

**Statement by Mr. Maythong Thammavongsa,
Director General, Department of International Organizations,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR
at the 24th Session of the Conference of CWC States Parties
The Hague, Netherlands, 25-29 November 2019**

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of Lao PDR delegation, I would like to warmly congratulate you, Ambassador Krassimir Kostov of Bulgaria on your election as Chair of the 24th session of the Conference of States Parties. I am confident that with your extensive knowledge and experience you will be able to lead this conference to a fruitful conclusion.

I would like to commend Ambassador Yun-young LEE of the Republic of Korea, Chairperson of the 23rd session of the Conference of States Parties for all his contribution and leadership. I would also like to commend the Director General of OPCW for his report to the Conference of States Parties.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the delegation of Azerbaijan on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and China. I would like to make additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr Chairperson,

Lao PDR has attached importance to the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, including Chemical Weapon. It, therefore, joined the Convention in 1997 and since then has carried out its obligations in good faith.

As we have witnessed, Chemical Weapon is one of the most inhumane weapons that caused untold sufferings to combatants and civilians alike. As such, the CWC has been widely supported and become near universal. My delegation joins other delegations to call on States that have not yet done so to join the CWC to make this Convention a universal aimed at making the world free of Chemical Weapons.

My delegation is pleased with the progress made on the destruction of the declared chemical weapons stockpiles, but we have to work harder to ensure the destruction is complete in a timely manner. Furthermore, we are concerned about the alleged uses of chemical weapons in the past few years, demonstrating that the potential risk of this deadly weapon use has not been totally eliminated. Therefore, we should renew focus of the OPCW to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and misuse of toxic chemicals. The development of the chemical industry should also be in a safe and secure manner, strictly in conformity with the CWC.

Mr Chairperson,

In order to fully comply with the CWC at the national level, the Lao PDR submitted its first national report to the OPCW in 2005, and established the National Authority in 2007, comprising of key relevant Ministries. The National Authority also serves as an advisory body to the Government on implementation of the CWC obligations. To ensure a smooth and effective cooperation, in March 2012, the Lao Government has signed the Privileges and Immunities Agreement with the OPCW.

The Lao PDR has also passed the Law on Chemicals Management in 2016 with the aim to ensure the safety to health, life, property, environment and society. In order to implement the law, the Government issued the Decision on Industrial Chemical list in 2018 to regulate the dangerous chemicals which includes the schedule chemicals that listed in

the annex of the CWC. With the existing legislation, Lao PDR has been categorized in the States Parties that have legal framework covering all initial measures for the Implementation of CWC.

In addition, in order to strengthen the National Authority capacity, the officers from concerned ministries have regularly attended regional and international meetings and workshops. Lao PDR also supports OPCW's activities and efforts of the States Parties in relation to transfer regime of the CWC. The Lao PDR has recently hosted a training-of-trainers course for representatives of customs training institutions in Asian States Parties on technical aspects of the transfer regime of the CWC in July 2019, involving 14 States Parties in the region. The objective of the training was to ensure broader outreach and to improve the capacity of States Parties to enforce the transfer regime.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to join other States Parties in reaffirming our commitment to the full and effective implementation of the Convention and will continue its cooperation with all States Parties to the CWC and the OPCW to fulfill all requirements and obligations in an objective, impartial and non-politicized manner. I would like to also take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to the international community as well as the OPCW for the valuable support and assistance extended to the Lao PDR and hope that such effective cooperation and support would continue in the future.

My delegation requests the circulation of this statement as an official document of the 24th session of the Conference on its website.

Thank you