Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Thongsavan PHOMVIHANE,

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR

The Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Landlocked Developing Countries "Building Resilient and Connected LLDCs: Accelerating Implementation of the Awaza Programme of Action through Partnership"

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr./Madam Chair,
Excellencies,

1. I congratulate Turkmenistan on assuming the Chairmanship of the LLDC Group and express our appreciation to Bolivia and the Kyrgyz Republic for their leadership. Having served in the Bureau, the Lao PDR remains committed to supporting our collective agenda.

2. Taking stock of the post-Awaza, we welcome the creation of the LLDC negotiating group under the UNFCCC. Moving forward, we urge progress on the Infrastructure Investment Finance Facility, Regional Agricultural Research Hubs, the High-Level Panel on Freedom of Transit, and a dedicated WTO work programme for LLDCs. Unhindered sea access remains crucial to lowering trade costs.

3. Central to our national strategy is transforming from a landlocked country into a land-linked hub. To this end, key projects—including the Laos–China Railway, the Laos–Viet Nam Railway, expanded road corridors, and access to the Vung Ang International Port—aim to drive regional integration. More recently, the Lao PDR officially joined Corridor 2 of the Organization for Co-operation between Railways (OSJD), a railway corridor linking the Lao PDR with Viet Nam, China, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and Estonia.

Mr./Madam Chair,
Excellencies,

4. Crucially, as the **first LLDC set to graduate from LDC status since the adoption of the Awaza Programme of Action**, the Lao PDR stands as a **pioneering case study** of how structural transition and APoA implementation can reinforce each other. Our experience underscores that LDC graduation does not erase landlocked vulnerabilities. On the contrary, it highlights the vital need for sustained international support, infrastructure investment, and strong transit partnerships.

5. Against this backdrop, implementing APoA cannot be achieved by LLDCs alone. International support, regional cooperation, including with transit neighbors, investment in infrastructure and productive capacities, and strengthened partnerships remain essential.

6. On a final note, let us ensure our commitments are translated into tangible progress, building resilience, and ensuring sustainable development for all LLDCs.

   I thank you.