



Minutes taken at the 'Safe Path Forward' UXO Sector Strategy Review and Revision Workshop

Held at the Lao Plaza
20th - 21st May 2009

BACKGROUND: A two-day, all-stakeholder workshop that aimed to produce a simple strategic framework with which to define the appropriate vision, goals, action plan, and responsibilities of a revised sector strategy. The analysis undertaken and framework developed would then help set the direction for key elements of the revised strategy.

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WORKSHOP DAY 1

Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Director General of the Department of International Organisations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs introduced the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Opening Remarks from H.E. Madam Onechanh Thammavong, by the Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and Vice Chair of the NRA

[- Speech attached as Annex 1](#)

- Madam opened the workshop and reinforced the need for a complete review and revision of the UXO Sector strategy
- Welcomed this collective effort to evaluate and revise safe path forward – She stated that this was the first ever gathering to review and revise the UXO strategy plan after 6 years of it being in use and stressed it was an important meeting and hoped that all ideas and comments will be put forward to produce best possible revised strategic direction.
- Through the experience of working in the sector we have learned that the strategy could be improved and one of the key points being that the strategy should be linked with the 5 year National Socio-economic plan (2006-2010) and National Eradication of Poverty Plan (2020), and the Millennium Development Goals - these principles are fundamental to exiting the Least Developed Country status
- During this meeting we will examine the weaknesses and build upon the strengths of the Strategy, the management and implementation of the strategy, to help achieve the Government’s development agenda
- In order to achieve the stated goal of moving from a least developed country, UXO sector work is vital as UXO/ERW continues to be a huge barrier holding back Lao PDR’s development
- The Lao Government considers it is crucial to improve this sector strategy and is fully supportive of this workshop.

Agenda Item 2: UNDP Rep Remarks

by the UN was represented by Mr. Dirk Wagner, Assistant Resident Representative

[- Speech attached as Annex 2](#)

- Mr Dirk highlighted the fact that although the Safe Path Forward was relevant and appropriate when it was decreed , it was written before the Vientiane Declaration, before the Government signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Convention on People with Disabilities.
- It was drafted before NGO’s were independently operational here, it was not aligned with MDG’s and to bring it more in line with the National Socio Economic Development plan it would need to fit with the 5 year timings. He therefore agreed with the Government that it needs comprehensive review and revision and was pleased that it was being undertaken in a participatory manner which included all stakeholders under clear Government leadership.
- He reaffirmed the support of the UN family

Agenda Item 3: Chair and Facilitator Remarks

Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith introduces Mr. Bob Eaton to the meeting and Mr. Bob explains briefly how the workshop will run.

- Bob Eaton worked for four years in Laos from 1980 to 1984 for the Quaker and Mennonite UXO project with the support of the Ministry of Social Welfare and Veterans. At the end of this NGO work the UNDP seconded Bob and his wife Wendy to the Ministry of Plan to assist in the documentation for the Least Developed Countries Roundtable held in Vientiane in 1985.
- Bob directed the UNDP/OPS programme of rural rehabilitation of Afghanistan form 1989 to 1995.
- In 1996 Bob led a team that produced a major report to the UN on mine action programs in four countries: Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, and Mozambique. In 1997 he organized the Survey Action Centre to conduct

Landmine Impact Surveys around the world. During the last ten years he has worked with mine action programs in over ten countries. At present is the Executive Secretary of the Survey Action Centre.

- Bob has served at the facilitator of both UN Global Mine Action Five Year Strategic Plans.
- Mr. Bob Eaton gave a brief explanation on how the workshop would be run, what was expected from it and possible next steps.
- He explained that a simple strategy theoretically has 3 key elements:
where we are, where we want to go, how do we get there?

Agenda Item 4: UXO Sector Structure Presentation

by Mr. Somnuk Vorasarn, Deputy Director NRA

- 30 minute presentation on background context and structure of the UXO Sector
- Mr. Somnuk emphasised how important it is to have proper legal enabling environment for UXO operations and International Treaty obligations

[\(Click here for Workshop Presentation\)](#)

Agenda Item 5: Vientiane Declaration Presentation

by Ms. Sisomboum Ounavong, Deputy Director General of the Department of International Cooperation in the Ministry of Planning and Investment

[- The Vientiane Declaration is attached as Annex 3](#)

- The Declaration outlines 5 key principles:
- Ownership, Alignment, Harmonisation, managing for results, and Mutual Accountability
- Ms Sisomboum highlighted the Lao Government's taking the lead to build strategic policy for cooperation and effective implementation of the declaration
- She also emphasised how relevant the Vientiane Declaration is to the UXO sector and the how the NRA UXO sector Working Group is a very important forum for seeing the Vientiane Declaration applied effectively in this sector

[\(Click here for Workshop Presentation\)](#)

Agenda Item 6: International Treaties Presentation

by Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith

[-A one page Summary of each treaty is attached as Annex 4](#)

- Mr. Saleumxay summarised three key international treaties directly relevant to the sector and outlined their current status in relation to Laos PDR, and the focus of their obligation.
- Anti personnel ban: entered into force march 1st 1999 – Obligations: destroy stockpile, clear all areas contaminated, provide transparency report, assist victims
- Right of persons with disabilities: entered into force 12th May 2008 – Obligations: enact national legislation to uphold convention domestically, establish focal point to oversee and drive convention implementation, and report regularly a progress report highlighting implementation process
- CCM: signed 2 December 2008, not yet in force - Obligations: destroy stockpile, clear all areas contaminated, provide transparency report, and assist victims

[\(Click here for Workshop Presentation\)](#)

Agenda Item 7: UXO Sector Evaluation Presentation: Key findings and recommendations

by Ambassador Dr. Maligna Saignavongs assisted by Mr. Tim Horner STA NRA and Mr. John Dingley STA UXO Lao

Dr. Maligna Saignavongs reminded the meeting participants of the UXO Sector Evaluation carried out in June and July of last year. It had 4 explicit objectives. It attempted to:

- Evaluate progress of the UXO Sector against the 3 objectives of the National Strategic Plan. Also examine the National Strategic Plan and make recommendations for revisions;
- Evaluate whether the structure of the UXO Sector is correct and if the NRA is providing effective leadership, governance and coordination as stipulated in Part IV, Institutional Arrangements of the National Strategic Plan;
- Evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of UXO Lao and the progress achieved against its strategy; and
- Review and assess the effectiveness of Government and donor support provided to the UXO Sector and the implementation of the National Strategic Plan.

