

## **Statement by Lao Delegation**

### **On Victim Assistance**

**The Second Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

**25-27 November 2020, Switzerland**

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Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the outset, I would like to commend Coordinator on Victim Assistance for the excellent work carried out by Spain and Mexico.

The Lao PDR strongly commits to implementing CCM Article 5 in tandem with Article 5 of the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) as well as the UNESCAP declaration on decade of disabled people and other related instruments. Against this backdrop, the scope of Victim Assistance Strategy in the Lao PDR has been outlined in our national SDG 18, “Lives Safe from UXO”, which we strive to achieve by 2030. The current National UXO Victim Assistance Strategy will be concluded by the end of this year (2014-2020) and the next five-year UXO Victim Assistance Strategy are now in the process of detailed consultation together with relevant line Ministries, Operators and Development Partners.

Mr. President,

In parallel with our international obligations, at national level with the adoption of the Law on Person with Disabilities in 2018, UXO advocacy projects have been integrated with promoting the right of person with disability. In addition, surveys, clearance and MRE conducted by relevant stakeholders resulting in a sharp declined of overall UXO casualties. For instance, 59 casualties in 2016, 41 in 2017 and over the period of 2018 to 2020, we have strived to reach the

target in reducing the number of UXO casualties to lower than 40 per year and we will continue to do our utmost to try to bring the figure down as low as we possibly can at this current capacity. Moreover, guiding by the Dubrovnik Action Plan, from 2016 to 2019 we have conducted workshops on victim assistance working groups in 10 provinces along with capacity building programme on victim assistance in 13 provinces. In addition, the information forms for UXO victim recording has been updated with more useful detail, and the nationwide UXO victim survey have been completed this year since it has been started in 2016.

Furthermore, from 2016 to 2020 Ministry of Health in partnering with NRA and relevant INGOs and civil societies have provided medical care and social-economic integration projects to UXO survivors and their families as follows: 223 persons have received medical treatment, 406 persons have received physical rehabilitation and 245 persons have received psychological rehabilitation. More importantly, 472 educational scholarship have been provided as well as 305 vocational training have been organized.

Mr. President,

Despite our achievements for the past years, Victim Assistance work still remain limited compare to other pillars in the sector due to the lack of funding on this issue. Lao PDR strongly believed that assisting whom who have been terrorized by the legacy of war is one of the core humanitarian objectives of the CCM which should not only limited to physical treatment but it should be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Therefore, the Lao PDR will continue to strive to provide a better assistance to the victims and their families. Lastly, I would like to take this opportunity to call on countries, international organizations and civil societies to strengthen the support to all effected countries in order to reach our common goal of the Convention especially in this difficult time.

I Thank you