sanctions to prevent and suppress activities prohibited to a State Party, undertaken by persons or on territory under our jurisdiction or control, as required by Article 9 of the Convention. I wish to confirm that it is Lao PDRs intention to establish a law or laws that will adequately and fully reflect the high standards achieved in this Convention and we urge all States Parties to do the same.

**Lao PDR will continue to do its best to implement all the provisions of the Convention and look forward to the day when our nation is free of the threat of cluster munitions and other UXO.**

**Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your kind attention.**