

Statement by,
Ms. Venephet PHILATHONG,
Acting Director, Division of UN Political and Security Affairs,
Department of International Organizations,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR,
At the Intersessional Meeting of the Anti–Personnel Mine Ban Convention
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Madame. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to begin by extending our appreciation to Japan for the leadership as the current presidency and for providing the Lao PDR with the opportunity to participate as an observer state.

The Lao PDR stands firmly in the conviction that landmines, cluster munitions, and all forms of Explosive Remnants of War represent one of the most persistent and devastating threats to civilian populations worldwide. These silent killers not only claim innocent lives but also systematically undermine the socio-economic fabric of affected communities, perpetuating cycles of poverty and hindering sustainable development for generations.

We remain committed to the global disarmament agenda as we have consistently demonstrated this dedication through our active advocacy efforts to raise awareness within the UXO/ Mine Action sector. At both global and regional levels, the Lao PDR has maintained record of supporting all relevant UXO/Mine resolutions and actively participating in Convention-related initiatives.

Our sustained engagement as an observer in intersessional meetings and Meetings of State Parties exemplifies our steadfast support for the Convention's humanitarian mission. Most

notably, our Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs led our delegation to last year's Review Conference in Cambodia, underscoring the highest level of political commitment to this cause.

In this connection, the Deputy-Minister has stated that the Lao PDR will submit the national voluntary report to the Convention. So, this year we will fulfill our commitment and submit the report before the Meeting of States Parties.

Madame President,

The reality facing our nation is both sobering and urgent. One-third of the Lao PDR's territory remains contaminated with cluster munition remnants—a devastating legacy that continues to cast a shadow over our people's daily lives.

Recognizing the magnitude of this challenge, our Government has elevated the UXO/Mine Action sector to the highest priority level. We have implemented comprehensive measures spanning national, regional, and international dimensions. These include the groundbreaking adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 18: "Lives Safe From UXO" as part of our national SDG framework, and the full integration of UXO/Mine Action into our national socio-economic development planning.

Madame President,

Despite our determined efforts, the scale of contamination continues to present formidable challenges, as reflected in our recent request for an extension request under the Cluster Munition Convention. Moreover, earlier this year UXO/Mine Action sector around the globe has face with sudden disruption, particularly in the Lao PDR, we had to pause the UXO operation across the country and laid off about 4,000 deminers. As the result, this year we may not be able to fulfill our obligation under the CCM extension request of clearing 6,500 Hectare.

Most importantly, the human cost remains tragically real and immediate. In just the first half of this year alone, we have witnessed 7 UXO accidents resulting in 12 victims. Most heartbreakingly, on June 1st—International Children's Day, when children worldwide were

celebrating, a 9-year-old boy named ANA in the southern province lost his life after discovering unexploded ordnance in his garden. This tragedy serves as a stark reminder that behind every statistic lies a family forever changed, a community forever marked by loss.

These sobering realities underscore the critical importance of sustained international cooperation and assistance. The mission to protect civilians from mines, UXO, and all explosive remnants of war transcends national boundaries and requires our collective commitment to addressing the long-term humanitarian challenges that define the Mine Action sector.

Madame President

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize our nation's unwavering political will and steadfast commitment to the humanitarian objective of the APMB.

The path ahead requires courage, determination, and above all, solidarity. The Lao PDR stands ready to contribute to this important mission, and we look forward to continued partnership with all members of the international community in building a world where lives are safe from these dangerous weapons.

Thank you,