



# *Lao People's Democratic Republic*

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**Statement by**

**H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs  
of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session  
of the United Nations General Assembly**

29 September 2018, New York

Madame President,

I would like to begin by congratulating you, Ms. María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés on your election as President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly. It is our great pleasure to see a woman chairing this august body and I assure you of our full support and cooperation and wish you every success in discharging your noble duty. Likewise, I wish to extend my congratulations to His Excellency Miroslav Lajčák for the successful completion of his tenure as President of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UNGA.

Madame President,

The 2030 Agenda that promises to leave no one behind has encompassed all the prerequisites for us all to build a peaceful and prosperous world. In order to meet this lofty goal of 2030 Agenda, the national governments and the international community have to work hand in hand to implement it and it requires international peace and security that would create conducive environment for economic growth and social progress, while enhancing international cooperation and assistance with priorities given to the most vulnerable groups of countries, namely LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS.

To realize the 2030 Agenda and achieve the SDGs, the Lao Government has incorporated the SDG targets into its 8<sup>th</sup> five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2016-2020 soon after the adoption of the Agenda 2030. Given its specific need, the Lao PDR has gone extra mile by adopting the national SDG 18 entitled “Lives Safe from Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)” to address the problem caused by UXO. At the High-level Political Forum held in July this year, the Lao Government presented its first Voluntary National Review on SDGs

implementation, which saw important progress and emerging constraints over the past years.

While positive momentum has been gained on SDGs and LDC graduation, the Lao PDR remains vulnerable to external shocks. This year, we are witnessing an increasing intensity of climate change and natural disasters that cause heavy loss and damage to lives and properties of people in different parts of the world. Like many countries, the Lao PDR is no exception and has been severely affected by natural disaster especially extensive flooding across the country. This is the worst natural disaster ever occurred in the history of our country. To date, 2,409 out of 8,464 villages in 115 out of 148 districts have been affected by massive floods. The exact costs of the loss and damage are yet to be known as Post Disaster Need Assessment will be conducted in the very coming months. This calamity has severely caused major impact on the livelihood of the people in the affected areas. Currently, the Lao Government, with assistance from friendly countries, international organizations including INGOs and individuals have provided emergency relief to the affected people such as the provision of temporary shelters, food and health care. May I, therefore, take this opportunity to express our heartfelt appreciations and gratitude to the friendly countries and international organizations for their valuable assistance provided to us during this difficult time.

Against this backdrop, it is more crucial than ever for world leaders to honor our commitments pledged in the Paris Agreement. Within ASEAN, great importance is given to the issue of climate change and disaster risk management. We also highly value the UN's continued support for ASEAN-UN Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management 2016-2020 in addressing the climate change and disaster management and responding to its impacts on socio-economic development in the years to come.



Madame President,

To address the scourge of transnational crime, it requires concerted effort at all levels. In this context, the Lao PDR remains highly committed to working closely with the international community in the fights against illicit drug, illegal wild life trade, trafficking in persons, among others. The Government has adopted the Drug Control Master Plan 2016-2020 as we implement the ASEAN Work Plan on Securing Community Against Illicit Drugs 2016-2025 so as to realize the vision of Drug Free ASEAN as one of high-priority agenda of the region. We are also pleased to support the “Global Call to Action on the World Drug Problem”, initiated by the President of the United States. In our fight against human trafficking, the Government has spared no effort in combating this heinous and inhumane crime by adopting several laws, regulations and national action plans to combat trafficking in persons and becoming signatory to numerous regional Agreements and MOUs, including the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, that seek to prevent and combat human trafficking.

Madame President,

The United Nations needs to be strengthened so it can respond effectively to the challenges we face today. We are pleased with the initiatives by the Secretary General on reforming and repositioning of the UN with the aim to improve UN capability to meet the needs in the current environment. In this context, we reiterate our view that development issues must remain at the core, be an integral part and a top priority for the United Nations and member states while promoting international peace, security and human rights. While emphasizing the importance of enhancing capacity of the UN system to deliver its mandate, we are concerned

about the continued decline of the contribution to the core funding to the UN agencies. If this trend continues, it will affect the performance of the UN development agencies and development programs on the ground. Therefore, my delegation would like to call on donor countries to fulfill their ODA commitment of at least 0.7% of their GNI.

Madame President,

We all acknowledge that peace and security are prerequisites for socio-economic development of all nations. Therefore, we need to maintain and promote peace and security at all costs. Past experiences have shown that settling disputes by peaceful means is the best way to ensure durable peace that is essential for sustainable development of a nation. As such, it is incumbent upon the international community to further build mutual trust and confidence in an effort to jointly overcome the on-going challenges and seek peaceful solutions to the disputes or conflicts that we are witnessing in various regions of the world. Against this backdrop, we welcome the recent historic Summit between the Leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States of America in June this year which constitutes an important milestone in the relations between the two countries. We also welcome the 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit between the leaders of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea with an objective to improve not only bilateral relations between the two countries, but also to address the issue of denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula. We hope that such positive momentum will be strengthened, thereby, contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability, and denuclearization in the region as a whole.

While there is positive development in the Korean Peninsula, my delegation is of concern on the lack of progress on the Palestinian issue. We hope that this

long overdue issue on Palestine will be resolved by peaceful means in order to achieve a two-state solution where Palestine and Israel can live side by side in peace, security and within internationally recognized borders as stipulated in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions.

On the other note, in the era of interdependence, international cooperation and engagement are key factors for peaceful and mutually benefited co-existence. The enforcement of isolation and sanction measures imposed on any country may not bring about benefits to the international community. On the contrary, it will cause a loss for all and lead to increasing hostility. In this regard, my delegation urges that the embargo on the Republic of Cuba be ended. We would like also to call on the international community to uphold and further strengthen multilateralism that will promote cooperation rather than confrontation. This remains one of the core values of our only universal organization, the United Nations.

Madame President,

I would like to conclude by express my support to the theme for the 73rd session of the UNGA: *Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies*. It is indeed pertinent to the current global situation and the work of the United Nations. However, to make all of the internationally agreed goals and commitments a reality, it requires strong political will and firm commitment and support for multilateralism, particularly to make the United Nations stronger than before so that it can effectively serve and respond to the needs of all member states.

I thank you.