

**Statement by Lao PDR  
on Victim Assistance  
7th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions  
4-6 September 2017, Geneva**

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Mr President,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to Chile and Italy for their work as coordinators on victim assistance and their comprehensive report to the meeting.

As one of the countries most affected by Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), the Government of Lao PDR is committed to provide assistance to cluster munition victims and survivors of other explosive remnants of war (ERW). Besides the implementation of Article 5 of the CCM, the Lao PDR is focused on the implementation of Protocol V of the Convention on Conventional Weapons, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other related instruments.

Since its adoption in 2014 the Decree on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been the most important framework for our support to persons with disabilities, including the victims of cluster munitions and other forms of UXO. During the 2016 ASEAN Summit, which was held in our capital Vientiane, Lao PDR launched the national Sustainable Development Goal 18: Lives safe from UXO to emphasize the national commitment to address the UXO issue. Our new ambitious goals are to completely eliminate UXO casualties, clear UXO from priority areas, and ensure health treatment and livelihood support to UXO survivors, all by 2030. In addition, new policy on provision of treatment for UXO survivors has been approved by the NRA last month.

The number of UXO victims fell from 302 in 2008 to 59 in 2016. Such decline is due to the survey, clearance and risk education efforts of all stakeholders involved in the UXO sector. Almost ten thousand survivor profiles were recorded into the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database. This information has been used by various stakeholders to adequately address victim needs in order to improve the work of victim assistance in the country. In addition, the Survivor Tracking System was also established in order to provide an accurate picture of survivor needs and the provision of services, which is an essential step in

ensuring that the needs of cluster munitions survivors are addressed. In fact, more than five hundred UXO survivors have benefited from immediate medical care, physical rehabilitation, and socio-economic support aimed at ensuring they could earn an income.

Mr President

Despite such progress, we still face with challenges. Most importantly, UXO accidents still happen on a regular basis in Lao PDR. During the first nine months of 2017, there has unfortunately already been 28 casualties, and just last month, in August, an accident happened in Savannaket province causing three (3) victims, of which two (2) were killed instantly and one (1) person seriously injured. Victim assistance clearly is an area requiring extensive and long-time support. While there are thousands of victims waiting for support, the area remains underfunded.

The Lao PDR will continue to do its utmost to improve the quality of life for UXO survivors. We wish to express our sincere thanks to donors for their valuable support, and hope that such cooperation will continue, and if possible also expand, to fully achieve the goals for victim assistance within the broader disability and development frameworks.

Thank you for your kind attention.