Statement by H.E. Mr. Latsamy KEOMANY
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR
Head of the Lao PDR’s Delegation
At General Debate of the Ninth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Geneva, 28-29 November 2022

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Thank you, Mr. President, for the floor.

1. At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Leonardo Bencini, on your election as President-Designate of the 9th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention or BWC and I am confident that under your able leadership the Conference will be crowned with great success.

2. My delegation aligns itself with both NAM and ASEAN statements.

   Mr. President,

3. The Lao PDR highly values the progress made in the implementation of BWC in the past years and it has been playing an important role in preventing biosecurity threats and promoting the peaceful use of biotechnology and related international cooperation.

4. As you are aware that the COVID-19 pandemic has offered the BWC both opportunities and challenges, therefore, we must work together to prevent and mitigate future biological threats. As this year marks the 50th Anniversary of the BWC’s opening for signature and we need to make it universal in order to move forward in the field of disarmament affairs. We, therefore, encourage all States Parties to join and accede to the BWC.

   Mr. President,

5. The Lao PDR is of view that Weapons of Mass Destruction or WMD poses serious threats to international peace and security. Therefore, the Lao PDR always attaches great importance to the issues related to Biological Weapons and BWC as they represent important components of the international legal architecture related to WMD.
6. We recognize that the lack of verification system continues to pose challenges to the effectiveness of the implementation of the Convention. Therefore, multilateral negotiations among States Parties to conclude a non-discriminatory-legally-binding protocol that dealing with all Articles of the convention in a balance and comprehensive manner are needed in order to strengthen the convention. Furthermore, we emphasize the need to enhance international technical cooperation and assistance, and exchange of information on toxins, biological agent’s equipment and technology for peaceful purpose.

7. Besides these, the Lao PDR is of the view that we need to focus more on transparency and compliance related issues. Moreover, we need to do more awareness raising campaigns of the Convention at all levels and countrywide to ensure full, effective and ownership implementation of the Convention.

Mr. President,

8. The Lao PDR has undertaken a number of concrete steps to strengthen its own capacity in the BWC implementation, namely in the laboratory biosafety and biosecurity. These include, among others, the establishment of National Laboratory Biosafety Authority; the development of National Biosafety Regulations; the development of National Biosafety Manual; and the development of National Guideline for domestic specimen packaging and transportation. In addition, some training courses and on-site mentoring exercises on biosafety, biosecurity and bio-risk management have been conducted for concerned officials from both central and provincial levels. More importantly, in early this month with the support of EU, we had successfully conducted two workshops on CBRN National Action Plan Review and on Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) for BWC.

9. Furthermore, the Lao PDR attaches great importance to the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) where in the coming year, we are planning to submit our National CBMs report, in order to build transparency.

10. At regional level, the Lao PDR has also undertaken efforts to strengthen its implementation of BWC through both regional and international cooperation projects/programs with other States Parties. Since 2011, the Lao PDR has been proactively participating in the European Union Chemical, Biological,
Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Centre of Excellence initiatives’ such as meetings, seminars and workshops related to BWC and CBRN.

Mr. President,

11. The Lao PDR appreciates the role of the Sponsorship Program in enabling developing countries to participate in various meetings and trainings. Therefore, we encourage this Sponsorship Program to continue in order to enable the participation of developing States Parties in the BWC meetings.

12. In conclusion, the Lao PDR would like to reiterate its commitment to work closely with other States Parties to advance the BWC to a greater height and wishes this Review Conference a great success.

I thank you, Mr. President.