



Statement by
Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, as an observer
at the Standing Committees Meeting of States Parties to Convention on
the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction
Geneva, 21 May 2012

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Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak as an observer of this meeting. Allow me to join previous delegations in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the Standing Committees Meeting of States Parties of the Mine Ban Convention.

Mr. President,

Explosive remnants of war, including landmines have created great impacts on the post war era of socio-economic development. Despite the conflict ended long time ago its legacy continues to cause lives and limbs of the civilian population for many decades to come. Lao PDR is one of those countries that have endured such enormous sufferings and pains for many decades ago and will continue to face such challenges in the future. At the average of about 300 casualties per year were recorded after the end of conflict in my countries, causing great impacts on the victim's family and community. Fertile land has been denied for agriculture, domestic and foreign investment projects often delayed or stalled by the present of UXO. Recognizing these great impacts, the Lao Government with valuable assistance and cooperation from donor countries, international organizations and NGOs, began to clear UXO since the late 1990s. The efforts have been redoubled since the advent of the Convention on Cluster Munitions to which Lao PDR has attached great importance. Significant progress has been achieved so far on clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance. Since 1996 to the end of 2011, about 28,545 ha of contaminated land were cleared, 1,333,402 UXO items were destroyed of those 6,257 were big bombs, 545,127 were cluster munitions, 6,698 were anti-personnel mines, and 775,320 were other explosive items. The number of casualties has been reduced significantly to 92 in 2011. All UXO survivors have been received some assistance, in terms of health care service and social reintegration.

Mr. President,

With regard to the Mine Ban Treaty, despite Lao PDR is not yet a state party to this Treaty, we have already implemented a number of its obligations, especially in terms of clearance, victim assistance and voluntary transparency report pursuant to Article 7. Furthermore, we have participated in all undertakings held under this Convention to make sure of our full understandings of the obligations under the Convention and to show our intention toward becoming a state party to the Convention. All those engagements and activities undertaken by Lao Government reflected its true commitment that it will accede to the Ottawa Convention as it has announced some time ago and it will continue to work toward that goal. I hope that with all the engagements we have undertaken and cooperation from internal community, Lao PDR will be able to join the Convention in the future.

Mr. President,

I would like to conclude my statement by expressing, on behalf of the Lao Government and people, our profound gratitude to all donor countries, International Organizations and INGOs for their generous assistance in support of our efforts to address this long-term humanitarian challenge caused by UXO, including landmines. It is our strong hope that greater aid and assistance would be forthcoming from the international community to help Lao PDR address the UXO issue to help save lives and limbs of the innocent civilians, especially women and children.

Thank you.