Statement by
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Third Secretary, Permanent Mission of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations
at the Thematic Discussion on clusters 1 to 4 combined
of the First Committee during the 76th Session
of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 13 October 2021
Mr. Chairman,

1. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Malaysia and Indonesia on behalf of ASEAN and NAM, respectively. I would like to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

2. **Nuclear weapons** pose the most dangerous threats to humanity and international peace and security. Therefore, we firmly believe that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use and those nuclear weapons will never be used again under any circumstances.

3. The **Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament regime and it is the only relevant international instrument that is being enforced and moving closer universality. Therefore, it is more crucial than ever for the international community to strengthen our cooperation and enhance our commitment in pursuit of the Treaty’s main objectives.

4. The Lao PDR believes that, the entry into force of a historic agreement on **the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW)** early this year will further contribute to the realization of making our world free from nuclear weapons. In the same vein, we should increase our efforts for raising public awareness and promoting education on the danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction to help realizing the treaty’s objective. In this regard, the Lao PDR continues to underline the importance of the entry into force of the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT)**, and call upon those remaining Annex II States to sign and ratify the CTBT.

5. The Lao PDR recognizes the significant role that the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)** has played in nuclear non-proliferation and promotion of peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. Therefore, we joined other ASEAN members in signing the Practical Arrangements with the IAEA in September 2019. Like all ASEAN member states, the Lao PDR highly values the establishment of **Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones** including the principles enshrined in the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ Treaty).

Mr. Chairman,

6. On **Conventional weapons**, the Lao PDR is concerned over a wide range of security and humanitarian impact arising from the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons as these weapons are widely used by criminals and drug traffickers. Therefore, my delegation supports the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in tackling this issue.
7. Although, conventional weapons do not have destructive impact as weapons of mass destruction, but their extensive use can also cause harmful humanitarian impact with long term consequences. In this context, the **Explosive Remnant of War (ERW)** is a good example as it created humanitarian consequences long after the conflict ended.

8. Like others, the Lao PDR has gone through the traumatic experience of humanitarian and developmental impact posed by the use of conventional weapons. Therefore, we strongly support and actively participate in the work of the international community on conventional weapons control and disarmament. For this reason, the Lao PDR is a party to major international instruments in this field such as the **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)** and 4 of its protocols, and attaches particular importance to the **Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM)**.

**Mr. Chairman,**

9. The legacy of Indochina war has left behind numerous challenges which have prolonged until today as more than 270 million cluster sub-munitions were dropped on Lao soil and up to 30 percent of them failed to detonate upon impact. To this date, the Lao PDR continues to encounter negative consequences which have continued to kill and maim innocent lives, particularly children, and hampered socio-economic development and poverty eradication efforts in our country. Being one of the most affected countries by cluster munitions, the Lao PDR has adopted our national SDG called “SDG 18” entitled “Lives safe from Unexploded Ordnance”. Furthermore, the CCM obligations have been integrated into our National Strategy for the **Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)** sector called “The Safe Path Forward II”.

10. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of Lausanne Action Plan in the 2nd Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) in September 2021, which will provide a clear guidance for state parties to strengthen the CCM implementation in reaching objectives of the treaty. The Lao PDR remains committed to continue actively promoting the universalization of the CCM by working closely with all States Parties and the international community.

11. In conclusion, the Lao PDR counts on all countries and development partners to continue enhancing international cooperation and increasing assistance to affected countries to ensure that people can enjoy their rights to development and uplift their standard of living. The Lao PDR will continue to promote consistent dialogue between affected states, donor countries and relevant stakeholders to uphold our commitments to work together in order to ensure that all lives are safe.

**I thank you, Mr. Chairman**