



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

317 East 51st Street, New York, NY 10022. Tel: (212) 832 2734; Fax: (212) 750 0039; www.un.int/lao

(Please check against delivery)

Remarks by

His Excellency Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
to the United Nations at the Virtual Commemoration of the
International Day of Vesak 2020

02 July, New York

His Excellency TIJJANI MUHAMMAD-BANDE, President of the General Assembly,

His Excellency António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations

His Excellency Hon. Dinesh Gunawardena, Minister of Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka

Most Venerable Monks, Distinguished colleagues,

At the outset, I wish to thank the Permanent Representatives of Sri Lanka and Thailand for co-hosting this year's virtual commemoration of the International Day of Vesak despite the COVID-19 pandemic. I would also like to thank Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly for their esteemed presence that makes the Vesak celebrations more meaningful.

The Day of Vesak is most sacred and important annual event for the Buddhist community around the world as we commemorate on that very same day, the birth, attainment of enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha. It is my great pleasure to virtually join million others in celebrating this auspicious event.

This annual observance provides all Buddhists with a felicitous opportunity to pay homage to the Buddha and reaffirm their devotion to His teaching, and to underscore the principles of non –violence and peace, love and compassion, tolerance and understanding, truth and wisdom, respect and regard of all life, and freedom from selfishness preached by the Buddha.

For more than two decades now through the adoption of the General Assembly Resolution 54/115 in 1999, the United Nations has acknowledged the contribution that Buddhism has made for over two and a half millennia and continues to make to human spirituality. Therefore, the annual observance of the International Day of Vesak here at the United Nations remains relevant and imperative even being held virtually this year. The United Nations Day of Vesak celebration not only reaffirms the United Nations' strong commitment to the principle of respect for diversity, but also promotes greater respect and tolerance, peace and mutual understanding among humankind.

It is also a true reflection of core value of the international community and the United Nations.

Excellencies,

As the international community strives to overcome this global public health crisis, socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing intolerance,

violence and suffering, the Buddhist approach to solving the global crises, especially the noble virtues of compassion, tolerance and understanding are more essential than ever. We firmly believe that by continue upholding our common responsibility and morality, we must take action individually and collectively to promote multilateralism, global solidarity and international cooperation.

Buddhism has played a very important role in every aspect of the life and culture of the Lao people, becoming an institution of national heritage and national culture. Indeed, two of the World Heritage sites that the country is home to, have a rich Buddhist heritage including some of the most attractive Buddhist monuments and ruins in Southeast Asia. Buddhism plays a crucial role in promoting non-violence, peaceful co-existence, morality and mutual understanding and respect among people of various ethnic groups, thus contributing to the maintenance of peace, social order and well-being of the people in our country.

In conclusion, I wish the celebration of this remarkably sacred Vesak Day will inspire all of us to follow the wisdom and teachings of the Buddha in promoting peace, compassion, tolerance and to end the racial discrimination, intolerance, violence, misunderstanding and human suffering, so our world will be more peaceful and a better place for the entire human race, based on among others, the principle of equality: that all living entities are equal, and the principle of reciprocity: this is to **do unto others** as you would have them **do unto** you.

Happy International Day of Vesak. Thank you.