



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

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**Statement**

**by**

**Ms. Somsanouk KEOBOUNSAN,**

**Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic  
Republic to the United Nations**

**During the Thematic Debate on Conventional Weapons**

**of the First Committee during the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the United Nations**

**General Assembly**

**New York, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

**Mr. Chairman,**

1. Since this is the first time I am taking the floor. Allow me to congratulate you and members of the Bureau on the assumption of your office.
2. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Representative of Indonesia on behalf of NAM and Thailand on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

**Mr. Chairman,**

3. The Lao PDR has had traumatic experience of humanitarian and developmental impact caused by the use of conventional weapons. Therefore, the Lao PDR strongly supports and actively participates in the work of the international community on conventional weapons control and disarmament. That is why the Lao PDR has joined major international instruments in this field such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and 4 of its protocols and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and supports the letter and spirit and objective of the Mine Ban Convention by voting in favor of its resolution in spite of the fact that we are not yet a party to this convention.
4. Although, conventional weapons do not have the same effect as weapons of mass destruction, the extensive use of such weapons can also cause great humanitarian impact with long term consequences. The Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) is a good example that it created humanitarian problems long after the conflict ended. The ERW continues to be a major obstacle to social and economic development in many countries, including my own country.
5. As you may aware, the Lao PDR is one of the most heavily UXO-contaminated countries in the world. During the 9-year Indochina war from 1964 to 1973, about 270 million cluster sub-munitions were dropped on Lao soil where up to 30 per cent of those failed to detonate upon impact and scattered around in most provinces of the country. To continue to tackle this enormous challenge in a systematic way, in September last year, the Lao PDR adopted the national SDG 18 “Lives Safe from UXO”.

**Mr. Chairman,**

6. The Lao PDR also concerns over a wide range of security and humanitarian impact arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. This is because, these weapons are widely used by criminals and drug traffickers. Therefore, my delegation supports the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in tackling this issue.

**Mr. Chairman,**

7. As one of the most heavily affected countries, the Lao PDR has been actively promoting the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in order to prevent further victimization of mankind caused by UXOs. Therefore, the Lao PDR welcome the outcomes of the Seventh Meeting of States Parties to this Convention held on 4-6 September 2017 in Geneva, Switzerland, and look forward to the 8<sup>th</sup> MSP to the Convention next September 2018. The Lao PDR would like once again to take this opportunity to call upon those countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so in order to achieve a world free from cluster munitions.

8. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank development partners for their support and assistance that have contributed to our efforts to rid our country of the UXO, which, in turn, will contribute to the implementation of many targets of SDGs such as under SDGs1, 2, 8, 17.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.