



STATEMENT

“Agenda item 9 (e) Victim Assistance”

16 September 2026

The 3rd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions
14-18 September 2026, Vientiane Capital

(Please check against delivery)

**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, I wish to express our appreciation to the Representative of **Niger** and **Japan**, the **Coordinator on Victim Assistance**, for their dedicated work in advancing the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention.

For the Lao PDR, victim assistance remains a long-term humanitarian responsibility and an essential part of our obligations under the Convention. Our first-hand experience of this painful legacy has taught us that effective victim assistance must go beyond medical care. It must protect rights, restore dignity, and promote the full inclusion and meaningful participation of survivors, their families and affected communities.

Excellencies,

The Lao PDR continues to strengthen its national approach to victim assistance by integrating it more closely into broader health, disability, social protection, education and livelihood systems.

In line with Article 5, we have strengthened cooperation among relevant national institutions and partners to improve access to medical care, rehabilitation, assistive devices, psychosocial support, education and livelihood opportunities, particularly for people living in rural and remote communities.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Health, provincial and district health centres such as **COPE**, survivors and persons with disabilities have benefited from improved access to prosthetics and orthotic services, physiotherapy and long-term rehabilitation. With the support of our development partners, including the United States, the Lao PDR has revised and adopted the updated **Victim Assistance Policy** to strengthen systematic and timely access to emergency and continuing medical care.

A significant step forward in 2026 is the development of the **Victim Assistance Strategy Plan 2027-2030 for the UXO/Mine Action Sector**. The Strategy will provide a rights-based and survivor-centred framework covering emergency and medical care, rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic inclusion and stronger coordination and data management. It is aligned with the National Strategy: **Safe Path Forward III**, the **National Socio-Economic Development Plan**, **SDG**

18: Lives Safe from UXO, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Excellencies,

Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. New UXO accidents continue to occur, while providing timely and adequate services in rural and remote areas remains costly and logistically demanding.

In **2025**, the Lao PDR recorded **15 UXO accidents, resulting in 25 casualties, including six fatalities**. During the first eight month of **2026**, 11 accidents resulted in 22 casualties, including one fatality, while four survivors sustained permanent disabilities. Behind these figures is a family and a community. They remind us that the humanitarian consequences of cluster munition remnants and other unexploded ordnance are not merely a legacy of the past; they continue to take lives and livelihoods today.

Excellencies,

Sixteen years after States Parties adopted the first Vientiane Action Plan, we gather here again to chart the way forward. As President of this Review Conference, the Lao PDR attaches particular importance to the victim-assistance commitments set out in Action 29-32 of the *draft Vientiane Capital Action Plan 2027-2031*, and we look forward to its adoption by this Conference. For our part, we will continue to strengthen the collection and management of gender-, age- and disability-disaggregated data and improving national coordination and planning so that assistance responds more effectively to identified needs.

From our national experience, we believe that **victim assistance** must remain a **long-term, inclusive and adequately resourced commitment**. We therefore encourage continued cooperation with affected States to strengthen national capacities, close remaining service gaps and ensure the meaningful participation of survivors.

The Lao PDR stands ready to work closely with States Parties, international organisations, development partners, and survivors to ensure that the rights and dignity of cluster munitions victims remain at the centre of the implementation of the Convention, while contributing to our shared vision of a world free from the threat of cluster munitions.

Thank you.