



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
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Statement by His Excellency Dr. Ly Thuch
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Third Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
High-Level Segment – General Exchange of Views
Vientiane, Lao PDR | 14-18 September 2026

Excellencies,

Honourable Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to congratulate His Excellency Thongsavan Phomvihane, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, on his presidency of this Third Review Conference. On behalf of the Royal Government of Cambodia, I would also like to commend the Lao People's Democratic Republic for hosting this conference, and the CCM Secretariat for their work in convening us.

Cambodia is also deeply grateful to the Government and people of Lao PDR for the warm welcome and generous hospitality. The welcome we have received in Vientiane reminds us that even amid painful legacies, friendship and humanity endure.

That we return to Vientiane carries a meaning beyond protocol. No country on earth has borne a heavier burden from cluster munitions than Laos. Sixteen years ago, this city hosted the first Meeting of States Parties. Today it welcomes the Third Review

Conference. The distance between those two gatherings is measured in cleared land, in lives rebuilt, and in a country that chose to lead from its wounds.

Cambodia knows that journey. We have lived it.

For thirty-three years, Cambodia has been clearing its land of landmines and explosive remnants of war. Over 3,500 square kilometres released. Millions of explosive items destroyed. Deminers who gave years — and some who gave their lives. We are not yet finished. Hundreds of square kilometres of legacy contamination remain. We inherited that burden from conflicts that ended before many of today's Cambodians were born, and we accepted the long, patient, dangerous work of making our own soil safe again.

We did not expect to start over.

In 2025, cluster munitions were used against Cambodian territory and communities. The types we are now finding in our fields — armed submunitions with no self-destruct mechanism, sitting on the surface, detonating on the slightest contact — behave like landmines. Our deminers trained for decades to clear devices buried in soil. Now they face armed ordnance in trees, on rooftops, in rice paddies, triggered by a footstep or the touch of a child's hand.

Since the recent Cambodia–Thailand border conflict, surveys across seven provinces have identified thousands of contaminated locations covering nearly four thousand square kilometres, of which almost three thousand square kilometres are affected by cluster munitions alone. Civilians have been killed and injured — farmers, not soldiers. More than twenty thousand people also remain displaced and unable to return to their homes and properties due to the continued occupation of Cambodian territory.

Let me say that again. Cambodia has not yet finished clearing the contamination it inherited from wars that ended decades ago. And now, nearly 4,000 square kilometres of new contamination have been added—by weapons used in 2025—placing an even

greater burden on our clearance efforts and the resources required to make affected communities safe.

Although Cambodia is not a State Party to this Convention, we share its purpose entirely. Cambodia has never produced, or used cluster munitions. We have, however, spent a generation clearing them. We know what they cost — in lives, in land, in years of development that never arrive. Their effects are indiscriminate. Their consequences outlast every ceasefire. And the people who pay the price are always civilians.

Cambodia stands ready to share its experience — in clearance, in risk education, in victim assistance — with any country that seeks it. Our expertise was built through suffering. If it can spare others that suffering, it will have served its highest purpose.

Thank you.