

Statement by Mr. Pham Hai Anh
Director-General, Department of International Organizations,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam,
at the Fifth Review Conference of the States Parties to the
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction
“Siem Reap-Angkor Summit on a Mine-free World”
(Siem Reap, 25 November 2024)

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H.E. Dr. Ly Thuch, President of the Conference,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Cambodia for hosting this importance Conference and the excellent arrangements. I would also like to warmly congratulate you, Excellency Dr. Ly Thuch, upon your election as the President of the Conference and wish you great success in steering this Conference to a fruitful outcome.

Mr. President,

Landmines and explosive remnants of war claimed nearly 5,800 casualties in 2023, the majority of which was civilians, including children. Even in post-conflict situations, risks from unexploded ordnances still loom large threatening the normal life of people and communities, hampering development efforts of countries.

Almost five decades have passed since the end of the war, despite tremendous clearance efforts, by the end of 2023, 56.000 square kilometres, that is nearly one fifth

of Viet Nam's land area, remained contaminated with an estimate of 800 thousand tons of unexploded ordnances from nearly 16 million tons of munitions dropped in Viet Nam from 1964 to 1975. Since then, explosive remnants of war have killed 40,000 people in Viet Nam and maimed many more. That is why Viet Nam profoundly understands and supports the humanitarian aspects of the Ottawa Convention, as well as strongly opposes the indiscriminate use of mines against civilians.

At the same time, Viet Nam reiterates the legitimate right of states to self-defense and that, even with the invaluable assistance from the international community and partners, at the current speed and with current resources, it would take us a hundred year to clear all contaminated areas.

For the current period, we manage to clear about 500 square kilometres per year. Leading the clearance efforts are the most capable Vietnamese men and women working in the Engineer Corps and NGOs, while international partners have helped clearing nearly 23% of demined land.

For many years, the Government of Viet Nam has been working closely with partners and communities to put in place and implement many comprehensive policies, action plans and concrete measures, such as the establishment of Viet Nam Mine Action Centre in 2014, the completion of Stage One of nationwide survey and mapping in 2018. Currently, we are actively implementing the 2023-2025 Action Plan on ERWs with a view to reviewing and adjusting national mine action

architecture from the central to local levels to further improve capacities and effectively mobilize and efficiently use resources to implement the National Action Plan on ERWs for 2010-2025.

On this occasion, I would like to thank all of our partners for assisting us in implementing comprehensive policies, including mine clearance, risk education and victim assistance, including orthopedics, rehabilitation and livelihood. We will persevere in this course and call on the international community and partners to increase their assistance to help achieving the goal of safe land for development, leaving no one and no community behind.

At the international level, Viet Nam continues to promote mine action. In April 2021, in its capacity as President of the United Nations Security Council, Viet Nam initiated and chaired an open debate on Mine Action entitled “Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Mine Action and Sustaining Peace”, which culminated in the adoption of a Presidential Statement on mine action. The Statement calls for, inter alia, the immediate and definitive end to indiscriminate use of explosive devices in violation of international humanitarian law, the importance of safety and security of UN peacekeepers and the enhancement of international support for mine-affected Member States including through the sharing of best practices, providing technological and financial assistance to affected countries.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, as people are at the centre of all

development policies of Viet Nam, we will spare no efforts in making Vietnamese land and waters safe for our people and continue to join international endeavours for peace, cooperation and development for all people.

I thank you for your kind attention./.