

Statement by Lao PDR
National Implementation Measures

First Review Conference to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
7-11 September 2015 in Dubrovnik, Croatia

Madam President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to thank New Zealand for its hard work in coordinating an area of national implementation measures.

It is with great pleasure to highlight the meeting on key national implementation measures undertaken by Lao PDR.

Lao PDR continues to be mindful of the strong commitment that is required by our nation and by the international community in order to meet the many obligations contained in the Convention. I wish to reiterate our commitment to all the provisions of this Convention. Please allow me to take this opportunity to briefly update the meeting on developments in Lao PDR with respect to the UXO sector over the past five years.

1. With regards to the implementation Status

- Lao PDR approved a new national strategy for the sector, “The Safe Path Forward II”, which will guide work in the UXO sector to 2020. This strategy is aligned very closely with our NSEDP VII, VIII and directs the UXO Sector to focus clearance activities on areas that have been identified as development priorities.
- At the same time, the Lao government adopted UXO clearance as a ninth Millennium Development Goal, targeting reducing the impact of UXO in Lao PDR
- Lao PDR approved a new Victim Assistance Strategy up to 2020. This document was designed as a tool to guide the NRA Victim Assistance unit to assist UXO Victims within the broader disability and development frameworks in Lao PDR.
- Lao government approved a new evidence based survey approach. The most important feature of the new approach is that Lao PDR will systematically assess whole villages and whole development areas, rather than individual land use plots within those areas. This will enable confirmed hazardous areas to be identified through non-technical and technical survey and enable more informed planning for our land release effort;
- The Lao government issued the notification No. 93, which stipulates that all provincial and district development projects in areas affected by UXO must undergo survey and clearance before project implementation, and must also allocate funding to cover the cost.
- We have integrated UXO into the primary school’s curriculum in 10 UXO contaminated provinces. This curriculum aims to teach children how to live in UXO contaminated areas, to better understand the dangers associated with UXO, and to learn how to prevent and avoid these threats.

- Lao PDR is implementing a pilot project for a brush cutter machine that is being conducted in cooperation with UXO Lao and Japan International Cooperation System (JICS).
- Lao government approved a better coordination system for the UXO sector in Lao PDR and strengthened its oversight over the sector. Moreover, Humanitarian team of the Lao Army was trained in survey and clearance and operates under the oversight of the NRA.

2. while much progress has been made, we are still facing a number of challenges, including:

- Funding support has been characterized by a difficult funding situation affecting the UXO sector as a whole, in particular, the two main national institutions responsible for the implementation and oversight of treaty activities,
- The coordination and collaboration among sector stakeholders to increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of the sector, has been improving, but require further improvement,
- Lao PDR has yet to establish a national legislation that contains legal prohibition for committing prohibited acts under the Convention. In collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, and in consultation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNDP, we commenced the development of national legislation that covers our remaining legislative obligations under the Convention. Currently, we are looking for dedicated funding to realize this important task as we are still lacking.

Lao PDR will continue to do its almost best to implement all the provisions of the convention. We hope to see the day when Laos is free from cluster munitions, other explosive remnants of war and landmines.

I thank you for your kind attention.