



**Statement by Mr. Daovy VONGXAY,
Director General, Department of International Organizations,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR
At the 12th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions,
10-13 September 2024, Geneva, Switzerland**

Item 10 a: Universalization

**Madame President,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates**

The Lao PDR's delegation would like to express our thanks to Malawi and Peru, the Coordinators on Universalization for their work.

This year has brought significant challenges, and it is with deep regret that Lithuania's intention to withdraw from the Convention on Cluster Munitions and We collectively express our profound concern over the use and transfer of these deadly weapons.

The Lao PDR has suffered the devastating impact of cluster munitions for more than five decades. Even today, remnants of these munitions continue to threaten the lives and livelihoods of our people. Given our painful history, we urgently call upon the international community to uphold the Convention on Cluster Munitions and to strictly refrain from the use, production, transfer, and stockpiling of these indiscriminate weapons, as prescribes in the Convention.

Distinguished Delegates

Over the years, the Lao PDR has been steadfast in promoting the CCM at national, regional, and international levels. Since the UXO/Mine Action sector came under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have launched numerous public awareness initiatives. Notably, we renovated the UXO Visitor Center in Luang Prabang Province, where we installed meaningful artworks that narrate the stories of UXO victims through sculptures made from bombshells. In April, we commemorated the International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance at this center,

and I extend a heartfelt invitation to all to visit, learn about the ongoing impact of UXOs, and see firsthand the work we have undertaken to address this legacy.

Furthermore, this year, the Lao PDR presented its third Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in New York City. As part of this, we organized an exhibition on our national SDG 18: Lives Safe from UXO, highlighting how the implementation of SDG 18 is saving lives and improving livelihoods by turning UXO-contaminated land into coffee plantations. We also co-organized a side event with Azerbaijan to exchange experiences on SDG 18, further raising awareness about the impact of these deadly weapons and promoting support for UXO/Mine action, which is crucial for achieving the SDGs and the objectives of the CCM.

To mark the entry into force of the CCM on August 1st, we organized exhibitions and learning hubs for students, fostering youth engagement with the CCM and its mission.

Madame President

As ASEAN Chair this year, the Lao PDR has consistently elevated the profile of the CCM in regional forums. Our call for the universalization of the CCM has resonated at the UN General Assembly, echoed by our head of delegation each year.

The Lao PDR remains committed to promoting the universalization of the Convention through every available channel, both bilaterally and multilaterally. We commend all countries that have demonstrated their commitment by implementing the Convention. In closing, we urge all Parties to fulfill their obligations under the CCM and take this opportunity to call upon those countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so. Let us continue to work together towards a world free from cluster munitions.

Thank you.