



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

H.E. Thongloun SISOULITH

*Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic
at the 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly*

New York, 23 September 2016

Mr. President,

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Your Excellency Peter Thomson on your election as President of this 71st Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). It is my firm belief that with your rich experience, you will guide this Session of the General Assembly with great success. We stand ready to extend our full support and cooperation to you in the discharge of your noble duty. Likewise, may I also extend my profound congratulations to His Excellency Mogens Lykketoft for the successful completion of his duty as President of the 70th Session of the UNGA.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to commend His Excellency Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on his active and tireless undertakings towards achievements of the United Nations' mission and objectives in many fronts over the past decade.

Mr. President,

The international community remains concerned over various challenges and developments in many regions of the world. To name a few, terrorism and extremism remain a threat to regional and global peace and security, more than 800 million people across the world still live in extreme poverty, while natural disasters and climate change have caused tremendous damage to social and economic development of various parts of the world. At the same time, the global economy is still fragile and growing at a slow pace.

Against this backdrop, the international community has, over the past years, made collective efforts to respond to and address those challenges by adopting various measures and mechanisms, including cooperation frameworks such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

2015-2030, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for Financing Sustainable Development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, and the Programme of Actions of Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

In this respect, I am of the view that it is imperative for us to be resolute in translating our political commitment into concrete actions, while enhancing mutual trust, cooperation and assistance in order to collectively address the challenges. We need to continue to adhere to the fundamental principles of the United Nations in resolving regional and international conflicts by peaceful means, while promoting development cooperation with focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At the same time, the United Nations, which has the duty to encourage and assist Member States to implement those measures, should improve its mechanisms and working method so as to be able to respond to challenges and carry out its duties effectively.

Mr. President,

Southeast Asia continues to enjoy peace and stability. This provides fundamental environment conducive not only to the socio-economic development of the countries in the region, but also to the enhancement of regional cooperation in the new era of the ASEAN Community since 31 December 2015 as well as the strengthening of cooperation between ASEAN and external partners with the aim of further consolidating and advancing the ASEAN Community in line with the ASEAN Community 2025 through the ASEAN-initiated frameworks. We do hope that the international community particularly ASEAN's Dialogue Partners and other external parties will continue to support ASEAN and its centrality in the evolving regional architecture.

The Lao PDR is proud and honoured to assume ASEAN Chairmanship in 2016, the first year of the ASEAN Community. In this

spirit, we introduced the theme: ***“Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic ASEAN Community”***, with the aim of realizing the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. The ASEAN Summits and related Summits which were recently concluded earlier this September adopted many important documents related to cooperation within ASEAN and between ASEAN and its external partners. All this has contributed significantly to the common cause of maintaining and promoting peace, stability and cooperation in the region and the world at large as well as the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals. Taking this opportunity, the Lao PDR would like to extend its sincere thanks and appreciation to the international community particularly the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN’s Dialogue Partners for their kind cooperation and support extended to our ASEAN Chairmanship this year.

Mr. President,

2016 is the first year of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, including the Sustainable Development Goals. In this regard, I commend Mr. President for choosing the theme 'The Sustainable Development Goals: a universal push to transform our world' for this Session, which is responsive to the real situation. It is my view that we need to deepen understanding of the SDGs at the national, regional and international levels in order to integrate these goals into our respective national development plans, and to mobilize sufficient resources for the effective implementation of this Agenda. We also need to ensure an environment of peace and stability, which is the common aspiration of mankind and in consistence with the United Nations' purpose of peace, friendship and development cooperation, aimed at ensuring that we, the peoples live together in peace and dignity.

Mr. President,

Early this year, the Lao PDR held an election of the National Assembly which subsequently approved the new Government. This Government has further pursued the national development policy and mainstreamed the SDGs into its 8th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020), the Development Strategy 2025 and Vision 2030. We regard the SDGs implementation as our international obligation, which will not only contribute to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but will also bring development benefits to the Lao PDR. To this end, our Government must focus on the achievement of the goals of its 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan, Development Strategy 2025 and Vision 2030, which include green growth and sustainable development, maintaining steady economic growth, achieving constant reduction of poverty and graduating from the least developed country status, among others. In addition to the 17 SDGs, the Lao Government has adopted its national SDG 18: "Lives Safe from UXO". I myself together with Secretary General Ban Ki-moon formally launched this SDG18 on 7 September 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The targets of this particular SDG are to ensure that by 2030 residual UXO activities are undertaken and all known UXO contamination in high priority areas and all villages defined as 'poor' cleared; that annual casualties from UXO accidents are eliminated to the extent possible; and that all identified UXO survivors and victims have their needs met.

The Lao PDR is a least developed and landlocked country that continues to face many challenges and impediments in the development of infrastructure and quality human resources, among others, thus requiring the continued support and assistance from the international community. I am confident that with the strong determination of the Lao Government coupled with the continued cooperation and assistance of the international community, we will be able to achieve those goals.

Mr. President,

Climate change and more frequent and severe natural disasters have affected the national development as well as the livelihoods of the people around the world. This poses a major challenge that no single country alone is able to address. Recognizing the importance of this issue, the Government of the Lao PDR formally joined the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. I very much hope that the Paris Agreement will enter into force by the end of this year and will be effectively implemented. For its part, the Lao Government has submitted its Nationally Determined Contributions and integrated climate change, natural disaster risk reduction and management into its National Socio-Economic Development Plan.

Mr. President,

Lessons from the past have shown that the use of armed forces to resolve conflicts occurred in different regions of the world only brings about enormous devastation to humankind such as the great loss of lives and properties, resulting in poverty, hunger and other negative impacts. This leads to an escalation of crimes and terrorist acts. Against this backdrop, the Lao PDR calls upon the international community to uphold the political will to address conflicts in various parts of the world by peaceful means, which the Lao PDR has consistently supported.

The Lao PDR always hopes that the issue of Palestine be resolved by peaceful means by the parties concerned with a view to creating two independent states of Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace.

The Lao PDR welcomes the re-establishment of the diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba, and expresses its strong hope that such relations would be further enhanced, leading to the lifting of the embargo on the Republic of Cuba in the near future.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the United Nations must be further strengthened especially in terms of its effectiveness in addressing the important global issues. All Member States of the United Nations should extend full support and cooperation and fulfill their international obligations in order to address these enormous global challenges, and in particular to implement the SDGs in a timely and effective manner. The Lao PDR reiterates its firm commitment and determination to continue working closely with the international community to build a more secured, peaceful, just and prosperous world.

Thank you.