



**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 71st Session of
the United Nations General Assembly**

New York, 20 October, 2016

Mr. Chairman,

1. I would like to join previous speakers to congratulate you and member of the Bureau on the assumption of your office.

2. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Representative of Thailand 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. The Lao PDR stresses the significance of the humanitarian concerns caused by the use of conventional weapons. The Lao PDR strongly supports and actively participates in the work of the international community on conventional weapons disarmament. The Lao PDR has become state party to major international instruments in this field, such as Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and 4 of its protocols and Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Lao PDR also supports the spirit and objective of Mine Ban Convention to which we have stated our intention to join the treaty. We participated in the negotiation process of the Arms Trade Treaty and take note of the entry into force of the Treaty. Currently, we are studying the Treaty with the aim of becoming state party of the Treaty in the future.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Even though, conventional weapons do not have the same effect as weapons of mass destruction but it has the same impact and causes long term consequences. The Explosive Remnants of War "ERW" create humanitarian problems and inflict unacceptable harm on the livelihood as well as pose serious obstacles to social and economic development of many countries.

5. 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,

6. As you are aware that the Lao PDR is one of the most heavily contaminated countries by Unexploded Ordinance (UXO) in the world. During the Indochina war from 1964 to 1973, about 270 million cluster sub-munitions were dropped on Lao land of which around 30 per cent of them failed to explode and remain scattered in most of the provinces of the country. The legacy of the use of cluster munitions has created long lasting obstacles that continue to pose on the livelihood of our people and our national development. As the experience has shown, the clearance of UXOs will take a long time and require huge amount of resources.

7. 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 United States of America 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.

8. On our part, to address these challenges, the Lao Government launched SDG 18: Lives Save from UXOs 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.

Mr. Chairman,

9. 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 mankind caused by UXOs. Therefore, the Lao PDR welcomes the outcomes of the sixth Meeting of State Parties to this Convention held on 5-7 September 2016 in Geneva, Switzerland to review the progress and challenges in the implementation of the obligations under the Convention and look forward to the Seventh Meeting of State Parties to the Convention to be held in September 2017. The Lao PDR would like once again to take this opportunity to call up on those counties that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so in order to achieve a world free from cluster munitions.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.