



**Statement
By**

H.E. Mr. Phoxay KHAYKHAMPHITHOUNE

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
at the Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

***Theme: Leaving no one behind: Sustainable Recovery from COVID-19 in LLDCs
and accelerated implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action
and the special Roadmap***

(4 minutes)

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**Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

1. It is my pleasure to attend this Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of LLDCs. I would like to commend Mr. Chair for organizing this important meeting, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
2. As we are all well aware that the COVID-19 pandemic is still ongoing unabated, has claimed loss of lives and severely damaged to the socio-economic development worldwide. LLDCs are no exception, in facts, we are facing incremental challenges given our existing physical handicap of being landlocked.
3. Lao PDR is even in the more awkward position of being LDC and LLDC. In this connection, while we are pursuing our ambitious target of graduating from LDC status, we are also exerting great efforts to transform the landlocked into a land-linked country. This is very much in line with the implementation of VPoA's priority areas. A notable and milestone event to be accomplished in the coming months is the grand opening of the China-Laos high speed railway, also built under the Belt & Road Initiative. This is a significant part of our ambitious aspiration of creating better infrastructure along the economic corridor for regional integration and connectivity. Nonetheless, much remain to be done, and uncertainty for recovery is still awaiting given the ongoing pandemic that we have not yet seen a light at the end of the tunnel.

4. In this connection, my delegation would like to urge the international community, especially the country in a position to do so, to consider providing vaccine to LLDCs to ensure that every country access to vaccine in an equitable and adequate manner. Otherwise, no one will be safe until everyone is safe. In addition, my country would also like to urge transit countries to facilitate and expedite the goods in their transit, especially in this difficult situation.

5. On other note, to help overcome the challenges of LLDCs, there also needs to improve SMEs, productivity and their competitiveness, be it product quality, access to market, funding, technology transfer and debt service measures. This requires enhanced international support and assistance to LLDCs to overcome such multiple challenges. I hope that such assistance will be forthcoming.

Mr. Chair,

6. To conclude, I would like to reiterate Lao PDR' firm commitment to achieving the VPoA's goals through enhanced partnerships with transit countries, development partners, UN agencies, international organizations and private sectors among others. In this connection, I would like to once again extend my gratitude to all relevant stakeholders for rendering your continued support to my country and hope to further receive such valuable assistance.

I thank you.