It first looked at the 3 objectives detailed in the Safe Path Foreword which were:

1. Community Awareness: “UXO/Mine Risk Education (MRE) teams will visit and deliver MRE training to all impacted communities in Lao PDR and UXO/mine accidents will be reduced not exceeding 100 persons/year”;
2. Survey and Clearance: “All agricultural areas considered to be ‘high priority’ will be cleared, as well as a sizeable portion of other areas identified as ‘medium priority’ – for a total of no less than 18,000 hectares of land cleared by UXO Lao alone”;
3. Victim Assistance: “A national database on Mine/UXO accidents will be developed to feed into the prioritization of clearance and MRE tasks. The specific needs of survivors of UXO/mine accidents will be factored in all national/local public health initiatives”;

After the final evaluation report was received there were a series of meetings to consider the findings and recommendations. All stakeholders were given the opportunity to voice opinions on whether the findings were correct and whether the recommendations should be implemented.

1. The use of scoping results as the basis for planning
2. The need for greater emphasis on roving tasks and responsiveness
3. The need for development of a simple system of priority setting that addresses development and poverty reduction priorities
4. The development of new types of targets, given the shift in emphasis to roving tasks
5. An explanation of funding policies and mechanisms for the sector
6. The definition of an exit or handover strategy for the NRA and UXO Lao residual functions.

[\(Click here for the Workshop presentation\)](#)

[\(Click here for the UXO Sector Review Final Report\)](#)

Comments from the floor:

Colin Von Rechenberg, Lang Xang: Oxiana risk model assumptions in the report are inaccurate.

Action: Asked for a clarification of the assumption in model at next TWG

Timing: TBC

Responsible: Clearance TWG

Dr Maligna Saignavongs, NRA: highlights that for Lao PDR in relation to CCM, there is detail built into treaty that allows for a country like Laos and others to renew timeframes allowed to meet clearance targets for 10 year deadline in CCM was unrealistic.

- He also talked about national legislation, specific laws that uphold and implement various aspects of International treaties, domestic integration of international treaties still a vague area

Bob Eaton, Facilitator: Alignment is key; how do we align Vientiane declaration and sector strategy with government development plans – this is fundamental and one paramount aim of workshop to start this process

Agenda Item 8: 5 Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan Presentation

by Dr. Khamlien Pholsena, Director General of the Department of Planning and Investment in the Ministry of Planning and Investment

- Dr. Khamlien Pholsena outlines concept document for 5 year plan 2011-2015 and highlighted key points:
- New plan hopes to increase international integration and competitiveness, improve governance, ensure sustained economic growth (modernisation, social investment, poverty reduction), integrate MDG's into national poverty reduction strategy
- Key goals: reduce poverty rate to under 25%, ensure universal primary education, bridge gender disparity in education, increase access to clean water to 80% nationally, reduce rate of infant mortality
- 7th plan aims to build social capital and domestic environment that attracts international investment
- Harmonisation of funds is also very important
- Intention to mobilise community contribution towards nation building agenda – establish programmes that involve community and provide sense of purpose and value for the individual
- Increase domestic workforce capacity to compete more internationally
- Bridge rich/poor disparity which
- Maintain 8% economic growth to continue nation building and poverty eradication agendas
- Foreign investment laws amended (expected to be formalised in June) to improve the investment climate – remove bureaucracy and streamline process of investment

[\(Click here for Workshop Presentation – Lao only\)](#)

Agenda Item 9: Breakout Groups – SWOT Analysis of the Safe Path Forward and Results in Plenary

- Bob Eaton organised the room into 4 breakout groups by assigning a number from 1 to 4 to each person, done sequentially along seating lines
- Each of the four groups consisted of approximately 15 to 20 people and were led by four NRA sub-sector officers:
 - Group 1 was led by Mr. Pommachanh Khammanichant , TWG Demining Officer*
 - Group 2 was led by Mr. Mingkhouankham Sisavath Victim Assistance Officer*
 - Group 3 was led by Mr. Pouviengsavanh Keosouphan, Senior Explosive Ordnance Officer*
 - Group 4 was led by Mr. Thongdy Phommavongsa, Mine Risk Education Officer*
- Each group was tasked with undertaking a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) of the Safe Path Forward Document.
- A SWOT analysis is a strategic planning method used to evaluate the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business. The objective was to broadly formulate a revised UXO sector vision and objectives by identifying the current internal and external factors that are favorable and unfavorable to the sector, and using that information as basis for progressive analysis.
- The results of the SWOT analyses have been consolidated below and have been organised into sub-sector section:

MINE RISK EDUCATION

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NRA as a coordinating body - Experienced MRE teams, long-standing work - TWG process, information exchange robust - Formalised sub-sector strategies that lay-out targets, direction, and activities MRE focus is targeting risky groups - National Standards 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater networking and partnerships with sector actors, particularly development agencies - Strengthen resources and human capital - Increased exchange/coordination between NRA and various ministries - System to measure effectiveness of MRE - Use past experience to guide new MRE message development
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We don't have results for how effective MRE is yet, despite tools and evaluation methods - Unsure if message reaching most at-risk groups - Behaviour change is difficult - Coverage is not ideal - Networking could be better - Presence in mass media is lacking - Do we have right people in right places advocating and promoting MRE? - We have not reached all the at-risk groups 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial situation and funding - Donor Fatigue/waning stakeholder commitment - Poor follow-up with treaty obligations - Sustainability - Finances committed by government - Sector Strategy not integrated yet into national socio-economic plan - Not all provinces are receiving support - Poor donor coordination - Slow eradication of UXO contributes too poverty remaining

