

Statement by the Lao Delegation on Cooperation and Assistance

at CCM Intersessional Meeting, 16-18 April, 2013

Geneva, Switzerland

Co-chairs,

Distinguished Colleagues,

At the outset, my delegation would like to thank Coordinators on Cooperation and Assistance for the excellent presentation and report back on the outcome of the technical workshop held earlier on 15 of April. The workshop has been proved an excellent opportunity and beneficial addition to the existing arrangements of our work, aimed at improving implementation of our Convention. In this regard, I would like to add our support to the continuance of this practice.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As one of the countries most heavily contaminated by cluster munitions, Laos considers international cooperation and assistance to be a very important factor in order to fulfill all obligations contained within the Convention, including stockpile destruction, clearance and victim assistance. Cooperation and assistance provided from the states in a position to do so not only helps those states which lack funding and capacity to meet their obligations, but will also help to promote the universalization of the Convention.

In 2012, the Lao PDR received financial and other support and cooperation from numerous donor countries, especially the States Parties to the Convention, but also from several signatories and state not party to the Convention. We also received assistance from and through international organizations including INGOs. External support totaled 22,852,669 USD in 2012.

In this regard, I would like to thank those States Parties and Signatories without whom our ability to implement the Convention would be seriously affected, particularly : Australia, Norway, Japan, Switzerland, Ireland, Germany New Zealand, the United Kingdom Austria, Canada, , France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the European Union.

In addition, we appreciate China for its financial support in the area of victim assistance and its intention to provide training for Lao deminers in the near future. We also very much appreciate the sustained strong support of the United States in the UXO sector. We were very pleased that former Secretary of State Clinton visited Laos this past year and that U.S. Ambassador Karen Stewart has recently become Co-Chair of the UXO Sector Working Group.

Lao PDR is also grateful to the private sector which contributed an additional 10 million USD last year to undertake clearance in the context of their commercial operations in various parts of the country.

Lao PDR is most appreciative of those donors who have contribute un-earmarked, multi-year funding through the UXO sector Trust Fund administered by the UNDP. The predictability and flexibility this provides, enables our country plan more effectively and to channel resources to where they are needed the most.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The demand for usable land in my county has increased and our capacity to clear the contaminated land does not meet the demand. According to our assessment, we need to release approximately 20,000 hectares of land per year for agriculture and development projects. Currently, we can clear only about 6,000 ha per year. This is a big gap. Filling it will require a significant in funding. We would like to quickly scale up activities that would require a total of around 50 million USD per year. We are confident that we have the capacity to absorb that amount of funding should it be forthcoming, ideally in a predictable and sustainable manner. For our part, the Lao government has contributed 600,000 USD to the sector in 2012. The Government has pledged to increase the contribution and the concerned agency is going to put forward the request in the next budget cycle.

In addition, as mentioned in our statement on National Implementation Measures, the Government has directed that all development projects in suspected contaminated areas must include in their plans and budgets, the cost of survey and, where there is evidence of contamination, of clearance. This directive could have profound impact over time.

Thank you for your kind attention.