

Statement by the Delegation of LAO PDR on Victim Assistance
Intersessional Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster
Munitions

2013, Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Throughout the 1964 to 1973 Second Indochina conflict, Lao PDR suffered intensive aerial bombardment and heavy ground fighting. Records indicate that approximately one ton of ordnance was dropped for every man, woman and child, including more than 270 million cluster sub-munitions, commonly referred to as “bombies”.

Because of their wide-area effect and high failure rate, there has been terrible and ongoing impact on our people and our country. In addition to many thousands of civilian casualties during the war, up to 30% of cluster munitions failed to detonate upon impact and remain very dangerous.

There have already been more than 20,000 additional UXO casualties since the war ended and cluster munitions continue to deny access to valuable land that could be used for agriculture and development projects.

It has been determined that there have been 702 UXO/Mine casualties from 2008 to 2013. Of these, 41% were children.

However, progress is being made. The number of new victims has dropped from an average of 300 per year just a few years ago to 56 this past year.

In 2013, to date, there have been 04 UXO/Mine casualties injured and 02 killed.

Since Lao PDR reported to the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo in 2012, we have undertaken to continue to implement Phase 2 of the *UXO/Mine Accident and Victim Reporting System* and UXO Survivor Tracking System in 10 contamination provinces for Laos PDR.

We have designated District and Provincial Focal Points to respond to accidents and the needs of victims throughout the country and are collecting information through the completion of detailed victim and accident surveys. Relevant information is input into the IMSMA database.

By the end of 2013, more than 15,000 UXO Survivors will be tracked through the *Survivor Tracking System*. Data will be collected on the needs of identified UXO/Mine survivors from the 10 heaviest UXO contaminated provinces: Bolikhamxay, Savannakhet, Khammaun, Champasak, Salavan, Sekong, Attapu, Laungprabang, Xiengkhaung and Hauphan province.

Once analysis of Survivor needs is complete, the data will be available to Ministries, local and international NGOs and donor countries. The Survivor Tracking System will provide Laos PDR with an accurate picture of survivor needs, an essential step in ensuring that the needs of cluster munition survivors are addressed in compliance with our UXO Sector Strategy “Safe Path Forward II”, our MDG9 and Article 5 of this Convention.

Continued coordination of the Victim Assistance Sector has occurred through quarterly meetings of the Technical Working Groups and awareness raising activities were organized during the celebration of the Entry into Force of the CCM. These activities were attended by a large cross section of Government, NGO’s, INGO’s and hundreds of others.

To address the challenges of Cluster Munitions Victim Assistance in the context of a broader Disability sector, a comprehensive, inter-ministerial, and inter-sectoral approach is required. The NRA is currently developing a final 2013 draft NRA Victim Assistance Strategy that will be the first step towards such an approach. It addresses the following 7 pillars;

- Data collection**
- Emergency and Continue Medical Care**
- Physical Rehabilitation support**
- Psycho-social support**
- Economic and Vocational rehabilitation**
- Legislation and policy**

- **Coordination:**

The Victim Assistance strategy will be adopted and implemented by the next few months and we look forward to reporting on further progress at that time.

Thank you for your attention.