CLEARANCE

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Very good and experienced technical capacity - Excellent local/national capacity - established - National Standards - Clearance rates have increased and more resources in the field: better efficiency and increased resources – productivity increasing/targets being met with extra - Technological assets improvements - Clear costings 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NGO's to operate more cost-efficiently - Greater cooperation between NGO's and commercials - CCM could help provide funding bump = potential to expand CL operations - Focus clearance on high-priority areas - Contract most-efficient organisations - Establish more local operators
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No measured analysis of how CL impacts development agenda/poverty reduction agenda - More resources needed to increase speed and scope of sector activity - Unregulated clearance - unrecorded and unregulated, undermines sector integration and development 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial situation and funding - Donor Fatigue/waning stakeholder commitment - Poor follow-up with treaty obligations - Sustainability - Finances committed by government

<p>agendas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development takes place in contaminated areas with no consideration for clearance - NRA CL focus too narrow e.g. humanitarian and agriculture and we need to expand to industrial, commercial, infrastructure projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sector Strategy not integrated yet into national socio-economic plan - Not all provinces are receiving support - Poor donor coordination - Slow eradication of UXO contributes too poverty remaining
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VICTIM ASSISTANCE

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Comprehensive survey done and information source/hence better understanding of sector through historical knowledge - Information gathering process established via survey has left strong ability for further info collection, increased cooperation and information exchange, improved communication - National Institutions (NRC, COPE) 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CCM puts spotlight on Victim rights and needs. CCM can provide the momentum VA needs - LDPA resurgence - Expand info exchange and greater interaction with Ministry of health
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No system established to collect NEW accident info - Communication/analysis of causes of accidents not well established outside of the sector - Info sources are not cross-institutionally integrated - Poor Victim support and Victim support strategy 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Financial situation and funding - Donor Fatigue/waning stakeholder commitment - Poor follow-up with treaty obligations - Sustainability - Finances committed by government - Sector Strategy not integrated yet into national socio-economic plan - Not all provinces are receiving support - Poor donor coordination - Slow eradication of UXO contributes too poverty remaining

GENERAL STRATEGIC COMMENTS (Safe Path Forward)

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong institutional leader and sector focal point (NRA) - Robust and dynamic strategy/plans - Coordination between NRA and Ministries - Clear strategy plan with defined targets 	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased focus on issue internationally could mean more funding and expansion of activities - Review sector institutional structure - Greater opportunity in sector by Army - CCM
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lao National capacity is increasing and improving - UXO Strategy approved/supported by government 	
<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategy difficult to bring to life - No timelines for donor hand-off - Financial support is not-sustainable because its dependent on outside sources - Effect of NRA not reached at provincial level yet - Reliant on ODA - Need more local expertise - Strategy revision slow and late - Not enough direct-source bombing information still - UXO sector not strongly enough integrated into National development plans 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Speed of MOU process can lead to lost donor funds - Global Financial Crisis

[\(Click here to see group-by-group SWOT Analysis\)](#)

WORKSHOP DAY 2

Agenda Item 1: Breakout Groups – Brainstorming revised UXO Sector Strategic Vision and Objectives

Mr. Bob Eaton explained that the plenary would split into the same 4 break-out groups as day one.

- Each group was to workshop a draft revision of a Vision, set of Objectives, and set of Key indicators for a revised UXO strategic Document based on the work done in the previous day’s SWOT sessions

The results of each group were:

Group 1

Vision - The group did not limit itself to one definitive phrase but came up with multiple draft phrasing

Remove the phrase ‘from the most highly impacted’ for this limits the scope and extensiveness of vision e.g. ‘*people from impacted communities to live free from the impacts of landmines and UXO*’ or;

‘*All Lao communities to live free from the impacts of landmines and UXO*’ or;

‘*All Lao communities are able to overcome the consequences of UXO and all victims receive full support*’

Objectives –

1. MRE Objective: Reduce the number of UXO incidents
2. VA Objective: Increase the support for all victims
3. CL Objective: to clear/release land to reduce poverty
4. Respond to all requests for UXO clearance
5. To foster long-term operational and strategic sustainability
6. Increase resources for the sector but also demonstrate a commitment to cost-effective operation

Sub-sector Indicators -

CL:

- How much land cleared (m2), how many UXO cleared, how much that cost, how long did it take
- Measuring how cleared land is being used – for poverty eradication purposes? No point clearing land that will sit idle or misused.
- Indicators to measure the value of cleared land before and after clearance
- Cost of clearance needs to be balanced with anticipated value cleared land will yield

VA:

- Effective surveillance and information gathering
- Expand services to all provinces affected by UXO
- Harmonisation of all types of Victim services with UXO specific services

MRE:

- Effective surveillance system and information gathering
- An indicator that tells us the cause, allows us to analyse cause of accidents, and then develop MRE message/target most at-risk groups appropriately
- Ensure the surveillance is effective and validity of data verified (QA)

Responsive Roving:

How many requests, how many of those we respond to, the time taken to respond to a request

System of prioritising requests

Group 2**Vision –**

‘Laos will be free from negative impact of UXO, livelihood of people in effected area will be is equally improved’

Objectives –

1. Allocate MRE work for appropriate agencies, the purpose is to reduce risk group
2. Clearance and handover land should be in follow the government socio-economic plan
3. Improve the current strategy to enable the application and the obligation of Laos to any convention that Laos has signed
4. NRA should collect complete data to store in appropriate manner, to analyze, to report and disseminate to appropriate operators

Indicators -

- Indicator: the number of accidents will gradually decrease, rough schedule might be:

2010 = 250

2015 = 150

2017 = 50

2020 = 25

- Land released should be that of land a slope rate of less than 35 degree in 2020
- Database, reports in various categories, effective information management and analysis tools to be developed and rigorously maintained

Group 3

Vision –

‘Lao should be free of threats and impacts of UXO’

Objectives -

1. New UXO strategy should be aligned/comply with all international treaties and obligations
2. Increase amount of land available for development purposes, not just agricultural cultivation, in 47 poorest districts
3. Reduce ERW casualties by 2/3rds by 2020
4. VA provided to 100% of Victims by 2020
5. Fully understand extent and scope of the problem; not limit out goal setting to just clearance
6. Reduce impact of UXO to a point that is manageable for local resources i.e. Government

