



KINGDOM OF CAMBODIA
PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement
by

H.E. Dr. Kosal Sea
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the United Nations

at the General Debate of the First Committee of
64th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 8 October 2009

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, allow me to join previous speakers to warmly congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your deserved election to preside over the work of the First Committee during this 64th GA Session. My delegation is confident that with your vast knowledge, skills and abundant experience, you will be able to steer the work of the First Committee on Disarmament and International Security towards fruitful outcomes. You can rest assured of our full support and cooperation.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by my colleague from Indonesia on behalf of the Non-aligned Movement, as well as the statement made by the distinguished representative of Myanmar on behalf of all members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chairman,

Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)

The world today is at the crossroads of whether we can prevent further proliferation of nuclear arms. Our disarmament efforts for many decades have brought unsatisfactory results. The time has come to renew our determination to make headway on these efforts.

Cambodia is of the view that reinforcing and empowering the process of disarmament and non-proliferation is vital through the combined efforts at national, regional and international level. Genuine political will and true commitment from individual countries and the international community are crucial to the progress of the disarmament regime, thus contributing to peace, stability and security. In this context, Cambodia highly values the call by US President Obama at the GA General Debate last month "...to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and seek the goal of a world without them". Cambodia also warmly welcomes the appeal, stipulated in Resolution 1887 of the Security Council adopted during its summit on 24 September 2009, to secure a safer world for all. The on-going negotiation between the United States and the Russian Federation on a new agreement to replace the START Treaty is indeed an encouraging positive step towards the non-proliferation environment.

In the ASEAN framework, we have the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) which is an important instrument to keep Southeast Asia free of nuclear weapons to ensure peace and security in this part of the world. It is also a good confidence-building mechanism which shall be adhered to by all, especially by the Nuclear Weapons States. In recent years, ASEAN has actively encouraged those states to accede to the SEANWFZ Treaty. In this regard, my government wishes to appeal to all Nuclear Weapons States to engage more constructively with the SEANWFZ Treaty.

Furthermore, Cambodia welcomes the adoption of the agenda for the 2010 NPT Review Conference which highlights the prospect of realizing the objectives and principles enshrined in the NPT in a balanced manner. My country wishes to assure her fullest support and cooperation to the Philippines' presidency of this important NPT Review Conference. Cambodia also notes with satisfaction the adoption of the Program of Work by the Conference on Disarmament for its 2009 session, thereby breaking its 12-year stalemate which will allow the world's sole multilateral forum to negotiate and substantively discuss strategic disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Mr. Chairman,

Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)

Small arms and light weapons are equally dangerous as weapons of mass destruction. While weapons of mass destruction destroy humanity in thousands with one blow; small arms kill thousands one by one and day by day. Therefore, urgent attention is compulsory to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Cambodia has neither been a source of arms supply, although the possibility of arms smuggling through Cambodia to other locations is inevitable. The win-win-policy of Samdech Prime Minister Hun Sen, which ended war and conflict in Cambodia in 1998, has brought immense transformation to the country - from a region of uncertainty, war, instability and backwardness - to an epicenter of sustained peace, security, social order, and respect for democracy. Thousands and thousands of small arms and light weapons that were left over by the war had to be removed and destroyed without any more delay. As of now, my government has seized and collected nearly half a million of small arms and light weapons.

Having understood that negative impacts of the illegal uses and circulation of small arms and light weapons go beyond the national border, Cambodia consistently advocates international cooperation in addressing this serious issue. The implementation of the 2001 UN Program of Action on small arms and light weapons remains a bold action-oriented-program. We urge the international community to continue its global efforts to control small arms, and, we pledge our fullest cooperation in every possible way.

Mr. Chairman,

Mines and UXOs

Likewise, mines and UXOs continue to pose serious insecurity and negative social impacts to many countries around the world, including my own country. In the country-side of Cambodia, there are millions of mines and UXOs left over by the war and conflicts in the past.

We should neither ignore our attention to the grave dangers of the landmines and UXOs nor overlook the challenges of demining. Cambodia suffers too much from these silent and indiscriminate killers. It is not only a nightmare, but an untold misery, as the victims of landmines become permanently traumatized and physically handicapped. This constitutes a heavy burden for our government. As such, Cambodia exerts its utmost efforts to address the issue of landmines and UXOs by integrating the demining issue into our national agenda, including the Cambodian Millennium Development Goals and the Rectangular Strategy of the Government. As of August 2009, we removed nearly two million mines and UXOs. We highly appreciate the contributions from our partners, including UN agencies, in terms of financial and technical support for the ongoing demining efforts in the country.

Concerning international demining efforts, the Royal Government of Cambodia has been deploying de-miners of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces to Sudan for mine clearance action under the umbrella of the United Nations. The fourth group has been dispatched in June this year.

Thank you.