



Statement by  
Mr. Khonepheng THAMMAVONG, Minister Counsellor/DPR,  
Permanent Mission of the Lao PDR to UNOG  
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, 20-24 June 2011

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**Check Against Delivery**

**Mr. President,**

First of all, 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. As a non party to this convention, I would like to update on our progress toward accession to this convention.

**Mr. President,**

As the most heavily bombed country per capita on earth, the Lao PDR knows too well the long lasting deadly impacts of ERW, including landmines. Although war ended many decades ago its legacy still haunts and threatens lives and socio-economic development of my country. Numerous people have fallen into prey of mines and explosive remnants of war, particularly innocent children. Fertile land has been denied for agriculture, domestic and foreign investment projects often delay or stall by the present of UXO. Great efforts have been carried out by Lao Government, development partners and INGOs since many decades ago, but much still need to be done and efforts need to be tightened up as the contaminated areas are so huge that it may take hundred years to clear them all. In this regard, the Lao PDR is in the process of drafting 10-year-plan for addressing UXO issues, which also aims to meet our obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions, to which we have attached great importance.

**Mr. President,**

As the most affected country by the explosive remnants of war, the Lao PDR has long supported the spirit and humanitarian objective of the Mine Ban Treaty. Although the Lao PDR is not yet a state party to this Treaty, we have made continued progress towards acceding to it since 2004 and the recent development was the

submission by the Lao PDR a voluntary transparency report pursuant to Article 7 of the Ottawa Convention in May this year. We hope that, the voluntary report will help international community understand the facts and reality on the ground as well as the desire and the intention of the Lao PDR to accede to the Convention. We are also confident that with all the efforts we are undertaking and the support from the international community, the Lao PDR would be able to become party to Ottawa Convention in the coming years.

**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 International NGOs for their generous assistance in support of our efforts to address this long-term humanitarian challenge. It is our strong hope that greater aid and assistance would be forthcoming from the international community to the Lao PDR in her continued drive to achieve its objectives outlined in the National Strategy on UXO and its 10-year-plan.

Thank you.