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**Statement by  
Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic  
on Victim Assistance at the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Protocol V  
of CCW**

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**Check Against Delivery**

Mr. Chairman,

As an observer to this meeting, my delegation feels honored to share our experiences on victim assistance. The Lao PDR is one of the most affected countries by explosive remnants of war, particularly by cluster munitions. 14 out of 17 provinces of the country are affected, especially in the remote area where the main activities involve agriculture and those farmers who are forced to cultivate their contaminated land or those whose poverty forces them to search for scrap metal are often the victims of explosive remnant of war.

As the evidence speaks for itself, the explosive remnants of war claim not only the lives and limbs of the Lao people, but also constitute a major obstacle to our socio-economic development. Of 46 poorest districts in my country, 41 are contaminated by UXO. This clearly shows the correlation between the presence of UXO and poverty. Our experience also illustrates that clearance of UXO contaminated land is proved time consuming and required a lot of funding.

Mr. Chairman,

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.

To fulfill its duties, the NRA has conducted a series of National Survey of UXO Victims and Accidents. Phase I survey has 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 117 and in 2010 it is accidentally to the same figure of 117. From January to September 2011 the number of casualties were recorded at 81 of those 45 were children. The continued fall of casualties is due to an effective mine risk education and the progress made on clearance. However, much remains to be done, particularly on actual victim assistance.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me turn to concrete assistance of what we have provided to the victims. There are 4 main players in the sector. 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. In 2010, 772 amputees and paralysis received the prosthetic and orthotic devices.

The Association for Aid and Relief Japan works directly with the National Rehabilitation Center and Provincial Rehabilitation Center to produce wheelchairs and

hand-propelled tricycles for distributions for free to people with disabilities across the country. In 2009 and 2010, 470 and 506 devices were produced and distributed respectively. The distribution is on the basis of non discrimination, but for anyone with disability and need. This greatly helps disabled people to overcome their mobility difficulty.

COPE is another 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 2010, over 1200 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. Once a UXO survivor leaves the hospital, the medical and rehabilitation team visits the village, for follow-up and to discuss treatment and socio-economic plans. After that, the survivor attends animal raising skills workshop or other vocational training and receives small grants to establish small businesses. For example, in 2010, sixty two UXO survivors received funding assistance, 89 UXO survivors and/or family members attended animal raising skills trainings and received small grants to buy animals, supplemental food and vaccinations in order to raise them successfully.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite some progresses made on victim assistance as I mentioned above, it is still far behind the real need on the ground since most of the victims are often those poor people living in remote areas where health services are often lacking or inadequate. Therefore, assistances from outsider are most important. 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.