

Statement by Lao PDR

Cooperation and Assistance

**Inter-sessional Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on
Cluster Munitions**

Geneva, Switzerland

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Thank you Mr. Co-chair,

Lao PDR would like to express our thanks to Sweden and Chile, for their excellent work as Coordinators of the Working Group on Cooperation and Assistance.

Dear Colleagues,

As we said in Zambia last September, real change in the lives of people living in contaminated areas, requires fully implementing the provisions of the Convention. In order to do this, affected countries need sufficient and appropriate human, technical and financial resources. And severely affected countries such as Lao PDR, need access to such resources over the long term.

We also need effective ‘partnership’ – within countries and between affected countries and the international community – states and civil society, including the private sector.

For Lao PDR, fulfilling our clearance and victim assistance obligations is a huge challenge. Though this work has been undertaken since the second Indochina war ended 40 years ago, and in a systematic way since 1996, we have cleared less than 2% of potentially contaminated areas, and many of the 20,000 UXO survivors do not have their needs adequately met.

In order to accelerate progress, we are taking a two pronged approach: first, to attempt to increase resources provided by our Government and the international community and second, to use them more effectively by

introducing better equipment and improved methods to our survey and clearance work .

With respect to resources, we wish to express our deep thanks to Australia, Japan, the USA, Ireland, Switzerland, the EU, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Norway, Canada Austria, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Poland and South Korea and for their generous support. In 2013, Lao PDR received more than USD 30 million from the international community, and we are very grateful for this.

The Government of Lao PDR is committed to increasing its own investment in the sector as well, and we have calculated the 2013 in kind contribution at just under US\$ 5M.

In late 2012, the Government issued notification that all development projects undertaken in potentially contaminated areas must plan for survey and, where there is evidence of contamination, for clearance, and to build this into the plans and budget for the project. This directive should have very positive impact on the resource situation for the UXO sector over time.

In addition to the 10 Year UXO Sector Strategy approved in 2012, the UXO Sector submitted an Action Plan to the National Round Table between Government and the International Donor Community last November that identifies key actions, indicators, expected outcomes and impact in 6 areas of activity in the sector, that we believe will make more efficient and effective use of all resources and achieve greater results.

Lao PDR continues to derive great benefit from the assistance of UNDP in administering the UXO Trust Fund, and in helping us to ensure the highest level of transparency and accountability for donor funds. Some donors prefer bilateral arrangements, and Lao PDR welcomes all types of support, especially multi-year contributions to assist planning as well as operations.

In closing, I wish to convey Lao PDR's ongoing, strong support for the proposal from the Co-chairs during our meeting in Zambia, to create an Online Cooperation Portal for potential recipients of co-operation and for donors.

We thank the Co-chairs once again and also everyone here for your kind attention and ongoing support of our efforts to free our country of UXO contamination.