



**Mine Action Review Statement on Lao PDR's Article 4 Extension Request
(delivered by NPA on behalf of Mine Action Review)**

**Item 9: Presentation of deadline extension requests under Article 4 of the Convention and of the
analysis of these requests: Lao PDR**

Twelfth Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, 10–13 September 2024

Thank you, Madam President. I am delivering this statement on behalf of Mine Action Review.

We thank Lao PDR for its comprehensive extension request.

We recognise that Lao PDR is the most heavily contaminated country worldwide and that the massive extent of cluster munition remnant contamination means it will require multiple more extension requests, and decades of effort, to fully identify and address the contamination.

We welcome Lao PDR's strong national ownership in its Article 4 implementation, including concrete and costed plans for both clearance to address confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) already identified, and for survey to continue to identify and confirm contamination. We also welcome that Lao PDR revised its clearance work plan to include only projections for humanitarian clearance of CHAs, and to exclude commercial clearance. Commercial clearance, unlike humanitarian clearance, tends to involve clearance of land in which no or very few submunitions are destroyed. It is not targeted clearance of CHAs, but instead clearance at the request of clients of often uncontaminated land, required for confidence building for construction and development projects. It should not therefore be considered as CMR clearance, unless it is of CHAs. We also encourage Lao PDR to take this into account, and separate out commercial clearance, in its annual Article 7 transparency reports.

We encourage the national authorities to take on board the recommendations of the international clearance NGOs and allow use of mine/explosive detection dogs (MDDs/EDDs) and drones in order to increase operational efficiency.

We commend Lao PDR's UXO Sector Working Group, which is an effective coordination mechanism, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and co-chaired by UNDP and by donor countries, which meets twice a year. It serves as an excellent example to other affected States Parties.

We welcome the inclusion of environmental considerations and of gender and diversity considerations in the extension request.

Lastly, we would like to inform delegates that Mine Action Review's side event on Thursday at midday, moderated by Norway, will include a Q&A session with representatives from Lao PDR's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and NRA, in which we will further discuss some of these examples of good practice and lessons learned. We hope delegates are able to join us for this.

Thank you.