



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. Mrs. KANIKA PHOMMACHANH
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 63rd SESSION UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
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Mr. Chairman,

Allow me, on behalf of the Lao Delegation, to congratulate you and members of the Bureau on your election. We look forward to working with you and assure you of our full cooperation and support in the discharge of your responsibility.

My delegation 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,

To date, not much progress has been made in the field of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Since the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, we have been consistently witnessing many setbacks in the multilateral disarmament machinery. These on-going impasses in the major non-proliferation and disarmament negotiations will unquestionably continue to undermine international peace and security. Only through political commitments and collective efforts, then this current stalemate can be resolved. In this respect, it is particularly important to address disarmament and non-proliferation issues through multilateral approach.

The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is vital to global security and non-proliferation regime. There is no doubt that, nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation, and peaceful use of nuclear energy are mutually reinforcing and remain the cornerstone in achieving the goals of NPT. The International community should therefore maintain a proper balance between nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. In this respect, there is an urgent need for States Parties to NPT to comply fully with and obligations to the Treaty. It is our hope that the States Parties to the NPT will demonstrate greater political commitments towards ensuring success of the NPT Review Conference in 2010.

This year marks the 12th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The Treaty remains as a significant instrument in promoting both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The importance of achieving universal adherence to the CTBT and the necessity of accelerating its early entry into force are therefore a matter of high priority. In this regard, we welcome the Launch of the Fourth CTBT Ministerial Meeting held in New York on September 2008, which aims at facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT. The Joint Ministerial Statement issued on this occasion would positively contribute to the outcome of the 2010 Review Conference of the NPT.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones in many regions of the world significantly helps to promote nuclear disarmament, prevent nuclear proliferation, and enhance peace and security at the regional and global levels. In this regard, the establishment of the South East Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone contributes to strengthening nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We wish therefore to underscore the importance for Nuclear-Weapon States to accede to the Protocol Annexed to the South East Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty in order for the Treaty to come into full operation.

Mr. Chairman,

Illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) remains as one of the major threats to human security causing casualties to hundreds of thousands of innocent lives. In this regards, the adoption of the final outcome document of the Third Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms held in July 2008 to review the Implementation of the Program of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is considered to be another contribution towards the fight against the proliferation of illicit transfer, manufacture and circulation of SALW.

The harmful effects of cluster munitions that create untold sufferings to civilian populations in many countries are a particular cause of concern. As one of the heavily affected countries by cluster munitions, the Lao PDR welcomes the Dublin Diplomatic Conference held in May 2008 that culminated in a landmark adoption of the draft treaty, Cluster Munitions Convention. The opening for signature of the Convention in Oslo, Norway on 3 December 2008 would significantly contribute towards protecting civilians and addressing the humanitarian impact of cluster munitions.

We underscore the importance and relevance of the Conference on Disarmament, as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, as well as the United Nations Disarmament Commission, as the specialized deliberative body within the UN multilateral disarmament machinery. However, the lack of consensus on a program of work of the Conference on Disarmament and the failure of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to adopt recommendations at the end of its three years cycle are a hindrance for UN multilateral disarmament machinery. It is hopeful that necessary flexibility and collective efforts would be demonstrated in order to move forward in the pursuit of the objectives of international arms control and disarmament.

To conclude, the international community must not falter in our commitment in tackling the continuing challenges in the field of disarmament and non-Proliferation. We therefore hope that the First Committee as an essential body of the General Assembly to discuss disarmament and international security issues would be productive in addressing the threats to global peace and security and accelerating progress towards achieving the total and complete disarmament.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.