



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Department of International Organizations

25 February 2009

Stephen D. Goose
Executive Director, Arms Division, Human Rights Watch
Editor, ICBL Landmine Monitor
Co-chair, Cluster Munitions Coalition

Dear Mr. Executive Director,

With reference to your letter dated 30 January 2009 addressed to H.E Dr. Thongloun SISOULITH, Deputy-Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR, requesting for updated information for your forthcoming publication on state policy and practice regarding cluster munitions, I have a pleasure to provide you with the following information as requested.

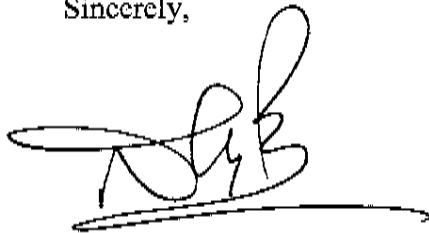
After the signing of Oslo Convention on December 03, 2008, the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR has immediately submitted a letter of ratification to the Lao National Assembly for consideration. On February 24, 2009 the Lao National Assembly has considered and approved the ratification of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and now we are in the process of administrative procedure that would lead to depositing of the instrument of ratification with the United Nations.

While awaiting the formal ratification of Oslo Convention, the Lao PDR has already implemented most of the provisions of the convention such as survey, clearance, risk education and victim assistance. Nonetheless, Lao PDR is enforcing its efforts to improve its national legal and executive measures to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Convention when it enters into force. We are also preparing ourselves to host the first state party conference of the Oslo Convention in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

The Lao PDR has never produced, stockpiled, transferred or used cluster munitions, but in contrast, the Lao people are the victims of cluster munitions and remain under a threat of such silent killers even 30 years after the war ended as two third of the country is contaminated by UXO. In this context, the Lao PDR has been working closely with the international community to raise public awareness about the danger and long-term impacts caused by cluster munitions and urge the world to ban such munitions. The Lao PDR is of the view that a state party to this convention should prohibit any transfer or stockpile of cluster munitions in its territory and the investment of cluster munitions should be banned.

Looking forward to working with you, I do hope that this information would be of great importance to you and your publication.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'SK', with a long horizontal flourish underneath.

Saleumxay Kommasith
Director General
Department of International Organizations
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Vientiane, Lao PDR