



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith, Minister of Foreign Affairs

**of the Lao People's Democratic Republic at the 72nd Session of the United
Nations General Assembly**

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Mr. President,

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to extend my congratulations to Your Excellency Miroslav Lajčák on your election as the President of this 72nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). I am confident that with your extensive diplomatic experience, you will guide this Session of the General Assembly with a 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 Peter Thomson for the successful completion of his tenure as the President of the 71st Session of the UNGA.

Once again, may I take this opportunity to extend my congratulations to His Excellency Antonio Guterres on his appointment as the Secretary-General of the United Nations and for his initiative on the management reform of the United Nations so that this organization can respond effectively to the current global challenges. I hope that such efforts will contribute to the attainment of the aims and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations.

May I join other delegates in extending our deep sympathy to the countries in Latin America and the Caribbean which have been severely affected by recent natural disasters.

Mr. President,

Today the current global geopolitical landscape is fraught with a myriad of challenges which pose a major threat to peace and security and adversely hamper development of countries and regions in the world. Therefore, it calls for our concerted efforts to overcome those obstacles and challenges so that people in different countries and various regions of the world can live their lives in a durable peace and prosperity. That is why, the choice of the theme: *“focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet”* for the 72nd UNGA is apt as the international community is focusing on the implementation of the 2030

agenda for sustainable development that has promised to leave no one behind.

It is my firm belief that peace and security remain the common aspiration of the international community. As such, in order to maintain and promote peace and development, it is incumbent upon us to enhance collaboration so that peace and sustainable development can prevail in our world. The United Nations, the only universal organization with the mandates to maintain and promote peace and cooperation for development, has to be in the forefront. To realize these objectives, the United Nations needs to be reformed in a manner it can respond to the current needs and pressing challenges today.

The Lao PDR earnestly hopes to see the world without nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. In this context, we welcome the recent adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons which, we also signed two days ago. But we are well aware that we still have an uphill task ahead of us for this Treaty to enter into force and be effectively implemented. Therefore, the international community has to redouble its efforts in this respect.

Mr. President,

Throughout the past decades, we have witnessed that many countries in the world have experienced a sustained economic growth and rapid development, which have lifted hundreds of millions of people out of poverty. Thanks to peace and security which have been prerequisites and essential for social and economic advancement of nations. At the same time, improvement of people's well-being will have positive impact on political stability and social order and helps to reduce conflicts. Past experience shows that settling disputes by peaceful means and through diplomatic solutions is the best way as it is more durable and causes no loss of lives and properties of the people. As such, it is important for the international community to further build mutual trust, flexibility and jointly address the root cause of the problem. In this spirit, the Lao PDR calls on all parties involved in the disputes or conflicts in various regions of the world to exercise the utmost restraint and resolve such conflicts through diplomatic

and peaceful means so as to deescalate the tensions as we firmly believe that only peaceful environment can form a fundamental ground for advancing national social and economic development.

The Lao PDR welcomes the re-establishment of the diplomatic relations between the United States of America and the Republic of Cuba and earnestly hopes that such relations will be enhanced, leading to the lifting of the embargo in the near future, thereby, bringing about the real benefits to the peoples of the two countries as well as to the region and the world at large. Likewise, the Lao PDR also hopes that the Palestinian issue which has been lasted for many decades will be solved by peaceful means with a view to creating two independent states of Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace, security and within internationally recognized borders as stipulated in the relevant Resolutions of the UN Security Council.

Mr. President,

This year ASEAN turns 50, over the past 5 decades, ASEAN has gone through a number of challenges and has adjusted itself to the changing regional and international environment, while taking into account its diversity and particularities in the region, and has achieved progress gradually, which led to the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community at the end of 2015.

The most remarkable achievement of ASEAN is the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the region, thus serving as favorable condition for ASEAN Member States in pursuit of their respective socio-economic developments as well as regional economic integration. At the same time, ASEAN has strengthened its relations with external parties, especially its Dialogue Partners in a substantive and comprehensive manner based on mutual benefit, and importantly, ASEAN centrality has been recognized by all external partners under ASEAN-initiated mechanisms. Countries in the region and beyond are keen to forge cooperation with ASEAN as it provides a venue for them to participate in the discussions on many important regional and international issues of common interest and concern, thus promoting mutual understanding and

trust among participants as well as promoting peace, stability and development in the region and the world at large.

The ASEAN's achievements have been possible thanks to the ASEAN Way, which is an important factor, especially the principles of "consultation and consensus" and "moving at a pace comfortable to all". ASEAN Way signifies ASEAN centrality and unity. ASEAN Way, in deed, remains relevant and ASEAN will continue to uphold this principle in the years to come.

Mr. President,

The Lao PDR attaches great importance to the implementation of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. Since their adoption, SDGs have been streamlined into our current National Socio-Economic Development Plan for (for 2016-2020) and a National Steering Committee for the Implementation of the SDGs chaired by H.E. Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith has been formally established. At the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development held in July, the Lao PDR has registered to submit and present our Voluntary National Review in 2018, all of which has demonstrated our Government's firm political will and unwavering commitment to implement and achieve the SDGs as well as build a strong foundation to support our country's aspirations to graduate from least developing country status by 2020. In pursuance of fostering an enabling environment conducive for achieving sustainable development, the Lao Government has taken an important initiative by adopting our national SDG18 entitled "Lives Safe from UXO" which was officially launched by Prime Minister of the Lao PDR and former UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in September 2016 at the sideline of the 8th ASEAN-UN Summit in Vientiane. The SDG18 aims to address specific development challenges caused by unexploded ordnances to mitigate their impacts on the lives of our people which will pave the way for improving the livelihood and well-being of the rural population and enabling them to contribute to the implementation of sustainable development agenda.

Mr. President,

Being both least developed and land-locked, the Lao PDR has continued to encounter various challenges that hinder our socio-economic development and achievement of the agreed global development goals. Against this backdrop, the Lao PDR has pursued its development through the implementation of the 8th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020, the Strategy 2025 and the Vision 2030 aimed at graduating from the LDC status and becoming a high-middle income country by 2030. Towards this end, the Lao PDR pursues a policy of transforming from a land-locked country into a land-linked hub, facilitating direct connectivity between the immediate neighbouring countries: Viet Nam, Thailand and China and the wider region and constituting part of the production and supply chains through implementation of infrastructure projects, improvement of logistics and transport networks, for instance, the construction of a high speed railway from Vientiane to Kunming, improvement of North-South Economic Corridor and East-West Economic Corridor, among others. These national strategies are being implemented as part of international and regional initiatives being undertaken such as ASEAN Vision 2025, the ASEAN Master Plan 2025 and China's Belt and Road Initiative, in which, the Lao PDR is a partner.

Mr. President,

I am of the view that political will constitutes a fundamental principle for attaining all agreed global development goals. Without firm political commitment, we will not be able to turn sustainable development agenda into concrete actions and outcomes. Therefore, my delegation firmly believes that development remains an integral part and a top priority for ensuring international peace, security and human rights, all of which are closely linked. Against this backdrop, we call on the international community to increase concerted efforts to ensure that development brings equal benefits for all countries. The Lao Government once again, reaffirms its strong determination to work more closely with the international community to realize the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as well

as to achieve our national development objectives of eradicating poverty, laying a solid foundation for LDC graduation, turning the country into an industrialized and modern nation and moving towards the direction of green and sustainable development that benefits for all the people, thereby, ensuring that no one in the country is left behind.

Thank You.