

## SDG 18: Remove the UXO obstacle to national development



### Background

Laos was subject to intensive aerial bombardment during the Indochina War (1964-1973). More than 580,000 sorties dropped around two million tons of bombs on the territory of the Lao PDR. These were mostly cluster munitions that the Lao people call “bombies”. An estimated 270 million bombs of this kind was dropped with a third failing to explode. It is estimated that cluster munitions had up to 30% failure rate resulting in up to 80 million unexploded “bombies”. More than 50,000 casualties are reported, and the extensive contamination with unexploded ordnance (UXO) continues to cause deadly accidents and leave many people with permanent disabilities. In addition, a lack of confidence in the safety of land can impede the productivity, and therefore the income of rural farmers and their families; this in turn reduce opportunities to strengthen and create livelihoods. UXO contamination in areas of existing or planned development, agricultural land and infrastructure (such as roads, schools, hospitals, medical/public health, water points, religious/culture sites, markets, recreational areas, rice field, garden, etc) presents a hazard for particularly at-risk section of local communities; there are differing implications of accidents according to gender, age, social status, education and other factors. UXO clearance is expected to become increasingly important as the continuing development of Lao PDR leads to intensified and expanded land use. As the full extent of contamination is currently unknown, the Government of Lao PDR plan to undertake a full survey of contamination by 2021. This will enable efficient planning to end the threat that UXO poses to human security and livelihoods in the country, thereby removing the obstacle to national development. In 2010, the Government of Lao PDR launched MDG9 to reduce the impact of UXO in Lao PDR in accordance with the National Strategic Plan for the UXO sector “The Safe Path Forward II”. Given special prominence to the UXO issues in Lao PDR and with the strong aspiration, the government of Lao PDR continues to address the UXO issues by adopting its national SDG to remove completely all the known UXO remains on the Lao PDR territory. It should be noted that this can only be achieved by UXO Lao PDR with the support of Development Partners.

## Facts and Figures

- More than 50,000 casualties have been caused by UXO in Lao PDR; as in 2015, 42 casualties were caused by UXO accidents and number of casualties reduced drastically to 25 in 2019.
- More than half of casualties in recent years have been children, predominantly boys;
- The national authorities in Lao PDR have recorded the needs of 8,918 survivors of UXO accidents;
- The districts with highest estimated UXO contamination are disproportionately among the poorest districts in the country;
- From 1996 until July 2016, more than 60,000 hectares of land has been cleared: more than 40,000 hectares for agriculture and 20,000 hectares for other development purposes. Over 1.7 million items of UXO have been destroyed: 7,500 items were big size bombs, over 800,000 cluster munitions, over 7,000 landmines and over 900,000 items were of other varieties of shells.
- More than 130,000 items of Unexploded Ordnance were found and destroyed are recently as 2015, with the majority of those being cluster munitions;
- Lao PDR is a leading advocate for the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and a State Party to the Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD);
- Under the new "Evidence base Survey and Clearance concept of operations, the UXO Sector has seen an improvement in productivity and efficiency of UXO clearance operations by an increase of 'bombies' destroyed per hectare from 5 items in 2014 to 22 items in 2015.

Targets	Indicators
18.1: By 2030, ensure that annual casualties from UXO accidents are eliminated to the extent possible.	<p>18.1.1. Number of reported UXO casualties (disaggregated by age group and sex).</p> <p>18.1.2. Percentage of population in contaminated villages (disaggregated by age group, sex and persons with disabilities with information on Confirmed Hazardous Areas in their village).</p>
18.2: By 2030, ensure residual UXO activities undertaken and all known UXO contamination in high priority areas and all villages defined as 'poor' cleared	<p>18.2.1. Percentage of high priority hazardous areas remaining to be cleared (disaggregated by high priority village).</p> <p>18.2.2. Number of villages defined as 'poor' with Confirmed Hazardous Areas remaining to be cleared.</p>
18.3: By 2030, ensure that all identified UXO survivors and victims have their needs met in health and support provided for livelihoods employment to most poverty-risk survivors.	<p>18.3.1. Proportion of active age UXO survivors unable to earn sufficient income with access to basic income security.</p> <p>18.3.2. Percentage of UXO survivors and victims mainstreamed into health, education and employment services.</p>