



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

(Please check against delivery)

**Statement by
Mr. Souliyong SO INXAY
Third Secretary**

**At the Thematic Discussion on Cluster 4: Conventional Weapons
of the First Committee during the 78th Session of the General Assembly**

New York, 23 October 2023

Mr. Chair,

1. My delegation aligns itself with statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the NAM (Non-Aligned Movement) and by Cambodia on behalf of ASEAN.
2. The Lao PDR is of great concern over a wide range of security and humanitarian impacts arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. Therefore, my delegation fully supports the efforts to strengthen the full and effective control of these weapons and combat the illicit trade at the national, regional, and international levels as they are overtly tied with international peace and security.
3. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of the final report of the Eight Biennial Meeting of States (BMS8) by consensus and look forward to convening the 4th Review conference of the United Nations Program of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) in 2024. We also welcome the adoption of the final report of the OEWG to elaborate a set of political commitments as a new global framework that will address the existing gaps in through-life ammunition management.
4. Like others, the Lao PDR shares the common aspiration to make our world free of threats from explosive remnants of war. Towards this end, we believe it is essential to universalize and put into practice, the pertinent international instruments and treaties, which the Lao PDR is a party to, including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), with particular importance given to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

Mr. Chair,

5. As the world's largest victim of cluster munitions and a state party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions, the Lao PDR is profoundly concerned over the announcement and possible use of cluster munitions. For over four decades, the Lao people were victimized by cluster munitions and until today the deadly unexploded ordnance have continued to harm and maim innocent people and posed major constraints for social and economic development.

6. On this note, the Lao PDR calls upon any state or actor to refrain from all use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions as prescribed in the Convention on Cluster Munitions so that innocent people will not be victimized by such heinous weaponry. Taking this opportunity, we invite all states, who have not yet done so, to join the CCM and pursue the goal of a world free of cluster munitions.

7. The Lao PDR reiterates that mine action is crucial for achieving the SDGs and encourages all efforts to promote mine action at the international and national level. On our part, the Lao PDR has adopted its national SDG 18 entitled “Lives Safe from Unexploded Ordnance UXO” and the Strategy Plan called “Safe Path Forward 3” for 2021-2030 aimed at addressing UXO-related challenges as UXO have undermined our national development efforts. In this connection, we count on the continued support and cooperation from the international community to help Lao PDR implement this specific national SDG18 together with other SDGs.

Mr. Chair,

8. History has demonstrated that conventional weapons, particularly the explosive remnants of war continue to cause deadly impacts on innocent lives. It is our firm belief that with our concerted efforts to implement the relevant international legal instruments and frameworks, we can make important contribution to the maintenance of international peace, reduce humanitarian impacts and ensure safer environment for the future generations. Thank You.