



Statement

by

H.E. Dr. Khiane PHANSOURIVONG

Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic
Republic to the United Nations

On behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

On Agenda Item **23**: Group of Countries in Special Situations

- (a) *Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries;*
- (b) *Follow-up to the Second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries;*

At the Economic and Financial Committee of the 73th Session of
the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 22 October 2018

(*Please check against delivery*)

Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honor to deliver this statement on behalf of the Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); namely, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Viet Nam, my own country, the Lao PDR.
2. ASEAN aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Egypt on behalf of G-77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

3. As the names suggest, the two groups of countries in special situations, the least developed countries (LDCs) and the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs), though have made some progress in the implementation of the key priority areas of the Istanbul Program of Action (IPoA) and the Vienna Program of Action (VPoA) continue to face challenges in the process of their national development due to poverty, low productive capacity, commodity export dependence, low level of economic transformation, limited market access, transport bottleneck, high vulnerability to external shocks and adverse impact of climate change, among others. These challenges become major constraints hindering their efforts to realize their national development objectives and meet the agreed global development agendas. For this reason, the development of LDCs and LLDCs must be given a special priority as their needs and challenges would hardly be overcome by themselves without support and assistance from the international community.
4. In view of the above, ASEAN as a comity of nations that has recorded significant development success through growing and deepening regional economic integration is strongly determined to turn the global development commitments such as the 2030 agenda, the IPoA and VPoA into reality at the national and regional level in order to narrow the development gap among its members and other countries in other parts of the world that are in a similar situation. ASEAN, therefore, calls on development partners to continue to support and assist the countries in special situations to implement their respective national development plans as well as the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) for the LDCs for the Decade 2011-2020, the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 and the agreed global development agendas such as the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

On its part, by recognizing the need to narrow the development gap as its members are at different stages of development, ASEAN launched the initiative for ASEAN integration in 2002. Currently, the IAI Work Plan III covering a wide range of areas is under implementation. This is aimed to narrow the development gap between the more and the less developed ASEAN Member States and to help the less developed Member States to accelerate the pace of economic integration with the region and the world at large. Furthermore, to broaden and deepen regional economic integration under the framework of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) to build a more competitive, inclusive, economic region while promoting sustainable development and narrow the development gap, the ASEAN Vision 2025, the ASEAN Framework for Equitable Economic Development, the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 are being implemented. This has significantly contributed to alleviation of poverty, narrowing the development gap and promoting sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

5. Let me conclude by reaffirming ASEAN's commitment to cooperating with the international community and partners, our efforts to promote sustainable development and narrow the development gap in our region in order to assist the groups of countries in special situations to realize the goals and objectives of IPoA, VPoA and the agreed international development agendas such as 2030 Agenda.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.