Indicators-

1. Comply with international obligations to bolster sector capacity

1.0 Number of km2 released

- Number of roving tasks complete

- Number of roving teams deployed

1.0 Number of casualties per year broken down by gender

- MRE indicators (to be designed)

1.1 Numbers of survivors needing assistance provided with support or % of survivors needing assistance provided with support

2. Gather information and then have detailed analysis

- Number of casualties

- Constant review of overall land contamination percentage

3. Develop national staff capacity and national institution

-Number of persons trained and equipped to provide service

- Number of km2 cleared/released by Lao nationals

- Number of provinces with established capacity

- % of UXO sector budget funded by the government

Group 4

Vision –

‘All people living in UXO-affected area should feel safe and confident to live there’

Objectives -

1. Reduce accidents by 60% over period 2011-2020 (60% from what level?)
2. Increase agricultural land available for production in 47 poorest districts to 30,000 hectares (2011-2020)
3. All old/new victims will receive full support; physical, mental, socio-economic, etc
4. Increase national staff capacity within sector

Indicators -

- 180 accidents per year will be average by 2020
- Increase of Lao exports as more domestic production
- Foreign imports are reduced as more domestic production

Agenda Item 2: General Area of Consensus in Plenary

Areas of General Agreement

Key Points of Agreement/Re-occurring themes over Workshop:

- MOU process needs to be improved and expedited
- Next strategic plan needs to be integrated into Government development plans and international Treaties
- Planning for residual capacity very important
- Effective information management is crucial to whole sector
- More enabling legal domestic legal framework to allow efficient UXO sector implementation
- Sustainability needs to be more prominent in sector/better planned
- Funding and Global Financial crisis are big concerns
- Harmonisation of funding and donor contributions very important
- Gender Equality an under-represented issue in Sector

Agenda Item 3: Consolidated Group Input for a Revised Strategy in Plenary

Collation of Input for a Revised Strategy

Broad vision:

- Ensure Laos is free of threat of UXO (that is where individuals live and to ensure an environment that is conducive to development)
- Needs to be consistent with other strategies e.g. NSEDP, government planning
- Consistent with the National Socio-economic... this should be referenced whenever we are prioritising areas of work
- Needs to be an enabling domestic legal framework to implement UXO work

Broadly Agreed Objectives:

1. Reduction of Victim Numbers

2. Full support to Victims

3. Clear/Release Safe and productive/ multi-purpose/ contaminated/ economically viable (too narrow) Land

- We are qualifying the strategy; what land shall we clear, BUT CCM obliges Laos to clear ALL land. Clearance needs to be prioritised too but this a treaty condition.
- Possible scoping exercise to support this objective

4. Reach a stage where local residual capacity is developed and robust enough so that local agency, eg government, will become sole body handling all UXO matters and takes on full responsibility for the sector

- Possibly within 10 years? Or more? Needs to be clarified.
- Gradual and systematic phase-out?
- Or it needs to be constantly monitored and too restrictive to put loose or fixed timeframes.
- Need to think about residual capacity holistically – not just look at Clearance. Are the local institutions for MRE, VA, and overall coordination able enough?
- Need to incorporate Vientiane Declaration into all objectives
- Timeframes for handover were controversial topic

5. Collect, Maintain, Analyse data ongoing

6. Pass National Enabling Legislation

Broad Indicators:

To be worked on in next round of workshops, TWGs', Sector-wide Working Group

Consensus

The Workshop agreed there was group consensus on the following items:

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Under authority of Lao PDR
- 1.2. With guidance of the national planning
 - 1.2.1. NESDP
 - 1.2.2. NGPES
 - 1.2.3. Master Plan of the MLSW
 - 1.2.4. Decree of the NCDP
 - 1.2.5. Draft Decree on the Rights of PWD
 - 1.2.6. Millennium Development Goals
- 1.3. And consistent with international treaty obligations
 - 1.3.1. CCM
 - 1.3.2. Rights of Disabled,
 - 1.3.3. Vientiane Declaration

2. Timing

- 2.1. Strategy end-date (end-state?) 2020 and within the 5 year cycle of the NSEDP

3. Vision

Lao PDR free from the threat of Explosive Remnants of War

4. Objectives and Indicators

4.1. Reduce victims

- 4.1.1. Number of accidents reduced by 60% of current estimates [i.e. 120]
- 4.1.2. MRE evaluated, improved and focused
- 4.1.3. Number of UXO destroyed by roving teams

4.2. Care for the survivors

- 4.2.1. All survivors to receive medical assistance, and job training

4.3. Release *productive land*

- 4.3.1. 36 of 47 poorest districts – NSEDP
- 4.3.2. Scoping process – Evaluation Report
- 4.3.3. Effective reporting and response system for spot tasks
- 4.3.4. Prioritized work based on provincial and district development plans

4.4. Build capacity for transition to full government ownership

- 4.4.1. Lao trained to replace Technical Advisors (TAs)
- 4.4.2. Full transition of MRE to MOE and MIC
- 4.4.3. Full transition of VA to MOH, MLSW, and MOE
- 4.4.4. Prepare transition of clearance to MOD or MOS and national operators
- 4.4.5. Increase proportion of resources provided by Lao government
- 4.4.6. Phased withdrawal of all TAs from NRA and UXO Lao

4.5. Collect, maintain and analyse data

- 4.5.1. Create a formal, system approach to collection and input into national database
- 4.5.2. All operators reporting
- 4.5.3. National database fully operational without full time TA
- 4.5.4. Regular reporting and special analysis on demand

4.6. Pass national enabling legislation

- 4.6.1. Develop and approve legislation that underpins the UXO Sector structure, Strategy and Treaty obligations
- 4.6.2. Scrap metal legislation, rules and procedures approved and implemented in all impacted provinces

Agenda Item 4: Next Steps Discussion

Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith advised everyone that the next workshop is tentatively planned for June 24, the dates are to be reviewed and any changes communicated shortly thereafter to all stakeholders

- The results of the next workshop would be considered during the MLSW 12 year review of the UXO Sector scheduled for the end of June or beginning of July.
- The next step should be a full UXO Sector Working Group meeting (possibly the same date as last year 15th July).
- Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith stated that 3 months from now would be a desirable timeframe to have draft new version to submit to the NRA Board and finalized by September.

