



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S  
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS**



*(Please check against delivery)*

**Statement on behalf of the Members of  
the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)**

**Delivered by**

**H.E. Mr. Anouparb VONGNORKEO**

**Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Lao People's  
Democratic Republic to the United Nations**

**At the Thematic Discussion on Cluster 2: Other Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)  
of the First Committee, 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**New York, 18 October 2022**

**Mr. Chairman,**

1. I have the honour to deliver this statement on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). ASEAN also aligns itself with the statement delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).
2. ASEAN attaches particular importance to our concerted efforts to address global security challenges in a strategic and holistic manner, including in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. As the international community strives to overcome the negative impacts caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, other non-traditional security issues such as terrorism, and chemical, biological and radiological (CBR) threats, among others, continue to present significant risks to the security and stability of the region and the world at large.
3. ASEAN reiterates its support towards the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, particularly for "ensuring respect for norms against chemical and biological weapons concerns the interests of all humanity". All weapons of mass destruction, if used intentionally or by accident, can result in severe casualties and cause massive loss of life, damage to property, and significant harm to numerous species and biodiversity. ASEAN therefore strongly condemns in the strongest possible terms the use of such weapons by any party under any circumstances anywhere as this constitutes a serious violation of international law. We urge the international community to fully and effectively implement all treaties concerning weapons of mass destruction, as well as Security Council Resolution 1540. In this connection, ASEAN takes note of the conduct of an Open Consultation of the 1540 Committee on the Comprehensive Review of the Status of Implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004) in New York on 31 May–2 June 2022, and welcomes the fruitful discussion at the "UNSCR" 1540 (2004) Workshop for ASEAN States" held in Bangkok on 21-22 September 2022.

**Mr. Chairman,**

4. On chemical weapons, all ASEAN Member States are parties to the 1997 Chemical Weapons Convention, and strictly abide by our international obligations under the Convention. Noting the 25th anniversary of its entry into force, ASEAN recognizes that the Convention remains one of the most successful instruments of disarmament that completely prohibits an entire category of WMD, providing for a verification system and promoting the use of chemicals for peaceful purposes in accordance with international law. ASEAN believes in promoting and achieving the universality of this Convention in order to move forward in the field of disarmament. We therefore urge those States that have not yet signed or ratified the Convention to do so as soon as possible.
5. ASEAN commends the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its unwavering efforts to support the implementation of the provisions of the CWC and welcomes the progress in eliminating chemical weapons stockpiles under the CWC. We strongly believe that the international community should redouble its efforts to strengthen international cooperation in order to eliminate chemical weapons and enhance international support to help all victims suffering from the use of chemical weapons.

6. As parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), ASEAN notes the 50th anniversary of the signing of the BWC and reaffirms our commitment to this landmark treaty. We recognize the necessity of multilateral negotiations and note the lack of a verification measure, the latter of which poses a challenge to the effectiveness of the Convention. We also place great importance on enhancing international cooperation and assistance, as well as exchanges in the use of toxins, biological agents, equipment, and technology for peaceful purposes.

**Mr. Chairman,**

7. ASEAN remains committed to enhancing regional capacity to address chemical, biological and radiological threats. The achievements of the Network of ASEAN Chemical, Biological and Radiological (CBR) Defence Experts, since its establishment in 2018, have fostered greater regional cooperation in this domain. Within the purview of the network, ASEAN CBR Defence Experts have continued to meet and share information and best practices through regular exchange of visits, workshops and virtual table-top exercises in order to strengthen regional preparedness and cooperation against chemical, biological and radiological threats.
8. Practical cooperation in the ASEAN defence sector has continued to make good progress since its inception in 2006, particularly through the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) platform. Moreover, the ADMM-Plus Chemical, Biological and Radiological Conference was organised by Singapore from 11 -12 October 2022 to develop a deeper understanding of the risks posed by CBR agents in terrorist acts in the region through the sharing of information and best practices, enhance cooperation and preparedness against CBR threats, and establish closer networks between regional and international CBR experts.
9. The CBRN Center of Excellence network established a regional secretariat for Southeast Asia in 2013 to enhance the capacity of ASEAN Member States in mitigating CBRN-related risks. This regional secretariat ensures cooperation and coordination in Southeast Asia and supports efforts to identify CBRN risk mitigation needs, develop National CBRN Action Plans, and formulate and implement regional project proposals. Within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), an ARF Workshops on "Raising Awareness and Promoting Cooperation on CBRN Risk Mitigation" was held in 2018. The ARF Table-Top Exercise on Response Capabilities to CBRN Incidents was also organized in Manila on 13-15 June 2022. This tabletop exercise aimed to enhance inter-operability and coordination among concerned government agencies and the international community on how to deal with a CBRN incident.

**Mr. Chairman,**

10. Let me conclude by reaffirming ASEAN's strong support for the work of the OPCW and the BWC's Implementation Support Unit, while emphasizing the importance of enhanced international support for States Parties to build their national capacity for the implementation of treaties related to weapons of mass destruction in accordance with national and international law and the UN Charter.

**I thank you, Mr. Chairman**