



Lao People's Democratic Republic

**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic
Republic, at the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

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(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Tijjani Muhammad Bande, on your election as President of the 74th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). I am confident that with your extensive experience, you will be able to lead the deliberation of this UNGA Session to a great success.

Let me also commend your predecessor Madame Maria Fernanda Garces for her successful Presidency of the 73rd Session of the UNGA.

Mr. President,

The international community is facing myriad challenges. Many parts of the world have been experiencing more frequent and severe impact of climate change, which has extensively affected the livelihood of the people globally. Heat wave has swept across Europe, while drought has prolonged in many parts of the world, but in others, flood has been extensive inundating residential and productive lands. In this context, while developed countries may have been more resilient to and able to adapt to the impact of climate change, developing countries and in particular, the least developed ones are the most vulnerable, including my own country. During the past two months, we experienced unexpected heavy rainfalls as a result of tropical storm Podul across the country, which made nearly all provinces inundated, causing enormous damage to infrastructure, agriculture and livelihood of the people. This has already costed millions of dollars to rehabilitate and restore normalcy in the affected areas.

Realizing the importance of combatting climate change, the Lao Government is focusing on the implementation of the Paris Agreement. It has already mainstreamed its Nationally Determined Contribution and integrating climate change and natural disaster risk reduction into the

current National Socio-Economic Development Plan. In addition, our National Assembly has endorsed Law on Disaster Management and it is expected to be promulgated soon. Currently, we are formulating the National Strategy and Action Plan on Disaster Preparedness and Risk Reduction.

At the regional level, ASEAN also has exerted common effort to address the impact of climate change and disaster risk management, among others. In this connection, we highly appreciate the United Nations' support to ASEAN through the implementation of the ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management 2016-2020 and the Environmental and Climate Change Action Plan 2016-2020. Having all these legal frameworks in place is not enough to combat climate change. Full and effective implementation of these instruments is the key, yet it would require joint effort at both national and international level to ensure such full and effective implementation. In this regard, as we commit ourselves at the national level, we would like to call upon the developed countries and all development partners to honor their commitment in contributing \$100 billion per year to support the developing countries' mitigation and adaptation needs.

Mr. President,

Peace and security is another important pillar that the international community must consolidate. We are fully aware that, without peace development cannot take root and human right cannot be upheld. This is the core objective and a solid foundation of the United Nations when it was founded. Since its inception, the United Nations has made significant achievements in many fronts, making significant contributions to the maintenance and promotion of global peace and security. This has created a

conducive environment for countries and regions around the world to make socio-economic development progress, thereby, lifting millions of people out of poverty. In this respect, multilateralism and enhancement of regional and international cooperation remain significantly relevant. Therefore, the reforms of the United Nations and other international organizations, including the international financial institutions should be carried out in an inclusive, open, transparent, predictable and democratic manner with a view to addressing regional and global inequalities and challenges. Otherwise, our journey to eradicating poverty and narrowing development gap within and among countries will remain an uphill task. Against this backdrop, we welcome the operationalization of the repositioning of the United Nations development system so it can respond effectively to addressing development needs and priorities of member states with particular attention to the countries in special situations namely LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS so they can deal with pressing vulnerability and external shocks.

The Lao PDR also continues to support the effort of international community to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation. Therefore, the Lao PDR has ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapon. Furthermore, we welcome the Commemoration of the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons held on 26th September.

In the past few years, coupled with the existing challenges such as conflicts, terrorism, poverty, pandemics, climate change, disasters and trade friction, we have seen increasing confrontation and tension. This has threatened international peace and security and eroded development gains. Therefore, we call for a strong political will and genuine commitment to strengthen multilateralism by adhering to the UN Charter and the principles of international law, in particular, the principles of sovereign

equality of state, independence, territorial integrity, non-interference in internal affairs. We believe that this is the best and only pathway to respond to and overcome the existing and emerging challenges. Yet, in spite of countless efforts of the international community to resolve the conflicts in different regions of the world, the existing ones remain.

In our region, ASEAN has enjoyed long lasting peace, security and stability, which served as favorable condition for national socio-economic development of all Member States. We in ASEAN, continue to promote regionalism and multilateralism that emphasize the importance of inclusivity, mutual benefit and respect, which form solid foundation in all essential frameworks of cooperation in ASEAN.

On the issue of Palestine, the Lao PDR reiterates its hope that the long overdue Israeli-Palestinian conflict should be resolved by peaceful means and in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

The application of unilateral measures with extraterritorial implication is not only contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law, but it also hampers the national development of other countries. In this regard, my delegation once again calls for the lifting of the embargo on the Republic of Cuba so this sovereign country and its people can enjoy freedom to participate in economic and trade relations with other countries in accordance with international law.

Mr. President,

The Lao Government attaches great importance and is highly committed to the implementation of the Agenda 2030 with an objective to develop economy and to narrow development gap in the country. Despite various policy measures being undertaken, the progress remains slow as a result of capacity limitation and funding constraints and development gap

persists, especially between urban and remote rural areas. In this regard, regional and sub-regional development plans tailored to actual needs of people at provincial and district levels are needed in order to deliver basic social services to the local population, especially in education, healthcare, income opportunities, enhancing market access for agricultural produce and improving livelihood of the rural people. To finance the said national development plans and strategies, we have mobilized resources required from all sources available, undertaking initiatives to promote domestic investment and attract high quality FDI, tax reform, diversifying economy, and promoting Public-Private-Partnership, in order to finance our national development agenda.

In conclusion, Mr. President, we firmly believe that in addition to the national ownership and leadership, the scale up of global partnership is needed to accelerate progress toward the effective implementation of global development agendas such as 2030 Agenda, Addis Ababa Action Agenda, Paris Agreement on Climate Change and POAs for the groups of countries in special situations with an ultimate objective of transforming our world into a healthy planet earth so all mankind can live in peace and prosperity.

On this note, we would like to take this opportunity to commend the successful deliberation of the first High Level SDG Summit and other high-level events organized at the margin of this year's UNGA, which would provide strong recommendations and inputs for the realization of our common ambitious sustainable development agenda and its lofty goals. The Lao PDR stands ready to work closely with all member states and other stakeholders toward a secure and prosperous world so that the present and future generations can live in peace, harmony and development.

Mr. President,

Before I end my remark, allow me to seize this opportunity to announce that the Government of Lao PDR has decided to present its candidature for the membership of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term 2023-2025. This is the first time ever that the Lao PDR which belongs to both vulnerable groups of LDCs and LLDCs to seek a membership in this important United Nations body. The Lao Government would highly appreciate the valuable support from all member States for its candidature.

I thank you, Mr. President.