Action: organize next workshop

Timing: 24th June

Responsible: NRA

Action: write first draft of next version of Safe Path Forward ready for next workshop

Timing: 24th June

Responsible: NRA

PREPARED BY: *MR. BOUNPHENG SISAWATH, JOHN FENECH AND TIM HORNER*

APPROVED BY: *MR. SOMNUK VORASARN DEPUTY DIRECTOR NRA*

Annex 1 - UXO Strategic Plan, 'The Safe Path Forward' Review Workshop Opening Remarks by H.E. Madam Onechanh Thammavong, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and Vice Chair of the NRA

- The Resident Representative of the UNDP,
- Representatives of International Organizations,
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

As Vice Chairperson in charge of the National Regulatory Authority for UXO/Mine Action Sector (NRA) in Lao PDR, I am very delighted to attend this National Strategic Plan Review Meeting, which will review and improve the 2003-2013 National Strategic Plan, "The Safe Path Forward", for addressing UXO issues in Lao PDR.

This is the first time that we come together to assess the result of the implementation of the said Strategic Plan that has been carried out in the past six years. At this venue, we will discuss and share views, and try to identify areas which might need revision for our situation. In this regard, it is crucial for us to align our activities with the Sixth Five Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2006-2010), and the National Strategic Plan for Poverty Eradication by 2020. This is an overall policy of the government aiming at leading the country out of a state of underdevelopment. In this endeavour, different sectors are required to formulate detailed plans to be applied according to their role and jurisdiction.

Distinguished participants,

The intention behind this meeting is to assess the situation, and identify and rectify shortcomings. In doing so, it will help to further enhance our strengths, and to create more favourable conditions for the management and implementation of the Strategic Plan. The approach will allow us to achieve the Government's goals as stipulated in the Poverty Alleviation Plan. We must act together and be proactive in creating these positive conditions for developing infrastructure in different areas. To achieve this goal, UXO clearance tasks cannot be overlooked. The UXO problem is indeed a serious obstacle for the national economic development. Because of UXO contamination, our economic growth is slow, and as we all know well, Lao PDR is an underdeveloped country. Our Government lacks funds for UXO clearance. We need to seek financial help from outside.

However, a big challenge in soliciting financial support at the moment is the current financial crisis that the world economies are facing. But the Government feels strongly that it needs to improve the national strategic plan for addressing UXO issues in order to help achieve the numerous goals set that would allow the country to free itself from the state of underdevelopment in the new millennium. To do this successfully, continued hard work for many years to come is needed.

As participants of this consequential meeting, I would like to make an earnest request to you to make a physical and mental contribution while discussing and sharing lessons that would make this meeting successful.

Once again, on behalf of the Government of Lao PDR, I would like to express our high appreciation to UNDP and other international organizations for their strong support in many ways to our country.

Thank you for your attention!

Annex 2 - UXO Strategic Plan, 'The Safe Path Forward' Review Workshop Opening Remarks by Dirk Wagener, UNDP Assistant Resident Representative On behalf of Madam Sonam Yangchen Rana, UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative

H.E. Madam Onechanh Thammavong, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare and Vice Chair of the NRA, Ambassador Dr. Maligna Saignavongs, Director of the National Regulatory Authority, Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Director General of the Department for International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Distinguished guests, development partners, United Nations colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to be here today on behalf of Ms Sonam Yangchen Rana, UNDP Resident Representative & UN Resident Coordinator, to witness the opening of this very important workshop which will review and revise the national strategic plan for the UXO Sector.

We at UNDP are very aware that UXO, and in particular, cluster munitions continue to threaten the lives and livelihoods of people in Lao PDR today - many decades after the end of the war. UNDP is a long-time supporter of the Government in this sector. We assisted the Government to establish UXO Lao in 1996 and we continue to support the 1,000 women and men working in the nine worst UXO-affected Provinces for UXO Lao. UNDP also assisted the Government to establish the NRA as it was designed in the Sector Strategy, "the Safe Path Forward" and it is the mandate of the NRA that the strategy is now revised.

"The Safe Path Forward" was drafted in 2002 for the period 2003 to 2013. Although relevant when it was adopted by Decree, it was developed before the NRA became operational and before International NGO's worked independently in the UXO sector. It does not include the commercial aspects of the sector and was in force before the disability and cluster munitions conventions were signed by the Lao Government. It also predates the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and does not fit with the Governments vision of exiting the Least Developed Countries-status by 2020. It also needs to highlight areas where it supports and contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. All of this means it needs to be revised with the participation of all stakeholders to ensure its continued relevance and appropriateness for the Lao context in 2009 and beyond.

In addition to supporting the NRA and UXO Lao, UNDP has helped laying some of the foundations for this review most recently with the UXO Sector Evaluation and the Assessment Study of Gender Perspectives in the UXO Sector which were both completed last year. The Management Response we worked on with our partners will give substantive input on how the recommendations of the Evaluation are considered and the Gender Study will help us mainstream this important subject throughout the new strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Now is a very exciting period with many opportunities that we need to seize and make the most of. We are over mid-way through the 2003-2013 "Safe Path Forward" and a lot of valuable lessons have been learned. Last year was in particular a remarkable year for the whole of the UXO Sector in Laos, with achievements that give us hope for the future. The Government of Lao PDR, supported by development partners, played a strong leadership role from the very beginning of the Oslo process to develop the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The Regional Conference the Government hosted in Xiengkhuang in October last year was the first to be held in a UXO affected area. The field trips demonstrating clearance and risk education activities contributed to the Conference's huge success in awareness-raising to further the aims of the Convention. And the success will be a small affair in comparison to the First Member States Parties' Meeting of the Convention a year after it comes into force as the Government has offered to host it in Vientiane. This conference is expected to bring up to a hundred countries here in 2010 to discuss progress on eliminating cluster munitions for all time.

