



**Statement by Mr. Bounpheng SISA WATH,
Acting Director General, Office of the NRA (National Regulatory Authority
for UXO/Mine Action Sector in the Lao PDR)
At the 12th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions,
10-13 September 2024, Geneva, Switzerland**

***Item 10 c: Clearance and destruction of cluster munitions remnants and risk
reduction education***

**Madame President,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

I would like to express our gratitude to the representatives of Norway and Italy who have carried out their esteemed roles as coordinators on clearance and risk education.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to present a progress on UXO clearance operations in the Lao PDR in 2023 and the half year of 2024. **Non-Technical Survey has been carried out in 445 villages, and Technical Survey conducted in 532 villages.** Through these operations, a total of an additional **313 Square Kilometers (31,353 hectares)** were identified as confirmed hazardous areas, contaminated with unexploded ordnance.

UXO survey and clearance across Lao PDR have been carried out by a number of national and international organizations, including the National Unexploded Ordnance Program (known as UXO Lao), Humanitarian Demining Unit 58 of the Lao People's Army, MAG, NPA, HALO Trust, Humanity & Inclusion, and other commercial operators involved in clearing unexploded ordnance for specific investment projects in affected provinces.

Over the past 18 months, a total of 97 Square Kilometers (9,743 hectares) of land have been cleared, 88 Square Kilometers (8,809 hectares for agricultural) land, 9.3 Square kilometers (934 hectares for development land). In 2023, land clearance was 62 Square Kilometers (6,209 hectares) with 82,572 UXO destroyed. For half a year of 2024, land clearance was 35 Square Kilometers (3,534 hectares) with 30,258 UXO destroyed.

As a result, 2023 and early 2024 mark our most productive year yet in terms of land cleared and UXO destroyed. However, the challenge remains immense. To fully meet our obligations under the Convention, substantial investment and support are still needed to remove the threat that endangers innocent Lao farmers.

In parallel, Explosive Ordnance Risk Education (EORE) has been conducted alongside UXO clearance efforts, significantly reducing risky behavior among at-risk groups, including ethnic communities. EORE has been integrated into primary, secondary, and teacher training curriculums to ensure that risk education is a core part of every child's education. Additionally, raising awareness has been regularly conducted through villages and schools' loudspeakers, television, radio, and materials distribution.

Madame President,

While we are embracing innovation and pursuing greater efficiency in our clearance efforts, continued international support is crucial. Under the management of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Lao government is fully committed to accelerating progress across all operational areas. We urgently call upon our friends and partners, the state parties of the Convention, to renew their commitment and help us eliminate the scourge of cluster munitions.

As we presented on the first day, Lao PDR has proposed an extension request for implementing Article 4 of additional five years to continue this work to 2030. This extension proposal is the second requested for the Lao PDR and is intended to ensure greater progress in the implementation of UXO clearance activities outlined in the convention.

The achievement of this work plan relies on close collaboration of all stakeholders. For our side, we will do our utmost effort to address the massive UXO contamination problem. Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all who provided assistance and support to us. We sincerely hope that you will continue your support to help Lao PDR, to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 18, as well as fulfill our obligations under the CCM as planned.

Thank you