

Statement by H.E. Mr. Anouparb VONGNORKEO, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Asia-Pacific Group for the month of July 2021, at the Informal meeting of the plenary on the occasion of the Nelson Mandela International Day

Wednesday, 21 July 2021 (10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.)

Mr. President,
Madame Deputy-Secretary- General,
H.E. Dr. Naledi Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa,

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

I have a great honor to speak on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group.

Mr. President,

We are gathered here today to observe the annual Nelson Mandela International Day which was officially declared by the General Assembly in 2009. This annual and meaningful celebration is not only a reminder about the legacy of Mr. Mandela, his accomplishments and contributions to humanity, but also an opportunity to reflect on invaluable and inspiring lessons that we can learn from his life, including the power of unity in diversity, human spirit, forgiveness and compassion.

Nelson Mandela was an extraordinary global advocate for human dignity and equality, a true embodiment of the legitimate and universal fight against oppression, discrimination, racism, colonialism, poverty and conflicts. He was one of the most iconic and inspirational leaders of our time. He left us with the legacy of a remarkable man and leader, a true inspiration for freedom and justice around the world.

As we are working collectively towards ensuring international peace and security, sustainable development and human rights for all, the international community has continued to encounter increasing and unpredictable challenges. These include, among others, persistent armed conflicts, terrorism and extremism, political unrests, natural disasters and climate change, widening inequality, extreme poverty and the ongoing unprecedented global health crisis of COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, we should be encouraged by the examples set by Nelson Mandela. He taught us about the importance of working together to improve the lives of all, even in a disorderly moment as well as the importance of dialogue and solidarity across all lines and divisions. Therefore, it is more crucial than ever for all of us to work together in good faith to overcome those emerging challenges and to attain the common good for all by reaffirming our political will and renew our commitment to strengthening multilateralism, enhancing development cooperation while upholding the Charter of the United Nations and international law whereby the United Nations is indispensable in this regard.

Mr. President,

Nelson Mandela devoted his entire life to the service of his people and humanity. His sacrifice and triumph have taught us what a powerful impact one person can have, to make the world a better place for all mankind if we are determined to dedicate and work together.

While we are acknowledging his contribution to the struggle for democracy and promotion of a culture of peace and reconciliation throughout the world, let us continue each day to be inspired by his enduring example and his call to never cease working for building our better world.

I thank you, Mr. President.