UN agencies throughout the country are supporting the UXO sector in clearance, victim assistance and risk education activities. Today, I reaffirm the commitment of the UN Country Team in Lao PDR to continuing partnerships and support for the UXO sector.

The recent Cluster Munitions Convention and the ongoing achievements of the national UXO programme gives us all the hope and confidence that the impacts of UXO in Lao PDR can be comprehensively addressed - with the continued commitment of the Government and the harmonised support of the international community. The partnerships are

established, we now need an up-to-date clear and decisive strategy to guide us. It is only with good strategic leadership that the deadly threats from UXO can be lifted from the Lao people.

Once again, I would like to congratulate the Government on its achievements in the UXO sector and I am pleased to have this opportunity today to reaffirm the UN's support and wish you well with the review and revision.

I wish you all good health, Khob Chai lei lei!

Annex 3 – Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness

VIENTIANE DECLARATION ON AID EFFECTIVENESS

I n t r o d u c t i o n

We, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (the Government) and the Partners in Development (the Partners), seek to take appropriate monitorable actions to make aid more effective and assist the country in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and the long-term development goal of exiting the status of least developed country by 2020 (the 2020 goal). We recognise that while increased volumes of aid and other development resources are devoted to achieving the MDGs, aid effectiveness also needs to increase significantly to support the efforts to strengthen governance, improve development performance, and enhance development outcomes. At this Ninth Round Table Meeting, we seek to localise the "The Paris Declaration" that emerged at the conclusion of the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness held in Paris in March 2005 to fit the circumstances of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). We seek to enhance the impact of aid in reducing poverty, increasing growth, building the capacity of human resources and institutions, and accelerating the achievement of the MDGs and the 2020 goal.

P a r t n e r s h i p D e c l a r a t i o n s

The following Partnership Declarations are developed in a spirit of mutual respect, support and accountability. They reflect the ambitions and structure of the Paris Declaration and build on the ongoing development efforts and experiences in the Lao PDR. They represent a shared recognition between the Government and the Partners to enhance the effectiveness of aid in the Lao PDR. They will be implemented to the extent possible.

Although this Declaration does not constitute a legally binding instrument, it represents a shared recognition between the Government and the Partners on enhancing aid effectiveness in the Lao PDR. The Government and the Partners, when and where possible, will make available appropriate resources, knowledge and capacity to implement the Declarations.

1. Ownership

Government exercises effective leadership over the development policies, strategies and coordinates development actions

1. The Government leads in developing and implementing its five-year National Socio Economic Development Plan or NSEDP (2006-2010) through a broad consultative process that integrates the official development assistance into mainstream planning.
2. The Government continues to translate the NSEDP into prioritised and results-oriented operational programmes in the Public Investment Programmes (PIPs) and the annual plans and budgets.

3. The Government exercises an effective leadership role in coordinating aid at the macro and sectoral levels through a substantive and ongoing process of dialogue with relevant stakeholders including the Partners in development; through such mechanisms as the Round Table Meetings and the Sector Working Groups.
4. The Partners will support the leadership of the Government and strengthen the Government's capacity to exercise its leadership.

2. Alignment

Partners align with the Government's strategies and use strengthened Government regulations and procedures

Partners align with Government's strategies

5. The Partners base their dialogue with and support to the Lao PDR on the NSEDP and related national and sectoral strategies and plans and periodic reviews of progress in implementing these strategies.

Government strengthens Government regulations and procedures with support from Partners, with Partners increasingly using the strengthened Government regulations and procedures

6. The Government and the Partners will establish mutually acceptable frameworks that provide reliable assessments of Government regulations and procedures, their performance, and work together to strengthen these as necessary and appropriate. The Partners seek to adopt harmonized performance assessment frameworks for Government regulations and procedures so as to avoid presenting the Government with an excessive number of potentially conflicting targets.
7. The Government will seek to ensure, as appropriate, that the legal framework, national regulations and procedures, institutions and procedures for managing aid and other development resources are effective, accountable and transparent
8. The Partners use the regulations and procedures of the Government to the maximum extent possible, including through integrating project implementation arrangements into line ministries. Where use of the country's regulations and procedures is not feasible, the Partners seek to establish additional measures acceptable to the Government and the Partners that strengthen the country's regulations and procedures.
9. The Partners will seek to avoid creating parallel structures that are not well integrated with the regular Government regulations and procedures, such as parallel Project Implementation Units (PIUs) or parallel Project Management Units (PMUs), for the day-to-day management and implementation of aid-financed projects and programmes.

Government strengthens development capacity with support from Partners

10. The Government will seek to integrate the capacity building objectives in the NSEDP into related national and sectoral strategies and plans and work with the Partners to develop a comprehensive, long-term capacity building programme.
11. The Partners will seek to align their analytic and financial support with the Government's capacity development objectives, strategies and long-term capacity building programme; make effective use of existing capacities; and coordinate and harmonise support for capacity development accordingly.

Strengthening financial management

12. The Government will continue to ensure timely reporting on and publication of budget planning and execution, and take leadership in the financial management improvement process.
13. The Partners will seek to enhance the predictability of future aid to the maximum extent possible through transparent decision making processes, provide indicative commitments of aid over a multi-year framework (including aid commitments covering multi-year expenditures of projects) and release aid funds in a timely and predictable fashion.
14. The Partners will seek to progressively rely on the Government's financial management system, once mutually acceptable standards have been attained.

Strengthening national procurement regulations and procedures

15. The Government and the Partners will seek to commit sufficient resources to support and sustain the improvements and capacity building in public procurement.
16. The Partners will seek to progressively rely on the Government's procurement system, once mutually acceptable standards have been attained.

Strengthening environmental and social assessments

17. With the Partners' support, the Government will seek to develop specialised technical and policy capacity for social and environmental impact analysis and enforcement of legislation.

