



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

317 East 51st Street, New York, NY 10022. Tel: (212) 832 2734. Fax: (212) 750 0039

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR KANIKA PHOMMACHANH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 64th SESSION UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, 10 OCTOBER 2009**

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset I should like to join those who have congratulated you, Sir, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the First Committee and assure you and the Bureau of my delegation's full support and cooperation under your able leadership throughout the course of this session. The Lao PDR fully associates itself with the statements made by the representatives of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is delighted to contribute to this general debate on disarmament and international security and reaffirms the Lao PDR's commitment to global efforts aimed at strengthening disarmament. General and complete disarmament must be our ultimate goal. In this context, our current session is taking place at a time when there is much opportunity to move towards progress in disarmament and a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Third Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) concluded successfully with the adoption of the agenda and procedural decisions for the Review Conference which laid an important foundation for a successful Conference. The Conference on Disarmament in May this year had been able to agree on its programme of work after a decade of stalemate. Likewise, the UN Disarmament Commission had reached an agreement on the agenda for the three-year cycle. The recent high-level meeting of the Security Council on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament has adopted resolution 1887(2009) which addresses the issue of nuclear weapons.

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) also pose the gravest threat to humankind. The Lao PDR is of the view that the absolute and most credible guarantor against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. The NPT is therefore a key instrument in the efforts to halt proliferation of nuclear weapons and an essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Therefore, the upcoming 2010 Review Conference will be an important opportunity for the States Parties to the NPT to provide a renewed commitment to the principle and objective of the three pillars, and demonstrate greater political commitments and collective efforts to seek solutions on the issues of nuclear disarmament, strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are looking forward to its successful outcome.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the other cornerstone of nuclear non-proliferation, remains a significant instrument in promoting both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In this regard, the Lao PDR sees the Final Declaration issued on the occasion of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty held in New York the 24 and 25 of September 2009 as a firm commitment of the international community to accelerate the ratification process in order to promote the entry into force of the Treaty at the earliest possible date, thus ridding the world of nuclear weapon test explosions.

Nuclear-weapon-free-zones throughout the world represents an effective contribution to strengthening global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and enhancing peace and security at the regional and international levels. The Lao PDR believes that the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and other regional nuclear- weapon-free zones continue to reinforce the NPT system as well. We therefore wish to underscore the importance of nuclear-weapon States adhering to these various zones, including, in particular, acceding to the Protocol annexed to the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Of more immediate concern to the Lao PDR are the cluster munitions. We fully endorse the objective of achieving the total elimination of cluster munitions, which cause excessive injury and have indiscriminate effects, especially on civilian populations. As one of the most cluster munitions affected country, the Lao PDR attaches enormous importance to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and its contribution towards protecting civilians and addressing the humanitarian impact of this silent killer. We strongly support the Oslo process since its inception from Lima to the Dublin Diplomatic Conference that led to the signing of the Convention in Oslo, Norway, on 3 December 2008.

Since Oslo, the Lao PDR has actively taken all the necessary steps to fulfill its obligations under the Convention and ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions on 16 March 2009. We will remain active supporter of the Convention and contribute its utmost to all initiatives that will promote an early entry into force of the Convention and its full and effective implementation. In this perspective, the Lao Government has announced at the signing ceremony in Oslo its offer to host the First Meeting of States Parties in the Lao PDR. Together with Ireland, the Lao PDR will present a draft resolution on the Convention on Cluster Munitions at the First Committee of the 64 Session of the UN General Assembly. In this regard, we would be grateful for the support of delegations for our draft resolution.

In conclusion, the Lao PDR would like to underscore that to make further progress in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, there needs to be strong political will and flexibility from States in overcoming the obstacles and to meet the security challenges facing the international community. We therefore hope that the First Committee which is an important forum of the United Nations for deliberating on disarmament and the international security agenda would be productive in addressing the threats to international peace and security. It is our strong belief that with great solidarity, we will be able to achieve the common goals of creating a safer and more secure world for all.

I thank you Mr. Chairman