



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

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Statement

by

Mr. Soulikone SAMOUNTY

Third Secretary

**Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic
Republic to the United Nations,**

**At Thematic Debate on “Conventional Weapons”
of the First Committee during the 70th Session of the
United Nations General Assembly**

New York, October 26, 2015

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). However, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

The Lao PDR attaches great importance to humanitarian concerns caused by the use of conventional weapons. Therefore, we strongly support the efforts of the international community to address this issue by actively participating in the work of the international conventions on conventional weapons. The Lao PDR is state party to major international instruments in this field such as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and 4 of its protocols and the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Lao PDR also supports the spirit and objective of the Mine Ban Convention as evidenced from our continued voting in favor of the UNGA resolution on the Mine Ban Convention despite the fact that my country is yet to be a state party to such convention. In the meantime, we welcome the entry into force of the Arms Trade Treaty. We are currently studying its text with the aim of joining the treaty in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

Although conventional weapons do not have the same level of effect as that of the weapons of mass destruction, the widespread use of such weapons continue to cause long-term consequences caused by the Explosive Remnants of War "ERW". The ERW not only inflicts serious humanitarian consequences on the civilian population but it also becomes major obstacles to the social and economic development of ERW-contaminated areas in many countries, including my own country.

The Lao PDR, therefore, concerns over a wide range of security and humanitarian impact arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons. To address this problem, countries need to work together. To this end, my delegation supports the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in tackling this issue.

Mr. Chairman,

As you are aware that the Lao PDR is one of the most heavily UXO-contaminated countries in the world as over two million tons of bombs were dropped on the Lao soil during the war from 1964 to 1973. Although the war ended 4 decades ago, The ERW continues to kill or maim innocent people, including women and children to this day. Furthermore, the ERW continues to hamper our national development, especially to the agricultural sector and the livelihood of the rural people, to the infrastructure development and to other investment projects in the unexploded ordnance (UXO) contaminated areas of which 14 out of 17 provinces of my country continue to be affected. The clearance of UXOs will take a long time and require a huge amount of resources. We, therefore, express our sincere thanks to the friendly countries, international organizations and others for the support and assistance that have been extended to us and once again call on them to provide increased funding and technical assistance to support our efforts to clear the UXOs in our country which will, in turn, contribute to a great extent to our efforts to eradicate poverty and create prerequisites for our country to graduate from the underdevelopment status in the future.

As one of the most heavily affected countries, the Lao PDR has been actively promoting the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in order to prevent further victimization of humankind caused by UXOs by, inter-alia, hosting the first meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and active participation in the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions held in Croatia in September this year. We, therefore, welcome the adoption of the Political Declaration and Dubrovnik Action Plan. We also look forward to participating in the Sixth Meeting of the States Party to the Convention to be held in Geneva in 2016. Taking this opportunity, the Lao PDR, once again, wish to congratulate those countries that have already ratified the CCM and encourage those that have not done so to ratify or accede to this Convention.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.
