

Statement by Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo,
Director-General of Department of International Organizations, Ministry of
Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR
on “International Cooperation and Assistance”
at 8th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
3-5 September 2018, Geneva

Mr President,

My delegation wishes to begin by expressing our appreciation to Australia and Peru, coordinators on cooperation and assistance for their excellent work.

The Lao PDR considers that substantial progress has been made in the implementation of the Convention. These achievements are the results of an enhanced and collaboration, cooperation and assistance among States Parties, Signatory States, supportive States to the Convention, as well as organizations and stakeholders including civil society, all of whom have reiterated their strong commitment in achieving a world free from cluster munitions. This positive momentum and mutual support have enabled us to achieve a more effective implementation of the Convention. We therefore believe that cooperation and assistance are key elements to realizing the objectives of the Convention.

Mr. President,

The cooperation and assistance in the implementation of the Convention in the Lao PDR has been undertaken in various forms through multilateral and bilateral arrangements. In responding to the needs of the people in the country as well as to enhance national ownership and transparency, the UXO Trust Fund established just before the 1st MSP, received contributions amounting more than 34 million USD over the past 7 years. Recently, the Trust Fund has been replaced by a

newly developed Government-UNDP program entitled ‘Moving towards achieving SDG 18-Removing the UXO Obstacle to Development in Laos is designed to support the National Regulatory Authority and UXO Lao, our national operator for the next 5 years supported by various donors. Indeed, this is an important step in achieving SDG18 and, through the implementation of the new National Cluster Munitions survey and prioritization of clearance, the objective of ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the UXO sector will be met. The project also encompasses the requirements for a more robust and transparent legislative, planning, and enhanced information systems. The program has received generous contributions from Canada, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and the European Union.

On bilateral note, the Lao Government has been working closely with the United States, Japan and Norway to implement UXO survey and clearance projects. In 2018, the United States plans to allocate 30 millions USD and a detailed MOU process is being discussed. In addition, Japan has contributed more than 34 million USD to the UXO sector and conducted a trial project to develop new technology for UXO clearance. Last but not least, Norway had provided financial support in the amount of more that USD 450,000 to UXO Lao for carrying out UXO clearance operation in Luangprabang Province. In addition, Australia and the UK have expressed their intentions to support UXO sector later this year.

Mr President,

Currently, there are more than 13 non-profit and civil society operators being active in the UXO sector with additional funding support of more than 25

million USD. In addition, there are 15 national and international commercial operators with more than 10 million USD of funding.

The Lao PDR reiterates that cooperation and assistance are essential to the full and effective implementation of the CCM. In this regard, States Parties should continue to adhere to Article 6 of the Convention in helping other States Parties to address the problems of cluster munitions. Without continued and increased international support and assistance, meeting the obligations enshrined in the Convention will be an uphill task.

Once again taking this opportunity, on behalf of the Lao Government and people, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to all donors countries and partners for the valuable support and assistance extended to the Lao PDR in addressing the daunting challenges caused by UXO.

Thank you Mr. President