



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

(Please check against delivery)

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

**at the Thematic Discussion on Cluster 4: Conventional Weapons
of the First Committee during the 79th Session of the General Assembly**

New York, 24 October 2024

Madam Chair,

1. My delegation aligns itself with statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the NAM and by Cambodia on behalf of ASEAN.
2. The proliferation and misuse of conventional weapons pose serious security challenges and social order. Their extensive use can also cause harmful humanitarian impact and long-term consequences. A good example is the persistent threat of Explosive Remnants of War (ERW), which continue to harm innocent people long after conflicts have ended. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive arms control mechanism, enhanced transparency, and strengthened international cooperation in order to mitigate the risks and ensure global security. In this regard, my delegation fully supports the ongoing efforts to reinforce effective control of these weapons and combat their illicit trade at the national, regional, and international levels.
3. My delegation welcomes the consensus adoption of the outcome document of the 4th Review Conference of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (POA) and the International Tracing Instrument (ITI). We emphasize the importance of supporting and expediting the implementation of the Fellowship Training Programme on Small Arms and Light Weapons, particularly for developing countries.
4. Like others, the Lao PDR shares the common aspiration to make our world free from the dangers posed by explosive remnants of war. To achieve this goal, we believe it is crucial to promote the universalization and effective implementation of relevant international instruments and treaties. As a committed party to these frameworks, including the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), we place particular emphasis on the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

Madam Chair,

5. Being one of the most heavily impacted country by cluster munitions, the Lao PDR has experienced firsthand, the devastating and persistent effects of these inhumane weapons. Over the past decades, these remnants have tragically claimed lives and

injured innocent people, with children comprising the majority of the victims. Therefore, our mission to eliminate these threats is not merely an economic necessity but a profound moral obligation.

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. The Lao PDR deeply values the Convention on Cluster Munitions and remains unwavering in its commitment to upholding its principles and achieving them. Taking this opportunity, we urge all states, who have not yet done so, to join the CCM and pursue the goal of a world free of cluster munitions.

Madam Chair,

7. The Lao PDR reaffirms that mine action is vital for achieving the SDGs as it directly supports and ensures the safety and development. Clearing unexploded ordnance (UXO) will enable access to agricultural land, infrastructure and essential services which promote economic growth and contribute to poverty reduction. By preventing injuries, saving lives, and restoring decent livelihoods, mine action directly contributes to sustainable development and promotes long-term peace, making it a critical enabler across multiple SDG targets.
8. In this light, the Lao PDR has adopted its national SDG 18 entitled “Lives Safe from Unexploded Ordnance UXO” and the Strategic Plan called “Safe Path Forward 3” for 2021-2030, aimed at addressing UXO-related challenges as UXO have undermined our national development efforts. Our journey with mine action has been fortified by the generous support from numerous bilateral and multilateral donors, who have provided both financial and technical assistance. 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.
9. In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to working closely with all countries and development partners to strengthen international cooperation and support for countries affected by UXO and other explosive remnants of war. Our

shared goal is to protect and enable people to fully exercise their rights to development. Thank you, Madam Chair.