

Statement by the Lao Delegation on Universalization

At Intersessional Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

16 April 2012, Geneva

Co-Chairs,

Ladies and gentlemen,

First of all, allow me on behalf of the Lao delegation to join previous speakers in expressing our gratitude to Japan and Portugal, as Coordinators for universalization for the progress report on the status and activities with regards to universalization since the 2nd Meeting of States Parties. I also would like to congratulate Lebanon for the great success in hosting the 2MSP.

Mr. Coordinators,

I am so pleased to note that, since the Second Meeting of States Parties, 7 more countries have ratified or acceded to the Convention making the total number of States Parties to 70. My delegation would like to congratulate and welcome all 7 countries for ratifying and acceding to the CCM.

Mr. Coordinators,

As one of the most contaminated by cluster munitions per capita in the world and as the President of the First Meeting of States Parties to the CCM, Lao PDR has done its utmost to promote the noble humanitarian objective of the Oslo Convention with a view to making the Convention a universal. We took every possible opportunity to promote the Convention and urge states not parties to consider acceding to it as soon as possible. This has been carried out in many fora, such as in ASEAN context, in Non-Aligned Movement forum and at a number of bilateral meetings of which Lao delegation has made its call loud and firm for the promotion of the Convention. Lao PDR together with Lebanon, President of the Second MSP were enabled to include recognition of Cluster Munitions Convention into the final document of the NAM. At the 66<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, our delegation also reiterated our call for the universalization of the Oslo convention. Most significantly we made a universalization visit to our neighboring Vietnam

of which we have been informed that the leadership of Vietnam is very much supportive of the spirit and objective of the CCM.

Mr. Coordinators,

Nationally, in order to ensure that our local authorities and people understand fully our obligations under the Convention, we continue the advocacy work of the Convention through organizing workshops, disseminating reports, fact sheets and booklets on the UXO problem and the Convention as well as through mass media such as newspapers, TV and radio broadcasting. We took the actual tragic accidents of UXO to publicize the issue and raising awareness. For example, during the cold weather on 23 January 2012 whereby a group of people many of them are children in a village of Savannakhet Province made a bonfire in their backyard to warm them up during the cold weather and a BLU 26 buried under the ground exploded when it was heated up causing death to 4 people and wounded 3 others.

In order to make the UXO issue be formally well known, on the occasion of the celebration of UXO/Mine Awareness Day on 4 April 2012, we took the opportunity to launch logo design competition for specific Lao MDG 9 which was adopted at the High Level Round Table Meeting in 2010 for addressing UXO issue by 2020. The winning logo for MDG 9 will be announced during the celebration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of Entry into Force of the Convention on 1<sup>st</sup> August this year.

Mr. Coordinators,

Our Convention is relatively young and we have to work hard in order to meet our goal of the world without cluster munitions. In this regards, I would like to express our appreciation for the work done by international organizations and civil societies that insert their strong voice and their tireless efforts to promote the universalization of the Oslo Convention. I once again urge those countries that have not done so to consider ratifying or acceding the convention as soon as possible in order to make our world safer from cluster munitions.

I thank you for your kind attention.