

**Statement by the Delegation of the Lao PDR**  
**At the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster**  
**Munitions**  
**11 to 14 September 2023,**  
**Geneva, Switzerland**

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**Topic: Victim Assistance**

**Mr. President,**

**Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of Lao delegation, I would like to express our thanks to Mexico and Chile on their work as a Victim Assistance Coordinators.

Supporting UXO victims remains a top priority for the Government of the Lao PDR as demonstrated in our commitment to implement Article 5 of the CCM, which is also consistent with the Article 5 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as well as the UNESCAP declaration on the decade of disabled people and other related instruments. Domestically we have the Law on Person with Disabilities and Victim Assistant Framework is also outlined in Lao PDR's national SDG 18, "Lives Safe from UXO", which it strives to achieve by 2030.

The National Strategic Plan on UXO/Mine Action "Safe Path Forward III" (2021 – 2030) aims to support for at least 11,400 victims. To implement this target, the government utilizes the War Victim Medical Fund as a mechanism to provide funding support to victims. Established in 2016, the fund aims to provide livelihood support and services to them. The Government has also

strengthened policies aiming to provide physical treatment, rehabilitation, and related costs as well as compensation for families and vocational training and socio-economic support in the three of the most impacted provinces. The Government plans to extend this comprehensive approach to all victims in all provinces.

In 2023, 13 UXO accidents took place, with 26 casualties (5 women, 6 men, 10 boys and 5 girls) comparing to 20 casualties (3 women, 9 men, 8 boys) in 2022. The causes of UXO accidents included lighting fires, playing with UXO, cutting grass and digging for food (collecting forest products).

From January to July 2023 there were 245 UXO survivors who received assistance. This included medical treatment (14), physical rehabilitation (30), psychological support (15) and vocational training (187). Psychosocial rehabilitation was also provided to victims to support the integration of victims into their community through the War Victim Medical Fund, as well as other sources. Over the last year, the UXO/Mine Action Sector has worked with two key partners in the area of victim assistance, notably KOICA and World Education. There has also been a greater focus given to vocational training and social-economic support for UXO survivors providing economic support enabling societal reintegration. Over the past year, the UXO sector was able to support 183 UXO victims of a targeted 1,050 UXO victims in the annual work plan.

The victim assistance sector continues to face significant challenges, most notably the limitation of funding; the current programme will end this year and the main challenge in being how to meet all of the physical and psycho-social rehabilitation needs of all casualties with the limited resources available. To overcome the decreasing of funds supporting the UXO sector, Lao PDR needs to find new ways and means to effectively mobilize and utilize funds. The

government of Lao PDR calls on the international community to support this important work.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all international stakeholders for their long-standing support and assistance extended to our country. Lao PDR stand ready to cooperate with all of you, in order to achieve our common goal and objective, especially in Victim Assistance.

**Thank you**