



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

(Please check against delivery)

Statement

by

**H.E. Dr. Khiane PHANSOURIVONG,
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Lao
People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations
At the General Debate of the First Committee on
All disarmament and International Security.
During the 73rd Session of the General Assembly**

New York, 9 October 2018.

Mr. Chairman,

1. Let me begin 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 aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representative of Indonesia and the Philippines on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Association of South East Asian Nations respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

3. Disarmament and non-proliferation are top of the agenda of the United Nations for many years. All Member States must support this in order to maintain and promote international peace and security. Hence, the Lao PDR attaches great importance to the work of the First Committee.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The existence of weapons of mass destruction, in particular, nuclear weapons 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. For this reason, we firmly believe that total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Therefore, we commend countries that have signed or ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which was opened for signing since 20 September 2017 here at the Headquarters of the United Nations. Today, it is gratifying to note that 69 and 19 countries have signed and ratified the said Treaty respectively. The Lao PDR is one of the countries that signed this important Treaty. My delegation hopes that the Treaty will enter into

force in the near future so that it can contribute to the realization of making our world free from nuclear weapons.

5. My delegation also welcomes the General Assembly Meeting to Commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons held on 26th September. We believe that we should redouble our efforts to raise public awareness and promote education on the danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction so that the future generations will not follow the path of acquiring weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

6. We are all well aware that NPT remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime as it is the only relevant international instrument which is being enforced and near universal. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to undertake, 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 supports 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.

7. The Lao PDR welcomes the recent historic Summit between the Leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America in June this year which constitutes an important milestone in the relations between the two countries. We also welcome the 3rd Summit between the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as this helps to

improve not only bilateral relations between the two countries, but also to address the issue of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. We hope that such positive momentum will be strengthened, thereby, contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability, and denuclearization in the region as a whole.

8. The Lao PDR stresses the importance of the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) which aims at promoting nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, more than two decades 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 are hoping to have those who have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT.

9. 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

10. The Lao PDR attaches great importance to the creation of the Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones as 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. Therefore, 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.

11. 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, the Lao PDR signed the IAEA Additional Protocol.

Mr. Chairman,

12. My delegation wishes also to touch on the danger of the cluster munitions as its use creates indiscriminate and dangerous long term effects on people and development. The cluster munitions 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 the development of the country. 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 were 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 PDR has gone extra mile by adopting the national SDG 18 entitled “Lives Safe from Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)” to address the problem caused by UXO. Therefore, we call on the international community to support and assist us to implement national SDG 18 together with, other goals of the SDGs, to help rid of the UXO in my country.

Mr. Chairman,

13. 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.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.