Statement by
Delegation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic on Clearance to the 9th Meeting of the High Contacting Parties to Protocol V of CCW
9-10 November 2015, Geneva, Switzerland.

Thank you Mr. Coordinator,

At the outset, on behalf of the Lao delegation, I would like to express our thanks and appreciation for your hard work and excellent report on clearance.

Lao PDR is one of the most affected countries by ERW and ERW is one of the main obstacles for the socio-economic development in my country, particularly in the countryside and in remote areas. Therefore, the government has given priority to clearance of ERW that will allow people to access the land needed for agriculture and other purposes for their daily lives. In this connection, in 2014, clearance operators cleared 7,075 hectares of land. During this clearance, the operators removed 93,902 Unexploded Ordnance items.

This year, from January until September 2015, the UXO Sector in Lao PDR managed to improve on these figures significantly due to improved survey and tasking mechanisms with 3,126 hectares of land cleared and 84,537 UXO items removed. The roving teams continue carrying out spot UXO disposal tasks and already removed 29,542 UXO items in the first nine months of 2015.

Mr. Coordinator,

A comprehensive survey to identify the exact size and location of contaminated areas by ERW is required in Lao PDR. Therefore, much of the trust for these increased outputs can be attributed to the quality of our new evidence-based survey methodology which utilizes both Non-Technical and Technical Survey to target cluster munitions remnants. The development of this survey system was completed in 2014 and the final standard operating procedures, or National Standards, were approved in January 2015. All operators are now required to follow this methodology and the advantages of this are showing in our results.

Furthermore, we continue to seek the best ways to improve our survey and clearance even further by the introduction of new methodologies and technologies. In 2014, we conducted - a project on a mechanical Brush Cutter, to support UXO clearance operation.

In general, we still rely heavily on manual clearance methods and we have the potential to significantly increase our manual clearance resources, but this needs continued and increasing support of the international community to realize this. In this connection, let me take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to the donor countries, international organizations and INGOs that have provided assistance to Lao PDR in addressing ERW and ERW issues and we hope that your valuable support assistance will be further continued.

Thank you for your kind attention.