Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Lao PDR delegation, I wish to extend our warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the chairmanship of this committee. Our felicitations also go to the other members of the bureau on their elections. We assure you of our fullest cooperation and support.

My delegation would also like to extend a warm welcome to Ambassador Sergio Duarte on his appointment as the High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs. My delegation looks forward to working with him and his dedicated staff.

The Lao PDR fully associates itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as well as the statement delivered by Myanmar on behalf of the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chairman,

We are all now living in a world of accelerating but unmitigated global risks. The international security environment today is much more challenging. The continued existence of internal conflicts, violence, international terrorism, and arms race are the gravest threat to international peace and security. In the same time, weapons of mass destruction also pose a great danger to the very existence of mankind. In recent years the progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has been slow and subjected to setbacks. Furthermore, nuclear weapons continue to be developed and stockpiled, and military doctrines are being revised that place a greater reliance on the potential use of such weapons. In this regard, the Lao PDR wishes to underscore the need for member states to live up to their commitments and obligations to the Non-Proliferation-Treaty (NPT), which remains, first, the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, and, second, the guarantee of States' rights to the development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We strongly believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. As long as these weapons continue to exist, there is a potential risk that they will fall into the wrong hands.
Mr. Chairman,

My delegation is heartened to witness the increasing accessions to and ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). We are pleased to note that the fifth conference to promote the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in Vienna concluded with positive support. It also provided a unique opportunity to underscore the importance of the Treaty and to accelerate its early entry into force. In this regards, we would like to renew our call for all states that have not signed or ratified the Treaty, particularly those states whose ratifications are needed for the Treaty entry into force, to do so without delay.

While the progress made at the Sixth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference last December was modest, the successful launch on August 20, 2007 of the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapons Convention was a positive step in establishing a new level of constructive cooperation between the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and the States Parties to BWC that will help strengthen the implementation of the convention.

It is gratifying for us to witness the constructive and successful results achieved over the past 10 years in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Conventions, especially on the destruction of over one third of the declared global stockpile of chemical weapons. We believe that these positive steps are important landmarks to achieve a world free of biological and chemical weapons on one hand, and to prevent terrorists from acquiring such weapons on the other hand.

Mr. Chairman,

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones is a platform for promoting nuclear disarmament, preventing nuclear proliferation, and enhancing peace and security at the regional and global levels. In this spirit, the Lao PDR welcomes and supports the international efforts aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free-zones in all regions of the world.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the entry into force of the South East Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty. However, the accession of nuclear weapon states to the Protocol Annexed is needed to make the Treaty come into full operation. In this spirit, the Lao PDR joins other ASEAN member states in welcoming the announcement by the People Republic of China of its readiness to accede to the Protocol annexed to the Treaty and encourages wide support to the ASEAN draft resolution entitled, “Treaty on Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone,” tabled by Indonesia.

Mr. Chairman,

It is undeniable that the global challenges we face today imply not only a common vulnerability, but also a shared responsibility to act and seek collective solutions and indeed to share the inevitable costs of tackling them. Let us all realize our common purpose to constructively work together in building effective and cooperative disarmament and non-proliferation regimes.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.