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Statement
of

His Excellency Dr. SEA Kosal
Ambassador, Permanent Representative
of the Kingdom of Cambodia
to the United Nations

at General Debate of the First Committee
62nd Session of the General Assembly

New York
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Mr. Chairman,

First of all, allow me to sincerely congratulate you upon your assumption as Chairman of the First Committee. My Delegation wishes to extend our full support and cooperation to you and we are confident that under your able leadership, our deliberations will be crowned with success.

Cambodia would like to associate itself with the statement made by Indonesia on behalf of Members of the Non-aligned Movement (NAM) as well as the statement made by Myanmar on behalf of the Members of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chairman,

Weapons of Mass Destruction

We are successful in producing larger quantity of weapons of mass destruction, but we have been less successful in reducing them. My country is of the view that it is imperative for all States to fully comply with the existing non-proliferation legal instruments in order to build a better and safer world for all, particularly the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty which laid down a long term perspective toward achieving a non-proliferation regime of WMD, and to prevent them from falling into terrorist hands which can trigger the gravest danger to the international community. We believe that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the only way to guarantee against their use and their proliferation.

Being genuinely committed to counter the proliferation of all types of weapons of mass destruction, Cambodia ratified the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Convention of the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and other important treaties relating to this issue. In this regard, we welcome the 27 September 2007 Statement of the High-Level Meeting on the Tenth Anniversary of the Entry into Force of the Chemical Weapons Convention which reaffirmed the commitment of the States Parties to achieve the principal objectives of the Convention to destroy their chemical weapon arsenal.

Mr. Chairman,

Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ)

Cambodia and the other Members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) have made consistent efforts to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons within the region as well as other parts of the world. At the 40th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) held in Manila in July this year, our Foreign Ministers emphasized

the importance of Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and discussed ways to enhance the effectiveness of the Treaty. The Ministers also welcomed the adoption of the Plan of Action which would guide as future implementation of the SEANWFZ Treaty so that we are able to response to the evolving challenges on the spread of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Landmines

Landmines remain nowadays serious threats to many nations in the developing world, especially those countries emerging from war. These “silent killers” have destroyed the lives of many innocent peoples and maimed countless of others. Landmines are not only a security problem, but a humanitarian one as the victims become permanently traumatized and physically handicapped, while their families suffer untold misery of spiritual and material deprivation. Landmines also have great impact on the economy and development, as their effect constitutes a heavy economic and social burden for the government.

Despite full peace after years of conflict, Cambodia is still one of the most heavily mined countries in the world. Mines are still hidden in thousands of square kilometers of land and nearly half of the whole Cambodian population is directly or indirectly threatened by these ‘silent killers’. Due to these facts, my Government considers the mine clearance action as one of the highest priorities among activities for rehabilitation and development of our nation. Furthermore, the Royal Government is carrying out its campaign of mine clearance, by placing the de-mining operation in its relevant national agenda, such as “Cambodia Millennium Development Goals,” as well as in the “Rectangular Strategy” of the Government. Up to July this year, more than 1.5 million landmines had been cleared out.

To explain further rationale on our activities on landmines, in March this year, Cambodia with cooperation from Canada hosted a conference entitled “Mine Action: Implications for Peace and Development”. The conference is one of the world-wide events to mark the 10th Anniversary of the Ottawa Convention on the Ban of Landmines. In this regard, we call upon all States to become party of the Convention and to take bold step of renouncing landmines forever.

To share our own experiences with other countries that are also victims of landmines, Cambodia has dispatched the second group of 135 de-miners of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces to Sudan for mine clearance action under the umbrella of the United Nations Peace Keeping Operation.

Mr. Chairman,

Small Arms and Light Weapons

Small arms, though small in its nature, carry big concerns to all of us and are one of the main roots causes to inflict conflicts, dangers, violence and transnational crimes as we have witnessed in many parts of the regions.

We cannot undermine the illegal use and circulation of small and light weapons as they can be equally dangerous source of terrorism, violence and regional conflicts. In this regard, Cambodia believe that the 2001 "UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons" should remain the cornerstone for us all to work together to address this issue. In Cambodia, the Royal Government has developed a number of programs ranging from law enforcement on arms control to the "the Program of Weapon for Development" which had successfully led to the seizure and destruction of more than 200,000 small arms and light weapons.

In this regard, My Delegation wishes to take this opportunity to express its deep gratitude and appreciation to Japan, the EU and other countries for their valuable assistance to the programs.

Thank you