Statement

By

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At the General Debate of the First Committee on All disarmament and International Security.

During the 71st Session of the General Assembly

New York, 5th October 2016
Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao PDR, I wish to join other delegates to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I wish to assure you our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duty.

2. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar 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,

3. With today’s unpredictable world security environment, the international community needs to see the improvement in the field of disarmament and international security. Obligations that had been agreed upon in the past remain unfulfilled. The lack of political will and collective efforts continue to be the main challenges for the progress in the field of disarmament. Thus, the tasks that we must undertake to ensure a safe future for the next generations are daunting.

4. Disarmament and non-proliferation are top of the agenda of the United Nations that all Member States must support in order to maintain and promote international peace and security. In light of this, the Lao PDR attaches great importance to the work of the First Committee.

5. The continued existence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), in particular, nuclear weapons remain a matter of serious concern to international community. In this context, the Lao PDR reiterates its view that only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the international community could ensure an absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Therefore, the Lao PDR welcomes the General Assembly Meeting to Commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons held on 26th September 2016. We believe that keeping this momentum will move us forward to the total elimination of nuclear disarmament.
Mr. Chairman,

6. NPT is one of the Treaties that have played a significant role in the field of nuclear disarmament. The three pillars of Nuclear Non-Proliferation, Nuclear Disarmament and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy that are well articulated should serve 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 entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), of which the Lao PDR attaches great importance to, would certainly contribute to moving forward the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, 20 years after it was adopted, the CTBT remains ineffective. It is, therefore, the duty of the international community to ensure the entry into force of this Treaty and we have to be optimistic. In this context, we are hoping to have those who have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT at an early date, in particular, the remaining eight Annex 2 States.

8. The creation of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones has made significant contributions to the strengthening of the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime as well as to the enhancement of the regional and global peace and security. The Lao PDR again encourages the Nuclear Weapons States to recognize these zones and provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zones. We also wish to reemphasize the importance of the full operation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and encourage the Nuclear Weapons States to accede to its Protocol at the earliest possible date.

9. 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 has completed the internal process and signed the IAEA Additional Protocol.
Mr. Chairman,

10. While focusing on the threat posed by WMD and their proliferation, we can not afford to ignore the challenges posed by conventional weapons, in particular, the cluster munitions. The use of cluster munitions, especially the remnants of wars such as the unexploded ordnance (UXO) has created major obstacles to human life and national development in many countries and, in particular, in the most heavily bombed country per capita like my country, the Lao PDR, where UXO continues to pose serious obstacles to the people’s life and the national development even though the conflict ended over 4 decades ago. The clearance of UXOs will take long time and requires huge amount of resources.

11. In this connection, we would like to express our sincere thanks to those countries, international organizations and others, who have provided funding and technical support and assistance to my country, including the recent pledge of $90 million by the USA for the next 3 years and once again we would like to call on them to provide increased funding and technical assistance to support our efforts to clear the UXOs in our country.

12. On our part, to address these challenges, the Lao Government launched SDG 18: Lives Save from UXO as a national goal on 7 September 2016. In our efforts, to rid of the danger from the explosive remnants of war, we hope that support and assistance from the international community to realize this specific SDG goal will be forthcoming in the years to ahead.

13. We welcome the successful outcome of the sixth Meeting of State Parties to this Convention on Cluster Munitions held on 5-7 September 2016 in Geneva to review the progress and challenges in the implementation of the obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions and look forward to the Seventh Meeting of State Parties to this Convention to be held in September 2017 in Geneva. We would like once again to take this opportunity to call upon those counties that have not yet acceded to the Convention on Cluster Munitions to do so in order to achieve a world free from cluster munitions.
Mr. Chairman,

14. To date, the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has progressed at a snail pace. In this regard, the Lao DPR stresses the need for strong political will and collective efforts to overcome this difficult impasse and to reemphasize the multilateral approach to realize the ultimate goal of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Although a small country with limited resources, the Lao PDR is the state party to a number of international instruments on disarmament and is committed to fulfilling its international obligations under these treaties. The Lao PDR strongly believes that political will and flexibility of Member States are essential in order to make progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation as well as to overcome the challenges posed to the international community by nuclear weapons. It requires more effort from each and every country 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. My delegation, therefore, will continue to contribute constructively to the work of this committee.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.