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Statement by

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the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Member of Delegation of the Lao  
People's Democratic Republic, as an observer  
at the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties to Convention on the Prohibition of  
the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of  
Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction  
Geneva, 6 December 2012

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**Check Against Delivery**

**Mr. President,**

Since I take the floor for the first time, allow me to join previous delegations in congratulating you on your assumption of the presidency of the 12<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties of the Mine Ban Convention. I would also like to take this opportunity to convey our thanks for the sponsorship program that extended to my delegation. As a non party to this convention, I would like to focus on the progress the Lao Government has been undertaking toward accession to this convention.

**Mr. President,**

Being one of the most affected countries by explosive remnants of war, Lao PDR knows too well how explosive remnants of war, including land mines that pose great obstacles on national socio-economic development and in particular on the affected communities. Fertile land has been denied for productive use. Clearance proved to be time consumed and huge fund needed. Contaminations often locate at remote and rural areas where health and other services are limited or non-existed at all, particularly in developing countries.

In my country, the most daunting challenge is the contamination by cluster munitions. However, we did not put aside the importance of contamination by other types of ERW, including land mines. During the clearance operation from the beginning of this year to September 2012, all operators destroyed 50.524 items of ERW, of which 29.860 were cluster munitions, 244 were big bombs, 186 were land mines and 20.234 were other types of UXO. The number of casualties by UXO also dropped significantly. Since the beginning of this year to September there are 43 casualties, compared to 99 in 2011, 118 in 2010 and at the average of 300 casualties per years in previous decades.

To ensure long term achievement in addressing UXO problem, in 2010 the Lao Government adopted MDG9: Addressing the UXO impact, which is a localized millennium development goal. The Lao Government also revised the UXO strategic

plan and now called "The Safe Path Forward II" for the period of 2011-2020 which was adopted in June this year. It is a plan that focuses on and aligns the work of UXO clearance with poverty reduction and rural development of which the Lao Government has given highest priority.

**Mr. President,**

Concerning the Mine Ban Treaty, I would like to reiterate our strong support to the humanitarian objective of the Treaty, including the idea of establishing a world free of land mines. This has been reflected in our participation in the meetings, workshops and seminars undertaken under the Ottawa Convention. We have already voluntarily implemented the relevant obligations under the Convention, especially on clearance, mine risk education, victim assistance and voluntary report under Article 7. Our support also reflected in our continue voting in favour of the 67<sup>th</sup> UNGA Resolution on the implementation of the Convention. I would like to further reiterate our position to work toward acceding to this convention. In this regard, we have organized a regular review on where we are in terms of our readiness to accede to this Convention. I do hope that the international community would continue to support and understand the Lao PDR in this regard. On our part, we will continue to work hard toward that goal.

**Mr. President,**

In conclusion, let me avail myself of this opportunity to express, on behalf of the Lao Government and people, our profound gratitude to all donor countries, International Organizations and International NGOs for their generous assistance in support of our efforts to address this long-term humanitarian challenge. It is our earnest hope that greater aid and assistance would be continued to help Laos addressing the impact of UXO, including land mines.

Thank you.