

**Statement by the Head of the Vietnamese Delegation**

**H.E. Ambassador Nguyen Trung Thanh,**

**Permanent Representative of Viet Nam**

**to the United Nations in Geneva**

*10 September 2013*

*Mdm, President,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Thank you for honoring me with the privilege of winding up the first day of our important Meeting. On behalf of the Vietnamese Delegation, I would like to express heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Zambia for your excellent hospitality and arrangement in your peaceful and centenary city of Lusaka. Indeed this is my very first visit ever to Africa and I believe so is it to many of my Vietnamese colleagues. We are honored to bring the warm sentiments and solidarity of the Vietnamese people to the brotherly peoples of Zambia and Africa as a whole.

Mr. Minister, I warmly congratulate you on your presidency first ever in the great African continent. I wish you the finest success in realizing the priorities and duties as outlined in your Foreign Minister's instructive remarks earlier on. Also allow me to take this opportunity to express our highest appreciation and congratulations to H.E Ambassador Steffen Kongstad and the Government of Norway for their valuable contributions made during Norway's presidency over the last year.

*Mdm, President,*

Over the past twelve months since the Third Meeting in Oslo, there have seen encouraging progress and continued endeavors of the international community in promoting and operationalising the Convention, with an growing number of State Parties acceding to the Convention. Much more remains desired and needs to be done.

*Mdm, President,*

If there is one of the names of the countries that never fails to feature in the peoples' memory of a most tragic past and clear vision of a future of peace and prosperity, that would be Viet Nam. Naturally, it is the consistent policy of Viet Nam to advocate comprehensive

disarmament and the elimination of the weapons of mass destruction. Viet Nam welcomes all constructive international efforts for this purpose.

Viet Nam supports the humanitarian goals of the Cluster Munitions Convention, including the establishment of cooperation mechanisms and international assistance to solve the consequences caused by cluster munitions. As have been indicated clearly on previous occasions, Viet Nam is yet to be in a position to accede to the Convention. One of our major concerns is the ability to meet the clearance obligation under Article 4 of the Convention. The Convention places responsibilities of victim assistance on affected states, almost of which are developing countries. On the other hand, whether State producers and users of cluster munitions on the territory of other States should be held accountable in the light and spirit of the Convention is but one of several questions aspirants would have in considering the accession to the Convention. Another area of concern is that the Convention sets a maximum time-limit for a member state to ensure the clearance and destruction of cluster munition remnants on its territory within only 15 years. Given the situation well-known to all of us regarding Viet Nam, in a best-case scenario, it may take more than a hundred of years and an enormous amount of many billions of dollars for the clearance of cluster munitions on the 6.6 million hectares of contaminated land. Bearing that in mind and in the context of Vietnam's line of active and positive integration as a reliable partner of the international community, Viet Nam continues to study with appropriate steps in the on-going process of consideration of the Convention.

*Mdm, President,*

As one of a few countries heavily affected by cluster munitions and other unexploded ordnances left over by most devastating and protracted wars, the Government of Viet Nam has considered cluster munitions a great concern and adopted many policies and guidelines to address the post-war consequences of bombs and mines, including a comprehensive national action plan for the 2010-2025 period. Directly chaired by the Prime Minister, this is a clear indication of the Government's determination to clear and destroy these kinds of dangerous weapon. In 2012, ten projects were carried out in the most affected provinces, notably Quang Tri, Quang Binh, Dak Lak with a total area of 45.000 hectares and a large sum of many millions of USD equivalent, of which 95% was borne by the Government. We are also taking final steps to complete a national map of bomb and mine pollution and striving for the clearance of bombs and mines in more 50.000 hectares this year.

We commit ourselves politically and practically to improving the livelihood of victims of bombs, mines and other explosive remnants of war by providing assistance, including treatment, rehabilitation and support for the victims' re-integration in socio-economic activities. On March

2013, the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the International Centre of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (IC-VVAF) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) successfully held a seminar on overcoming the aftermath of bombs, mines and explosives left by the war in Vietnam. And today, joining our delegation to this Meeting are representatives from Quang Tri Province, including a vice provincial governor and a victim who will share with us later his personal story concerning the harmful effects of one of the most dangerous weapons of human beings that they are facing.

In terms of international cooperation and assistance, closer to home, in ASEAN, Vietnam's most recent initiative on humanitarian de-mining action has been accepted by the ASEAN Defense Ministers and their Counterparts of many Dialogue Partners of ASEAN. On the other hand, Vietnam has welcome and received significant support from a number of Governments such as of Japan, United States, Switzerland, Norway, Germany, Australia, UK, etc in the last decades through the implementation of humanitarian mine action programs, provision of equipment, facilities, and trainings on technical and institutional capacity development. Recently, the National Mine Action Standing Board has signed a memorandum of understanding with GICHD and IC-VVAF in coordination of the implementation of the national mine action program.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude and highest appreciation to all international partners who have made valuable contributions to this noble and humanitarian endeavor. We certainly appreciate most highly and engage in the further exchange of views, information and best practices with all relevant stakeholders. Such cooperation and assistance would help facilitate the process of reviewing and considering the Convention.

*Mdm, President,*

Although still being an observer to the Convention, I hope what I have just briefly shared with you above, would possibly bring to this Meeting a panoramic view of the situation in my country and most of all the ongoing efforts of the Government and Peoples of Viet Nam in this regard. Therefore, Viet Nam welcomes and is willing to cooperate with the international partners, non-governmental organizations and other relevant agencies in the field of detection, clearance of cluster munitions and other explosive remnants of war as well as victim assistance.

A very good evening to you all.

Thank you and Zkomo!