



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

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Nations

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Assembly

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(Please check against delivery)

Madam Chair,

I wish to begin by extending my sincere congratulations to you and other members of the bureau on your election to this Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Guyana, Azerbaijan and Malaysia on behalf of the G77 and China, Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and ASEAN, respectively.

COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented consequences and exacerbated our vulnerability and inequality. This global health crisis has also threatened to reverse our hard-earned development gains in all aspects. Countries in special situations, in particular, have experienced the most severe impacts due to their weak economic structure, fragile health and social protection systems coupled with limited resources. The most vulnerable groups in society especially women, children, elderly people, and persons with disabilities have been affected, due to their vulnerabilities.

To overcome this crisis, it is of paramount importance for the international community to ensure concerted global response to cushion the impact of the pandemic and adopt a holistic approach to building back better, based on solidarity and renewed commitment to uphold multilateralism, promote and protect all human rights, including the rights to development.

Madam Chair,

During the past few years, the Lao PDR has made significant achievements in the implementation of the SDGs, poverty reduction and improvement of people's livelihoods. Many of the SDGs have been streamlined into our national social and economic development plans in order to pursue sustainable development path and lay a strong foundation for LDC graduation. In this context, priorities are given to delivering adequate social services to the people at all levels, particularly in healthcare, education, income generation and social protection, among others.

The Lao Government has redoubled its effort to achieve Universal Health Coverage by 2025 by undertaking health system reform and increasing resources to improve access to higher quality and equitable health care services for all citizens. In fighting COVID-19 pandemic, the Lao PDR, in close cooperation with friendly countries and international organizations, has adopted early stringent preventive measures to contain and prevent the pandemic with only 23 confirmed infected cases recorded thus far and no fatality.

The country has continued to implement the Education Sector Development Plan with an aim of ensuring that education sector is appropriately structured and resourced, create opportunity for all citizens to have equitable access to quality education and benefit from socio-economic development.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls have become an integral part of national development agenda. Towards this end, considerable achievements have made in the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Currently, 27,52% of National Assembly members, including

the President and a Vice-President are women and there has been a considerable increased number of women in the cabinet. In addition, we have also witnessed increasing role of women in private sector, all of which, making significant contributions to the national socio-economic development in the country.

The Lao government has always attached great importance to the promotion and protection of child rights. On this note, the country has adopted and promulgated a member of child-related legislations and national action plans including 10-Year Strategy on Mothers and Children (2016-2025).

Despite the progress and achievements mentioned above, there remain much work to be done especially in mobilizing sufficient resources to meet the current needs as gap persists between urban and rural areas. Key challenges include persisting child malnutrition, low pre-school enrollment and completion rates, lack of disaggregated data on gender and for the rights of children includes the birth registration especially in the remote areas, among others, need to be further addressed as the pandemic has already hampered the on-going efforts to tackle the said constraints. If this trend continues, addressing the aforesaid challenges will remain an uphill task and pose unpredictable impacts on social sector including the employment. If the pandemic prolongs, it is forecasted that the unemployment rate in the country will rise from the normal rate of 2 percent to 25 percent. This will unavoidably impede income generation and people's livelihoods especially among the most vulnerable groups.

Madam Chair,

I wish to conclude by reiterating the Lao PDR's strong commitment to the implementation of the objectives of the World Summit for Social Development and 2030 Agenda and fulfill our international obligations based on our national circumstances and capacity. We firmly believe that with continued support from the international community, no one will be left behind.

I thank you, Madam Chair.