

Statement by Lao Delegation
On Clearance and Risk Reduction Education

10th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. President,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation and I would like to express our appreciation to Sweden and Guyana the coordinators on Clearance and Risk Reduction Education, for their tireless efforts in undertaking this important work.

From 2021 until June 2022, Lao PDR implemented a new “UXO survey procedure” which aims to identify Confirmed Hazardous Areas (CHAs) to be able to identify the full extent of UXO and cluster munitions contamination. Over this period, the UXO Sector carried out the Non-Technical Survey (NTS) in 396 villages, Technical Survey in 554 villages identifying 32,493 ha of CHAS and cleared land 7.500 hectares including 407 hectares of development areas and 7.097 hectares of agriculture areas. During this survey process, operators destroyed 32.140 items of UXO and 131,132 UXO items destroyed during the Clearance. The work on technical survey to identify CHAs for clearance is further evidence that the extend of contamination in Lao PDR is massive.

In order to ensure that land clearance to deserve the right track and needed of land utilization, in 2022 the National Regulatory Authority efforts to introduce prioritization process to local authorities. As well, the NRA are leading the revision of national standards which again should be completed by the end of 2022. In collaboration with development partner the NRA is aiming to launch National Prioritization process in 2023.

To strengthen efficiencies in survey and clearance work, we have been working with multiple stakeholders to improve our National Database System “IMSMA” including development of reporting format as necessity and we continue to strengthen its utility in collaboration with all operators in the country. Lao PDR has also strengthened our efforts in expanding and improving Explosive Ordnance Risk Education activities by updating the content of the advocacy material and ensuring materials are focused towards behavior change for specific at-risk groups. UXO radio programmes continue to be broadcasted in the seven most impacted

provinces (in coordination with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism and Lao Youth Union) and messages are being communicated in several local languages reaching multi-ethnic communities across the country. EORE staff have successfully conduct EORE activities in 1,065 villages communicating with 198,449 villagers of which 67,402 were children. However, we still face challenges with casualties. Over 2021, there were 63 casualties compared to 33 in 2020. In 2022, the NRA will undertake a KAP (Knowledge Attitude Practice) study to identify the effectiveness of EORE. We have also produced three songs to highlight the dangers of UXO which have been released to public.

Mr. President,

Lao PDR will continue working closely with international organizations and development partners in order to overcome challenges and obstacles. Currently, Lao PDR is in the process of revising the national standard and developing action plan in the area of Explosive Ordnance Risk Education, which includes assessing EORE methodology impact, upgrading education materials and expanding radio programme towards a nationwide approach.

The achievements highlighted above would not have been made possible without the support from our development partners, donors and international organizations working in the sector. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them and we look forward to the future cooperation in order to achieve not only our national goals and objectives but for CCM obligations as well.

Thank you