Statement by
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of the 69th United Nations General Assembly

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Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time I take the floor in this Committee, I would like to extend
my sincere congratulations to your election to this important position and wish you every
success in the upcoming work of this session of the First Committee.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statement made by the Non-
Aligned Movement on this agenda item.

Mr. Chairman,

The Lao PDR attaches great importance to humanitarian concerns caused by the
use of conventional weapons. This reflects in our strong support and active participation
in the work of the international conventional weapons disarmament. Lao PDR has
become state party to major international instruments in this field, such as Convention on
Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and 4 of its protocols and Convention on Cluster
Munitions. Lao PDR also supports the spirit and objective of Mine Ban Convention to
which we have stated our intention to join the treaty. We participated in the negotiation
process of the Arms Trade Treaty and welcome its entry into force in the near future.
Currently, we are studying the Treaty with the aim of becoming its state party in the
future.
Mr. Chairman,

Our strong support and active participation in the work of international conventional weapons disarmament takes root from the very traumatic experience of the history of our country. Laos has been recorded as one of the most heavily bombed countries on earth per capita. Throughout the Indochina war from 1964 to 1973, over 2 million tons of ordnance was dropped over the country. As a result, it causes an extensive contamination on the country with unexploded ordnance scattered in 14 out of 17 provinces of the country and continues to kill and maim innocent people, particularly women and children and creates huge impact on socio-economic development of the country long after the war ended. It denies access to most needed agriculture land, hinders and delays the construction of public infrastructure and adds cost to investment in the contaminated areas. Clearance of unexploded ordnance is very expensive and time-consuming. As a result, it compromises the rights to life and life to live free from threat and danger. As such, Lao PDR does not want to see the repetition of the suffering Lao people has endured for so long. We therefore, condemn the continued use of cluster munitions in some parts of the world and urge those countries who have not done so to ratify or accede to the Convention on Cluster Munitions as soon as possible.

Lao PDR welcomes the successful conclusion of the 5th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions held in Costa Rica last month. And we look forward to the 1st review meeting of the Convention on Cluster Munitions which will be held next year in Dubrovnik (Croatia).

Mr. Chairman,

In present day most conflicts are fought with small arms and light weapons. Drug lords or gangsters use small arms to protect their illegal businesses. Rebels also use small arms to fight the legitimate government forces or rob the humanitarian convoy. Therefore, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALWs) has caused great concerns for many countries. To address this problem, it needs concerted efforts from the international community. My delegation, therefore, supports the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in tackling this issue.

I thank you.