

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Sonexay Siphandone, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR**  
**at the Opening Ceremony of the 3rd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**

*Vientiane, 14 September 2026 | National Convention Centre*

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**Excellencies, Deputy Prime Ministers, Ministers, and Deputy Ministers,**

**Heads of Delegations, Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, it is my great pleasure and privilege to extend a warmest welcome to all distinguished international delegates assembled here in Vientiane.

Looking back sixteen years ago, in November 2010, we gathered here in Vientiane for the First Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). On that occasion, we adopted the Vientiane Declaration and the Vientiane Action Plan—foundational documents that have guided the international community in translating the Convention's vision into concrete action.

Our return to Vientiane today is therefore deeply symbolic. It is a source of immense pride for the Government and people of the Lao PDR to welcome back the international diplomatic community under a shared aspiration: to build a world entirely free from the threat of cluster munitions.

Hosting this major international conference is not only a historic milestone for the Lao PDR, but also a vital opportunity for us all to evaluate the implementation of our obligations under the Convention. This review will serve as the foundation for setting priority actions and defining our collective path forward toward the permanent elimination of these deadly weapons.

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

More than five decades since the end of the Indochina War, millions of unexploded ordnance (UXO) remaining scattered across the territory of the Lao PDR continue to pose a persistent threat to the daily lives of our people and a major barrier to our national socio-economic development.

For one of the most heavily affected countries in the world, this international treaty holds profound significance. It establishes an essential international humanitarian legal framework designed to protect human life and dignity, while ensuring safety, security, and sustainable development for affected communities.

To ensure the effective fulfillment of our treaty obligations, the Lao PDR has fully integrated international commitments into our National Socio-Economic Development Framework. We adopted the national Millennium Development Goal 9 (MDG9) and, currently, the national Sustainable Development Goal 18 (SDG18): *"Lives Safe from UXO"*. This underscores the Lao Government's firm commitment to keeping UXO clearance at the forefront of our national agenda, directly linked to poverty eradication and long-term sustainable development.

Since the entry into force of the Convention in 2010, addressing the UXO challenge in the Lao PDR has achieved steady, step-by-step progress. This has been made

possible through the invaluable support of States Parties, development partners, international organizations, and dedicated operators on the ground.

Hosting this Review Conference reflects not only the Lao PDR's commitment to fulfilling its international responsibilities, but also offers all delegations a tangible demonstration of the power and impact of multilateral cooperation within the framework of this Convention.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We meet at a time of rapid geopolitical shifts, marked by escalating armed conflicts worldwide. In this challenging environment, the core values and objectives of our treaty are being tested.

The experience of the Lao PDR offers clear proof: the use of devastating weapons yesterday inflicts severe consequences that endure across generations today and into the future. Healing the wounds of war is not a burden that any single nation or organization can bear alone. It demands a shared humanitarian responsibility and a collective international obligation to enhance the practical, real-world impact of the Convention.

This conference convenes a broad spectrum of stakeholders from national and international spheres, each playing a critical role in advancing the spirit and purpose of the Convention:

- **Governments**, as policymakers and resource providers;

- **Clearance Operators**, who risk their lives daily in the field;
- **International Organizations and Development Partners**, providing vital technical and financial support;
- **Civil Society Organizations**, driving advocacy, monitoring, and public mobilization; and
- **Victims and Affected Communities**, whose living experiences testify to the human cost of these weapons.

The Lao PDR is proud to serve as a bridge bringing these key actors together. Together, we reaffirm our resolve to uphold our shared humanitarian responsibilities, ensuring that innocent civilians and children around the world are spared from the ravages of these weapons, and that no nation ever again faces the tragic legacy of cluster munitions.

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

This conference represents a critical milestone in turning political commitments into concrete, measurable actions. Progress under the Convention is measured by:

- The expanding area of safe land returned to local communities;
- The quality of life and comprehensive support provided to victims and their families;

- The permanent destruction of stockpiles;
- A tangible reduction in casualties; and
- Sustained, predictable international cooperation and assistance delivered at scale.

During this conference, we will consider and adopt the **Vientiane Capital Action Plan 2027–2031**. This instrument sets out a focused, actionable, and measurable framework prioritizing key operational areas:

1. **Accelerated, Safe, and Efficient Survey, Clearance, and Risk Education**, to expedite the return of safe land to our communities;
2. **Comprehensive and Sustainable Victim Assistance**, to restore human dignity, foster economic opportunity, and ensure no victim is left behind; and
3. **Enhanced, Predictable International Cooperation and Assistance**, aligned directly with the socio-economic development priorities of affected countries.

Achieving these priorities requires sustained political will, adequate financial and technical resources, strong partnership, and the active involvement of victims and affected communities. No affected country can tackle the burden of unexploded ordnance in isolation; robust international cooperation remains an indispensable pillar for realizing the goals of the CCM.

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Sixteen years ago, Vientiane served as the birthplace of the Vientiane Action Plan—a moment when States Parties, affected nations, development partners, international institutions, and civil society united to translate principles into action. That milestone demonstrated the strength of our partnership and our shared global commitment.

In that same spirit, I call upon all States Parties, signatory states, observer states, and international partners to deepen our cooperation. Let us reaffirm our collective resolve to advance the implementation of the CCM and uphold the relevance, purpose, and values of this vital humanitarian instrument amid today's complex global landscape.

I am confident that with strong political determination and shared commitment, we will achieve new milestones, advancing toward a world free from the threat of cluster munitions—where all people can live, work, and thrive in peace, security, and dignity.

In closing, I wish this Review Conference resounding success. May your stay in Vientiane be productive, memorable, and pleasant.

Thank you.