STATEMENT BY

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OF THE KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

ON BEHALF OF
THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN)

FIRST COMMITTEE
THEMATIC DISCUSSION ON CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS

74TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to address the First Committee today on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam and my own country Cambodia.

Mr. Chairman,

2. ASEAN is deeply concerned with the illicit proliferation of conventional weapons globally. Proliferation of conventional arms contributes to violence and instability and perpetuates poverty, undermining human welfare. Each year more than 200,000 civilian casualties are caused by the use of small arms in conflict situations. ASEAN recognizes that effective regulation and control of conventional weapons is important in realizing peace, stability, and sustainable development efforts.

3. ASEAN supports the United Nations Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which can aid global efforts in regulating the flow of such weapons and can help combat the illicit trade in these weapons at the national, regional, and international levels. In this light, we look forward to the 2020 Seventh Biennial Meeting of States Parties.

4. In line with the conclusions of the 2018 Third Review Conference of the UN PoA, cooperation towards a more efficient global control of Small Arms and Light Weapons is necessary. Strengthening capacity-building measures as well as exchanging information and experience between partners is imperative to enhancing the regulation of conventional weapons. ASEAN supports multilateral transparency and confidence-building measures in addressing the global control of conventional weapons.

5. ASEAN welcomes the Agenda for Disarmament launched by Secretary-General António Guterres, which recognizes the immeasurable cost of human suffering resulting from the proliferation of conventional and other types of weapons. ASEAN fully supports the Secretary-General’s focus on saving lives through disarmament,
including by mitigating the humanitarian impact of conventional arms and addressing the illicit trade of these weapons.

6. For its part, ASEAN has been diligently working to reinforce the disarmament machinery in our region and beyond. ASEAN continue to address arms smuggling through the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime and the ASEAN Regional Forum. Moreover, the annual meetings of ASEAN Police Chiefs enable stronger regional cooperation in transnational crime investigations. At the same time, the ASEAN Forensic Science Institute helps promote the exchange of information on forensic investigations related to illicit arms.

7. To achieve the goal of disarmament, consistent international action is necessary. In this context, ASEAN takes note of developments within other frameworks and international legally-binding instruments, including the Fifth Conference of States Parties to the Arms Trade Treaty. We also look forward to the outcome of the Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention to be held in Oslo, Norway next month.

Mr. Chairman,

8. The ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre was established as a regional centre of excellence to help address the humanitarian aspects of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and explosive remnants of war. The Centre facilitates appropriate medical and rehabilitation assistance to victims, and strives to enhance community awareness through research and technical assistance projects. The Centre continues to uphold ASEAN’s strong cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service as well as the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

9. Given the devastating effects of land mines on civilian populations, particularly women and children, it is important that demining projects are developed with a holistic approach to include victim-support and strong community development focus. To this end, ASEAN calls on all States, particularly developed countries, to provide the necessary financial, technical, and humanitarian assistance in the ordnance clearance and in the reintegration and rehabilitation of victims.
In conclusion, ASEAN recognizes the adverse effects posed by the illicit transfer of conventional weapons as well as the dangers posed by the presence of unexploded ordnance. Their long-lasting impact affects communities and undermines global sustainable development efforts. The international community must actively address these issues through coordinated actions.

Thank you.