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Statement by
Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
on Victim Assistance at the 5th Meeting of the High
Contracting Parties to Protocol V
of CCW

12 November 2012, Geneva

Check Against Delivery

Mr. Chair,

On behalf of the Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to join previous speakers to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Conference. I am confident that under your guidance and leadership the meeting will be steered to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Chair,

Victim assistance is one of the core elements of the Protocol V. Article 8 (2) contains provisions of relevance for States that are responsible for ERW victims as well as for States that are in a position to do so to provide cooperation and assistance, including care and rehabilitation as well as socio-economic integration. Lao PDR as a State with ERW victims has tried its utmost to provide assistance to victims on this regard.

In order for a better plan to address the issue, especially for victim assistance, the Lao Government has established a national database of UXO victims within the National Regulatory Authority for UXO. The aim is to collect comprehensive data on accidents and survivors, in order to help concerned authorities to identify areas where accidents occur, thus clearance can be prioritized, to identify appropriate risk education and to provide assistance to victims and survivors who need rehabilitation and other help.

In this connection, the NRA has conducted a series of National Survey of UXO Victims and Accidents. Phase I survey had been completed in 2008 covering the period from 1964 to 2008. It revealed that 50,136 casualties were recorded of which 29,410 were killed and 20,726 survived. Currently, Phase II survey is underway aimed at compiling an up-to-date comprehensive data on victims. In 2008, 304 casualties were recorded but the number of casualties fell substantially in 2009 to 120, in 2010 to 118 and in 2011 to 99, and from January this year to September there were 40 casualties recorded. All 29 survivors were received necessary assistance from concerned agencies. The continued fall of casualties was due to an effective mine risk education and the progress made on clearance.

Mr. Chair,

Let me share some more concrete information on what we have done to provide assistance to victims. Ministry of Health, especially National Rehabilitation Center, is the main player from the Lao Government side to provide victim assistance in cooperation with other International Organizations and INGOs. National Rehabilitation Center provides three main works namely: the physical medicine rehabilitation hospital, the Prosthetic-Orthotic and wheelchair workshop and the special education for the deaf-blind and the vocational training for physical disability persons, including UXO's victims. In 2011, 776 amputees and paralysis received the prosthetic and orthotic devices, 443 disable persons received tricycles and wheelchairs.

COPE is INGOs that closely works with National Rehabilitation Center to support the development of rehabilitation service, primarily focusing on prosthetic and orthotic, physiotherapy and occupational therapy. In 2011, over 1300 prosthetic and orthotic devices were produced throughout five centers in the country supplying to around 1000 patients.

World Education has run the project of funding for the treatment of UXO survivors and socio-economic reintegration. In 2011, 57 newly injured UXO survivors received funding for initial medical care. 24 people received follow-up continuing medical care. 90 UXO survivors and/ or family members attended animal raising/veterinary skills trainings. UXO survivors received small grants for animal-raising 98 UXO survivors and/or family members attended handicraft training.

Mr. Chair,

In order to provide better service and long term assistance, the NRA together with all stakeholders are now drafting the national strategy for victim assistance by taking into account all data collected from the survey. The strategy should be finalized and approved in the near future. Furthermore, the NRA has completed the establishment of coordination points at provincial and district levels in 10 most ERW contaminated provinces in order to monitor and report the UXO accident, casualties and survivors and to coordinate relevant agencies to provide necessary assistance to those survivors.

Despite some progresses made on victim assistance much remain to be done. In this connection, my delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to donor countries, international organizations and INGOs who have made great contribution to UXO victim assistance in my country. I hope that your continued assistance will be forthcoming.

I thank you for your kind attention.