3. Harmonisation and Simplification

Partners' actions are more harmonised, transparent and collectively effective

Partners will seek to implement common arrangements and simplify procedures

18. The Government and the Partners will seek to jointly conduct and use core diagnostic reviews (such as Public Expenditure Reviews); carry out other reviews jointly wherever possible (e.g. sector reviews); and systematically share the results of all reviews undertaken.
19. The Partners will seek to work together to reduce the number of separate and duplicative missions to the field; and promote joint training to share the lessons learned.
20. The Partners will seek to rationalise their regulations and procedures by implementing common arrangements for planning, design, funding, disbursement, implementing, monitoring, evaluating, and reporting to the Government on the Partners' activities and aid flows.
21. The Government and the Partners will seek to explore the feasibility of using increasingly programme-based approaches.
22. The Partners will seek to pursue decentralisation and delegation of authority to their country offices to the maximum extent feasible.

Complementarity: more effective division of labour

23. The Government provides its views on the comparative advantages of the Partners and on the ways to increase Partner complementarity at country and sectoral levels.
24. The Partners will seek to make full use of their respective comparative advantages at sectoral level by aligning support.

Incentives for collaborative behaviour

25. The Government and the Partners will seek to improve their procedures and strengthen incentives – including recruitment, appraisal and training – for their managers and staff to work towards harmonisation, alignment and managing for results.

4. Managing for Results

Managing resources and improving decision-making for results

26. The Government and the Partners will seek to work together through a participatory process to strengthen the Government's capacities towards results-based management. They will establish results-oriented reporting and assessment frameworks that monitor progress on national and sectoral development strategies and the effectiveness of Partner inputs/support based on agreed key indicators.
27. The Government will seek to strengthen the linkages between national development strategies and annual and multi-annual budget processes.
28. The Partners will seek to harmonise their monitoring and reporting requirements, and - until they can rely more extensively on the Lao PDR's statistical, monitoring and evaluation regulations and procedures - work with the Government to the maximum extent possible on joint formats for periodic reporting.

5. Mutual Accountability

Both Government and Partners are accountable for development results

29. The Government and the Partners will jointly carry out annual reviews on progress in implementing the commitments on aid effectiveness and improved development outcomes through existing and increasingly objective country level mechanisms. They will seek to formulate appropriate indicators and (indicative) targets on aid effectiveness.
30. The Government will seek to involve the Partners in formulating and assessing progress on implementation of the national development plans.
31. The Partners will seek to provide in a timely manner accurate and comprehensive information on aid flows and programme intentions to enable the Government to present budget reports to the National Assembly and citizens, and coordinate aid more effectively.

6. The Way Forward

32. The Government and the Partners will seek to work together to define an Action Plan and associated Indicators to guide the implementation of this Declaration. The Indicators, reflecting those defined in the Paris Declaration, will be tailored to the context of the Lao PDR. They will include time-bound targets, as appropriate. The Indicators will be incorporated in the Action Plan that will also include a framework for monitoring progress both on implementation of the Action Plan and the outcomes. A taskforce comprising representatives of the Government and the Partners will prepare the Action Plan and associated Indicators, which will be reviewed and finalized with the involvement of the stakeholders including all the Partners. This is targeted to be accomplished by 31 May 2007.
33. We, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Partners in Development, hereby confirm our willingness to implement the above Partnership Declarations and enhance aid effectiveness in the Lao PDR.

Signed at this Ninth Round Table Meeting on 29 November 2006, in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

The Declaration was signed by the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and representatives of the following 23 partner countries and organizations on the occasion of the Ninth Round Table Meeting in Vientiane on 29 November 2006:

Australia
Austria
Belgium
China
Cuba
Finland
France
Germany
Indonesia
Japan
Luxembourg
New Zealand
Philippines
Poland
Republic of Korea
Singapore
Sweden
Switzerland
United States of America
European Commission
Asian Development Bank
The World Bank
United Nations

The Government of the Lao PDR welcomes expression of participation in (and signing of) the Vientiane Declaration by other partners.

Annex 4 – International Treaties

CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS

What does the Convention ban or prohibit?

The Convention bans the use, production, development, acquisition, stockpile and transfer of cluster munitions. A “cluster munition” is defined within the Convention as a weapon that is designed to disperse or release explosive submunitions.

Are there any exceptions?

The Convention does not ban a cluster munition that **contains no High Explosives** or has **fewer than 10 submunitions**, of which the submunitions must weigh less than 4 kilograms, are able to detect and engage a single target, and are equipped with electronic self-destruction and self-deactivating mechanisms.

The Convention does not apply to anti-personnel landmines.

The Convention prohibits States Parties from assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in any activity prohibited by the Convention. However, the Convention outlines this does not exclude States Parties from engaging in military cooperation and operations with States not party to the Convention that might engage in activities prohibited to a State Party.

What is required with respect to stockpiled cluster munitions?

The Convention requires each State Party to destroy stockpiled cluster munitions within **eight years** of the entry into force of the Convention for that State. States Parties may retain a minimum amount of cluster munitions that “absolutely necessary” for training purposes.

How many years does the Convention allow for clearance?

The Convention requires each States Party to clear all affected areas under its jurisdiction or control “as soon as possible and not later than **ten years** after entry into force of the Convention” for that State Party. For severely affected states that are unable to clear and destroy all cluster munitions within the timeframe, they can request extensions of up to **5 years** at a time. Extensions can be granted as many times as required for a severely affected State Party.

Does the Convention provide for assistance in implementation, monitoring and ensuring compliance?

The Convention provides each States Party with the right to seek and receive assistance in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. The Convention also requires each State Party “in a position to do so” to provide assistance for mine clearance, mine awareness, stockpile destruction and the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of cluster munitions victims.

The Convention requires each State Party to provide an annual transparency report on numbers and types of stockpiled cluster munitions, the status of stockpile destruction, areas contaminated, and the status of clearance programs.

What does the Convention require of State Parties with regards to assisting victims?

The Convention requires States Party to make every effort to collect reliable data on cluster munition incidences, assess the needs of victims, develop and implement a national plan to assist victims, and mobilise national and international resources to enable implementation of victim assistance programs.

