



# **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

**Statement by**

**His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**At the Summit of the Future**

**Interactive dialogue 3: Towards a Common Digital Future: strengthening  
inclusive innovation and cooperation to bridge the digital divides.**

**(3 minutes)**

**New York, 23 September 2024**

*(Please check against delivery)*

**Mr. President,**

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the opportunity to engage in this important dialogue among world leaders. I am of the view that the theme for our discussion today: “**Towards a Common Digital Future: strengthening inclusive innovation and cooperation to bridge the digital divides**” is of great relevance to the current global context as technology is increasingly shaping nearly every aspect of our lives. As Secretary-General António Guterres has stated and I quote “*Looking to the future, two seismic shifts will shape the 21<sup>st</sup> century: the climate crisis and digital transformation*” end of quote.

**Mr. President,**

The advancement of digital innovation serves as a pivotal accelerator for the achievement of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. UN member states are embracing digitalization to foster socio-economic development; ranging from production, trade, finance, education to services, among others. However, while many countries, particularly countries in special situation are making significant strides in adopting digital technologies, there is still **a big gap** among countries in this digital transformation.

**This digital divide** can deepen existing inequalities, while also hampering access to resources and opportunities. Therefore, **bridging this divide** requires concerted efforts to address barriers such as limited infrastructure, digital literacy, and affordability, ensuring that no one is left behind in this journey towards sustainable development, powered by digital innovation.

**Mr. President,**

The Government of the Lao PDR places great importance on science, technology, and innovation as critical tools for overcoming current challenges and advancing our national development agenda towards green growth and a digital economy. Moreover, our country has continued to enhance closer cooperation and collaboration with international organizations and countries in the region in order to share best practices and promote technology transfer including through South-South Cooperation and regional framework such as ASEAN, among others.

Despite these efforts, continued international **technical and financial** support and collaboration remain crucial, particularly in developing digital

infrastructure and building **human resource capacity** in science, technology, and innovation. In this regard, the Lao PDR urges development partners to intensify efforts to enhance **cooperation mechanisms and initiatives** that increase capacity and mutual support in research, development, and the application of science, technology, and innovation.

**Mr. President,**

In order **to bridge the digital divides**, the Lao PDR firmly believes that enhancing North-South Cooperation, South-South and Triangular Cooperation provides ample opportunities and mutual benefits for all. By **developing human resources**, sharing best practices and lessons learned, including transferring technical and technological know-how by taking into account the actual needs and circumstances of each country, as well as increasing investment in **teacher and higher education, research and development**, we will be able to significantly enhance our technological capabilities, meet the demand of skilled workforce and advance sustainable development globally.

In this context, we welcome the adoption of the **Global Digital Compact** as a significant milestone that lays a solid foundation for strengthening digital cooperation for the future.

**Mr. President,**

To conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to echo the call for the international community to work more closely together to achieve this development objective so that no country is left behind in this digital age.

Thank you.

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