



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

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Statement

by

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At the General Debate of the First Committee on All

disarmament and International Security.

During the 72nd Session of the General Assembly

New York, 5th October 2017

Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the delegation of the Lao PDR, I would like to by congratulating you on your election as the Chair of the First Committee. I wish to assure you our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duty.

2. My delegation associates itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non Aligned Movement (NAM) and the representative of 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. Despite the fact that the aspiration of the majority of the member states to see the world without nuclear weapons and that disarmament and non-proliferation are among the top of the agenda of the work of the United Nations for many years, it still lacks progress. On the contrary, it is quite noticeable that arms race is being revived which concomitantly brings along a greater threat of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) given today's highly advanced technology and the most modernized weaponry. As such, one could say that we are living in a less secured world. This urgently calls for all of us to have a greater political will to address this most important issue of disarmament and non-proliferation, in order to make tangible progress in the field by building mutual trust and confidence for the mutual security assurance of the entire world .

4. For whatsoever reason, the continued existence of weapons of mass destruction , nuclear weapons in particular, remains a matter of serious concern to international peace and security because as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of accidental,

mistaken, unauthorised, or intentional nuclear weapon detonations remains, thus, exposing humanity and the environment to their catastrophic effects. Therefore, we are convinced that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 7 July 2017 at the United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination which opened for signing on 20 September 2017. The Lao PDR is one of the countries that signed this important Treaty. My delegation hopes that its early entry into force can contribute to the achievement of a nuclear weapon free world. My delegation welcomes the General Assembly Meeting to Commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. We believe that we should redouble our efforts to raise public awareness on the danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction so that the future generations will not keen to follow the path of acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

5. The NPT remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime as it is the only relevant international instrument that is being enforced and near universal. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to pursue, in good faith, the effective measures to fill the legal gap for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, which are aimed at the full implementation of Article VI of the NPT, thereby, achieving and sustaining a world that is free from nuclear weapons. My delegation support the implementation of the three pillars of Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Nuclear Disarmament and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy that are well articulated because we firmly believe that it serves the best interest of the

international community. These three pillars are meant to be implemented equally, yet discrepancy remains as the nuclear disarmament is lacking behind.

6. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), of which the Lao PDR also attaches great importance to, would certainly contribute to move forward the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, more than 20 years after its adoption, the CTBT remains ineffective. It is, therefore, the duty of the international community to ensure the entry into force of this Treaty and we have to be optimistic. In this context, we are hoping to have those who have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT.

7. On our part, to support the international efforts, the Lao PDR has become the state party to a number of international instruments on disarmament and is committed to fulfilling its international obligations under these treaties

8. The Lao PDR attaches great importance to the creation of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones, since in our view, it has significantly contributed to the strengthening of the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as the enhancement of regional and global peace and security. As such, we are a strong supporter of preserving the Southeast Asian region as a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone and free of all other weapons of mass destruction as enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty) and the ASEAN Charter.

9. The Lao PDR recognizes the significant role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in nuclear non-proliferation and the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear technology, nuclear safety and nuclear safeguards. In this respect, we are pleased to inform that the Lao PDR has completed the internal process and signed the IAEA Additional Protocol.

Mr. Chairman,

10. My delegation wishes also to touch on the danger of the cluster munitions as it is found that its use creates indiscriminate and dangerous long term effects on people and development. The cluster munitions that were the most heavily used in my country during the 9-year long war is a case in point. This continues to kill and maim our people and hinder national development. It is a painstaking process to clear the unexploded ordnance (UXO). It is not known how many years it will take to clear UXO-contaminated areas as they so many and so large. Huge resources to support this work are needed. Over the past years, our efforts to clear the UXO, supported and assisted by the international community, have yielded a limited result. For the above reason, to continue to address this serious problem that still lingers on, the Lao Government launched the national SDG 18: Lives Save from UXO last year. Therefore, we call on the international community to pay close attention to this issue by supporting and assisting us to implement national SDG 18, among other goals of the SDGs, to help rid of the UXO in my country, the Lao PDR and by acceding to the Convention on Cluster Munitions so that horrible experience will not be repeated.

11. We welcome the outcomes of the 7th Meeting of State Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions held on 4 - 6 September 2017 in Geneva to review the progress and challenges in the implementation of this Convention and look forward to the next Meeting of State Parties to this Convention to be held in September 2018 in Geneva.

Mr. Chairman,

12. My delegation wishes to emphasize that to overcome this difficult deadlock and move forward this very important issue of disarmament and non-proliferation, a

strong political will and collective efforts of each State are critical and stress that the multilateral approach to realize the ultimate goal of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control is also critical. This is so because it requires more effort from each State to work together to achieve the common goals so that the world would be free from fear and threats posed by all kinds of weapons. My delegation, therefore, will continue to contribute constructively to the work of this committee.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.