When will that Convention enter into force?

The Convention stipulates it will become binding international law for State Parties six months after the 30th state ratifies or accedes. It will then come into force for states that join after this date six months after they accede.

Does the Convention propose a schedule of meetings? What about the costs for these meetings?

The Convention states that there shall be annual meetings of the States Parties until the first Review Conference and that this Review Conference shall take place five years after entry into force of the Convention. The first Meeting of States Party will be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations within one year of entry into force of this Convention.

Costs related to these meetings are borne by States that participate in these them in accordance with the UN scale of assessment adjusted accordingly. That is, only States participating in the meetings of the Convention pay for them and the costs assumed by participating States are consistent with their ability to pay.

How do States formally accept the obligations of the Convention?

The Convention opened for signature on **3rd December 2008** and will enter into force six months after the **30th state** has ratified the Convention. As of May 2009 96 countries had signed and 7 had ratified.

Anti Personnel Mine Ban Convention

What does the Convention ban or prohibit?

The Convention bans the use, production, development, acquisition and transfer of anti-personnel mines. The Convention defines “anti-personnel mine” as a munition designed to be placed under, on or near the ground or other surface area, to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person, and which will injure or kill one or more persons.

The Convention does not ban mines other than anti-personnel mines. For example, it does not ban mines that are exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a vehicle (e.g., anti-tank mines) and does not ban anti-personnel munitions that are command-detonated.

The Convention prohibits States Parties from assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone to engage in any activity prohibited by the Convention. This is a particularly relevant matter with respect to the interoperability of States Parties and States not Parties in military alliances.

What does the Convention require with respect to stockpiled mines and mined areas?

The Convention requires each State Party to destroy stockpiled anti-personnel mines within four years of the entry into force of the Convention for that State. States Parties may retain an amount of mines that “shall not exceed the minimum number absolutely necessary” for “the development of and training in mine detection, mine clearance, or mine destruction techniques.” Many States Parties have decided to retain no mines.

The Convention requires each States Party to clear all areas under its jurisdiction or control which contain anti-personnel mines “as soon as possible and not later than ten years after entry into force of the Convention” for that State Party.

Does the Convention provide for assistance in implementation, in monitoring implementation and in ensuring compliance?

The Convention provides each States Party with the right to seek and receive assistance in fulfilling its obligations under the Convention. It also requires each State Party “in a position to do so” to provide assistance.

The Convention requires each State Party to provide an annual transparency report on matters such as stockpiled anti-personnel mines and the status of programs for destroying stockpiled mines, and mined areas.

The Convention encourages States Parties to work together in a spirit of cooperation to facilitate compliance.

In addition to destroying stockpiled mines, clearing mined areas and submitting an annual transparency report, what other actions must States Parties take?

The Convention requires each State Party to take “all appropriate legal, administrative and other measures” to prevent and suppress any activity prohibited by the Convention which are undertaken by persons or on the territory under the jurisdiction and control of that State Party.

Does the Convention propose a schedule of meetings? What about the costs for these meetings?

The Convention states that there shall be annual meetings of the States Parties until the first Review Conference and that this Review Conference shall take place five years after entry into force. Given that the Convention entered into force in 1999, the Review Conference will be held in 2004. Costs related to these meetings are borne by States that participate in these them in accordance with the United Nations scale of assessment adjusted accordingly. That is, only States participating in the meetings of the Convention pay for them and the costs assumed by participating States are consistent with their ability to pay.

Can States still sign the Convention? How do States formally accept the obligations of the Convention?

The Convention was open for signature from December 3, 1997 until its entry into force on March 1, 1999. During that period, 133 States signed the Convention. The Convention is subject to ratification by these signatories. Instruments of ratification or accession must be deposited with the UN Secretary General through the Treaty Section of the UN Department for Disarmament Affairs in New York. As of December 2008 156 States had formally accepted the terms of the Convention through ratification.

Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

What is the purpose of the Convention?

The purpose of the Convention is to promote, protect and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms by all persons with disabilities, and to promote respect for their inherent dignity.

Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others

What is the essential nature of the Convention?

The convention has 50 Articles, most of which are concerned with specific rights of people with disabilities, such as education, health, work, conditions of living, and participation in different aspects of life. Some issues of particular interest for victims of UXO include:

- The Convention is concerned with all types of disability suffered by peoples of all nations, races, colours and creeds, without exception
- It provides a very broad range of support to such people in exerting their rights
- The needs for people who have a mobility disorder are specifically recognised, with obligations on States Parties to provide affordable and accessible mobility assistive devices
- The need for early detection and prevention are stressed
- Professional skills to assist people with disabilities should be developed
- The provision of services close to the homes of people with disability is promoted
- States Parties are required to collect information about people with disabilities
- International cooperation is a vital ingredient, without prejudice to the obligations of host nations.

How does the Convention Work?

The Convention confirms and secures all basic human rights on behalf of people with disabilities, and expects actions to be taken through all means to that end, but most especially through national legislation.

A national focal point or focal points must be identified for the implementation of the Convention

Nations will have an obligation to make regular reports on progress, the first within two years of coming into force, and thereafter every four years.

Does the Convention propose a schedule of meetings?

Yes, there is an obligation to hold a Conference within six months of coming into force, and that occurred on October 31st to November 3rd, 2008, in New York. Laos was not represented.

Thereafter, there will be a Conference every two years, unless the Conference decides on an alternative programme.

How is the Convention run?

Internationally, a Committee of experts is established to have oversight of the working of the Convention: initially, the Committee comprises 12 member selected by election at the Conference. After 60 States have signed, the Committee is increased by 6 members. Committee members can serve for four years and can serve two terms.

The United Nations shall provide a secretariat to support the Committee.

What is the Timetable for the Convention?

The Convention opened for signature on 30th March 2007 and Laos signed on 15th January 2008. Whilst the Convention entered into force on 12th May 2008, Laos is not fully and legally bound by its terms until it ratifies.

What needs to happen now?

Signature of the Convention signals intent to ratify and, in order to do so, to pass national legislation which will have the force of implementing the Convention in the signatory country.