



# *Lao People's Democratic Republic*

---

**Statement by**

**H.E. Dr. Khiane PHANSOURIVONG**

**Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to the United Nations**

**at the Third Committee of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly**

**Agenda item: 26 Social Development**

**New York, 05 October 2016**

(Please check against delivery)

**Madame Chairperson,**

1. On behalf of my delegation, I wish to congratulate you on your election as the chair of the Third Committee of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. My congratulations also go to members of your Bureau. I lend our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your duty.

2. My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the representatives of the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, and ASEAN respectively.

3. My delegation thanks the Secretary General for his report on Social Development under this agenda item.

**Madame Chairperson,**

4. Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in September last year, there is growing recognition of the importance of social development among international community, including my own country.

5. The Lao Government attaches great importance to social development, particularly, in the areas of poverty eradication, education, health and employment which were mainstreamed into the successive Five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plans (NSEDPP). In addition, various policies and measures have been put in place by the Government to create conducive environment for, and to facilitate, the implementation of social development programmes and projects. As a result, the poverty rate has declined; household welfare has also improved in terms of ownership of assets and access to services, thereby, resulting in a steady reduction in the poverty gap. The continued sustained economic growth has enabled our country to move up the World Bank's classification of low-income economy to that of a "lower middle-income" one. However, the country's economic growth is still much reliant on extractive sector. The

Government recognizes that the economy will need to be diversified to become more resilient, be able to generate greater employment and lead to greater sustainability of economic growth.

Madame Chairperson,

6. As we are aware that education enhances human capabilities and expands productive employment opportunities. As such, education is one of the Lao Government's top priorities in its national development plans. Hence, over the years, the Government has been actively supporting and promoting the universal primary education to ensure that no one is left behind. Public expenditure on education and sports has grown considerably. As a result, significant improvement of primary school enrolment ratio has been recorded with the increase from 84% in 2005 to 98.6% in 2015. Furthermore, non-formal educational programme has been also expanded to meet the changing demands of the labour market as part of the country's participation in ASEAN Economic Community (AEC).

7. In the meantime, the Government has paid close attention to skill development of the workforce to meet the demand of the labor market. As such, special importance is given to the development of technical and vocational education and training to upgrade the skills of the workforce to meet the changing needs of the labour market.

Madame Chairperson,

8. Despite noticeable achievement, some challenges remained as the school dropout rate is still high, particularly, in the rural and remote areas and quality of education need to be improved.

Madame Chairperson,

9. As state party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Lao PDR is strongly committed to supporting people with disabilities and fulfilling its obligations under such Convention. Provisions of this Convention have been advocated and implemented in good

faith at the central and local levels so that the rights of persons with disabilities are respected. The Government also puts in place measures to eliminate social discrimination against persons with disabilities, thus promoting their social integration and common development to ensure that no one is left behind.

Madame Chairperson,

10. In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to translating the 2030 agenda for sustainable development into concrete actions as social development is one of the three pillars of our Government's current national social and economic development plan.

I thank you, Madame Chairperson.