

**Statement by Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo, Director-General, Department of
International Organizations, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR
“on Universalization”**

**At 7th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
4 September, 2017, Geneva**

**Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Ambassador Biontino on your election as President of the Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I am confident that under your leadership, our meeting will be guided towards a successful conclusion. I would also like to thank Coordinators on Universalization, France and Zambia for their excellent work.

I would like also to take this opportunity to congratulate Madagascar and Benin and who have recently ratified the Convention. This brings the number of States Parties to 102, therefore gradually continuing the progress towards the universalization of the Convention. While such a progress is encouraging, approximately 90 States still remain outside of the Convention.

Mr. President,

More than 50 years ago, over 2 million tons of bombs were dropped on Lao territory and 30 percent of them still remain unexploded. At present, these remnants of war still constitute daunting challenges to our people and a major obstacle to the socio-economic development of our country. These bombs continue to kill and injure innocent people who want to live in a safe and secure environment. Being one of the most affected countries, such painful experience has been reminding the reason why we need to continue to actively promote the Convention to ensure that our tragedy will never be repeated elsewhere. I, therefore, would like to urge those who have not yet join the Convention to do so as soon as possible and encourage all States Parties to communicate with Non-State Parties about the importance and the moral spirit of this Convention.

Distinguished Delegates,

Since the entry into force of CCM, our government takes any possible opportunity to promote the Convention both at national and international levels. At a national level, the Lao Government raises public awareness on

UXOs through media as well as integrating UXO awareness into educational programs at schools. Furthermore, as traditional practice, we commemorate the entry into force of the Convention on every 1st of August.

Last year the Lao Government launched our national SDG18 which was the first localised SDG solely focus on freeing the country from UXOs. SDG 18 entitled 'Lives safe from UXOs' will help the Lao Government in development of policies and implementation plans to achieve its targets.

At international level, the call for the universalization of the CCM has been conveyed each year by our head of delegation to the UN General Assembly. Such message will again be included in this year statement. In addition, our delegation will host two side events to highlight Lao PDR's efforts in CCM process and further urging universalization of the Convention. One will be held here in this building tomorrow Tuesday 5 September during the lunch break at the room XXIII and the other scheduled on 22 September in UNHQ in New York during 72nd UNGA. Therefore, I take this opportunity to cordially invite all delegations to join us in these upcoming events.

Distinguished delegates,

The Lao PDR will continue to actively promote the universalization of the Convention in order to prevent any further loss of lives caused by UXOs. We congratulate those States who have shown their commitment by joining the Convention and encourage them to fulfill their obligations provided therein. Most importantly, we would like once again to take this opportunity to call up on those States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so in the near future.

Thank you Mr. President