

Statement by Lao PDR

Universalization of the Convention

4th CCM MSP

10-13 September 2013, Lusaka, Zambia.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me, on behalf of the Lao delegation, to congratulate and thank Ghana and Portugal for their excellent work in coordinating the working group on universalization and for reporting on the status, progress and challenges to universalization of the CCM, since the 3rd meeting.

Over the year, since the Third Meeting of States Parties in Oslo, 8 more states have ratified the Convention, namely: Peru, Australia, Nauru, Liechtenstein, Chad, Andorra, and very recently, Bolivia and Iraq. Lao PDR congratulates and commends those countries for their commitment to address the issue of cluster munitions. Their ratification has brought number of States Parties to the Convention to 83. The continued growth in membership of the Convention is evidence that our Convention is steadily becoming the international norm among member states of the United Nations. However, we should work harder to persuade the rest of the world community that cluster munitions are no longer acceptable for use, because of their indiscriminate, wide area effects and their high failure rate.

Lao PDR, one of the countries most affected by cluster munitions, has done its utmost to promote the noble humanitarian objectives of the Oslo Convention, with a view to making the Convention universal. We have taken every possible opportunity to promote the Convention nationally and internationally and will continue to urge states not party, to consider acceding to it, as soon as possible.

Domestically, we have maintained previous practices of advocacy and raising UXO and CCM awareness through interviews, articles, TV and radio

broadcasts. In April and August respectively, we organized events to commemorate Mine Action Day and the Entry Into Force of the CCM to educate people about the impact and danger of UXO and to reemphasize the noble objective of the Convention. On these occasions we called upon non-party states to join the Convention.

Internationally, a call for the universalization of CCM was included in the statement of the Head of delegation of the Lao PDR at the 67th Session of the UN General Assembly and we will include this message in our statement this year at the 68th Session of the UNGA.

In addition, we used the opportunities presented by Lao PDR hosting the 9th Asia-Europe Summit Meeting (ASEM), the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF), the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP) and the Asia-Europe Business Forum (AEBF) to organize side events and exhibitions of UXO, with the aim at promoting awareness of the danger of UXO and the critical importance of joining the CCM.

In March 2013, Lao PDR also hosted the Cambodia, Lao, Myanmar, Vietnam Summit and Summit of Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS). Once again, we used these opportunities to include in our statement, the call for the cooperation on UXO sector.

The Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to the UN in New York, organized an event to mark Mine Action Day and the official launch of "Voices from Laos: Clearing Bombs and Protecting Lives" at UN Head Quarters. Again, we used the opportunity to call upon all countries who are not yet States Parties to consider acceding to the Convention.

Dear Colleagues,

Once again, I would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to fellow States Parties, previous and current presidents and international organizations as well as civil society for your tireless efforts in promoting universalization of the Oslo Convention. I also wish to take this opportunity to call upon those countries that have yet done so, to consider

ratifying or acceding to the Convention as soon as possible, in order to help with the fight to free our world from threat of cluster munitions

I thank you for your kind attention.