



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

(Please check against delivery)

Statement

by

Ms. Somsanouk KEOBOUNSAN,

Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao People's

Democratic Republic to the United Nations

at the Thematic Discussion on Conventional Weapons

of the First Committee during the 73rd Session of the United

Nations General Assembly

New York, 29 October 2018

Mr. Chairman,

1. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of NAM and Viet Nam 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,

2. The Lao PDR has had traumatic experience of humanitarian and developmental impact caused by the use of conventional weapons. Therefore, the Lao Government 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 and 4 of its protocols, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and also 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.

3. Although, conventional weapons do not have the same effect as weapons of mass destruction, but their extensive use can also cause harmful humanitarian impact with long term consequences. The Explosive Remnant of War (ERW) is a good example as it created humanitarian problems long after the conflict ended.

4. As you are aware, the ERW, including the UXO continues to cause major negative impact on the livelihood of the people and hamper development in the affected countries. The Lao PDR is a case point where most parts of the country have been heavily UXO-contaminated countries in the world. During the Indochina war, more than 270 million cluster sub-munitions were dropped on most parts of the country where up to 30 per cent of them failed to detonate upon impact. Therefore, the ERW have been a daunting challenge to the socio-economic development and poverty eradication efforts in our country. To continue tackling this challenge in a systematic way, the Lao PDR has gone extra mile by adopting the national MDG 9 and was now rolled over as national SDG18 entitled “Lives Safe from UXO” to address the problem caused by UXO.

5. Against this backdrop, the Lao PDR has been actively promoting the universalization of the CCM in order to prevent further victimization of mankind caused by UXO. We commend countries which have shown their commitments by joining the Convention and take this opportunity to call upon countries that have not yet acceded to the Convention to consider to do so in order to achieve a world free from cluster munitions.

6. The Lao PDR welcomes the outcome of the 8th Meeting of States Parties to this Convention held on 3-5 September 2018 in Geneva and looks forward to the 9th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention next September 2019.

Mr. Chairman,

7. The Lao PDR is concerned over a wide range of security and humanitarian impact arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons 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,

8. In conclusion, I reaffirm the Lao PDR's commitment to continue actively promoting the universalization of the CCM by working closely with all States Parties and the international community so that together we can make the world free from UXO.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.