

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

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates

At the outset, my delegation would like to congratulate New Zealand for its work in coordinating the National Implementation Measures Working Group.

Lao PDR continues to recognize the strong commitment from the international community in ensuring that the obligations contained in the Convention are met. As the second country signing the CCM, Lao PDR will remain fully committed to the implementation of the Convention.

Dear colleagues,

During ASEAN Summit in September last year, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 18 was launched. SDG 18 aims to reduce the numbers of casualties caused by Unexploded Ordnance (UXO), improve the socio-economic development in the affected areas, and guarantee better support for the victims.

In addition to SDG 18, a new Survey Strategy entitled 'From Survey to Safety' was also adopted and is in the process of being implemented over a 5-year period. This strategy includes targets for Non-Technical and Technical Survey, which help define the extent of Cluster Munitions contamination. Starting in 2018, efforts will commence aimed at concluding a comprehensive survey of six (6) contaminated provinces. In 2019, three (3) additional provinces will be added to this national survey plan and finally, in 2020-2021, survey will start in another five (5) provinces. We thereby aim to have a total of 14 provinces fully surveyed by end of 2021, which will constitute the first comprehensive national survey of known cluster munitions in Lao PDR.

In late of 2016, the Prime Minister issued Order No. 43/PM. It stipulates that development projects in provinces and districts affected by UXO must undergo survey and clearance before project implementation, and these development projects must also allocate funding for survey and clearance.

in 2017, the Lao government is working on UXO clearance priorities, which collected priority land for development for 2018 in 14 UXO contaminated provinces. The provinces have identified 470,000 Ha of priority land for development, of which we have already

been able to determine that there are at least 10,000 Ha of Confirmed Hazardous Areas for clearance within these priority land.

We have integrated UXO awareness into the primary school's curriculum in 10 contaminated provinces to reduce the risk of further casualties. It aims to teach children how to live in UXO contaminated areas, to provide better understanding of the dangers associated with UXO, and to demonstrate how best to avoid these threats.

We have seen a strong progress in UXO sector in the Lao PDR. More than three thousand hectares, most of which was highly contaminated, have been cleared for agricultural and development use. While the number of casualties have slightly decreased from 59 in 2016 to 27 in nine months of 2017. And with the introduction of SDG 18, the aim is to bring the number to zero by 2030. The capacities of the national institutions have also been strengthened with training as well as on-the-job support in programme management and strategic planning.

Mr. President,

While much progress has been made, we are still facing several challenges. Firstly, funding is not sufficient and it affects the UXO sector as a whole, and it is a concern for the two main national institutions responsible for the implementation and oversight of the provisions of the Convention, namely the NRA and UXO Lao. The uncertainty regarding the funding situation is very unfortunate considering the increased efforts taking place in Lao PDR to both complete the first national survey and to establish a good system for prioritization of the clearance tasks. The role of the national institutions is very important to both coordinate the national survey and to ensure timely monitoring of the clearance process. Secondly, the coordination and collaboration among sector stakeholders need to be further improved to increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of the sector.

The Lao PDR will continue to work hard to free the country from the threat of UXO, to ensure individuals and communities can live in a safe environment contributing to development and where UXO victims are fully integrated into their societies and their needs are being met.

I thank you for your kind attention.