Statement
by
H.E. Dr. Khiane PHANSOURIVONG,
Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations

at the General Debate of the First Committee

During the 69th Session of the General Assembly

New York, 15 October 2014
Mr. Chairman,

1. On behalf of the delegation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, I congratulate you on your election as Chairman of the First Committee as well as to the other members of the Bureau. I wish to assure you our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duty.

2. My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the statement delivered by the Philippines on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). However, I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

3. With today’s unpredictable world security environment, the international community needs to see the improvement in the field of disarmament and international security. Obligations that had been agreed upon in the past remain unfulfilled. The lack of political will and collective efforts continue to be the main challenge for the progress in the field of disarmament. Thus, the tasks that we must undertake to ensure a safe future for the next generations are daunting.

4. The continued existence of Weapons of Mass Destruction, in particular, nuclear weapons remains a matter of concern the possible use or threat of use by terrorists and non-state actors. In this context, the Lao PDR reiterates its view that only through the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the international community could ensure an absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Therefore, the Lao PDR welcomes the first General Assembly Informal Ministerial Meeting to Commemorate the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons held on 26 September 2014. Following the successful convening of the first ever High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament in 2013, we believe that keeping this momentum will move us forward to the total elimination of nuclear disarmament.

5. The destructive power of, and the threat posed to the environment and human survival by, nuclear weapons are unique as any use of this kind of weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. The Lao PDR welcomes the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Norway and Nayarit, Mexico and will participate constructively in the Vienna Meeting on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.
6. Universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) would certainly contribute to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. However, 18 years after it was adopted, the CTBT remains ineffective. It is therefore, the duty of the international community is to ensure the entry into force of this Treaty and we have to be optimistic. In this context, we are hoping to have those who have not done so to sign and ratify the CTBT at the early date, in particular, the remaining eight Annex 2 States to sign and ratify this important treaty.

7. The creation of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones has significantly contributed to the strengthening of the global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation as well as enhancing regional and global peace and security. The Lao PDR wishes to reiterate that it is essential that Nuclear Weapons States recognize these zones and provide unconditional assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons to all States of the zones. We also wish to reemphasize the importance of the full operation of the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ) and encourage the Nuclear Weapons States to accede to its Protocol at the earliest possible date.

8. Furthermore, I am pleased to inform that the Lao PDR has completed the internal process and will sign the IAEA Additional Protocol in early November this year on the occasion of the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries in Vienna, Austria.

Mr. Chairman,

9. While focusing on the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation, we cannot afford to ignore the challenge posed by conventional weapons, in particular, the cluster munitions as they also constitute the threat to peace, human security and development because of its devastating impact on civilians, both at the time of use and long afterward. As one of the most affected countries by the Explosive Remnants of War, especially cluster munitions, the Lao PDR welcomes the progress made thus far in the universalization of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). We encourage further efforts by the international community in this regard and call upon those states who have not acceded to this Convention to consider to do so. We welcome the successful outcome of the Fifth Meeting of State Parties to this Convention held on 2-5 September 2014 in San Jose, Costa Rica and look forward to the First Review Conference of the Convention, in Dubrovnik (Croatia) in September 2015, where States Parties will review the progress made against the implementation of the 2010-2015 Vientiane Action Plan and consider the way forward.
Mr. Chairman,

10. To date, the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has progressed at a very slow pace. Expenditure on armaments has sky-rocketed while human races are struggling in extreme poverty. In this regard, the Lao DPR stresses the need for strong political will and collective efforts to overcome this difficult impasse and to reemphasize the multilateral approach to realize the ultimate goal of disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. Although a small country with limited resources, the Lao PDR is the state party to a number of international instruments on disarmament and is fully committed to the fulfillment of its international obligations under these treaties. The Lao PDR strongly believes that political will and flexibility of Member States are imperative for the progressive development in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation as well as for overcoming the challenges posed on international community. It requires much more effort from every country to work together closely to achieve the common goals so that the world would be free from fear and threats posed by all kinds of weapons. My delegation, therefore, will continue to contribute constructively to the work of this committee.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.