



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

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On Agenda Item 3:

Special Body on Least Developed, Landlocked Developing and
Small Island Developing States

The Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs Development Report 2023:
Strengthening Regional Cooperation for Seamless and Sustainable Connectivity

(03 Minutes)

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(Please check against delivery)

Mme. Chair,

Distinguished delegates,

1. At the outset, on behalf of the Lao Delegation, I would like to commend UNESCAP for the comprehensive report, which is very much relevant to our current situation. My delegation concurs with the main findings of the report, and in this regard allows me to share some of our views on the topic.

2. Over the past years as shown in the report, progress has been made in socio-economic development in the Asia-Pacific; however, widening development gap, inequality and digital divided remain prominent in the region. Particularly, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic over the past three years, and the multi-dimensional crisis, coupled with the Triple Planetary Crisis have further put countries with special needs at the most vulnerable than others, as they continue to encounter number of daunting challenges inherited from the geographic constraints and the remoteness from the global markets, which prevents them from harnessing the development potential and economic competitiveness, and therefore at risk of being left behind. To the end, it is necessary for the international community to continue helping the least disadvantage countries to overcome structural challenges, alleviate poverty and narrow development gaps, as well as better connect to the wider world, thus putting ourselves on the path of inclusive and sustainable development.

3. Being both LLDC and LDC, the Lao PDR attaches great importance to reduce the impact of the climate change in enhancing its connectivity through infrastructure development, trade regulation and facilitation, digitalization and cooperation with transit neighbours with an aims to transform into a land-linked countries and a logistic hub in the sub-region. Thereby, recognizing that expanded access to modern and affordable forms of energy and better utilization of current energy resources is essential for the Lao PDR's continued social and economic advancement; our government prioritizes the needs to develop the energy sector in an affordable, inclusive, and sustainable manner. In other hands, with adoption of the 20-years National Digital Economy Development Vision, the 10-year National Digital Economy Development Strategy, and 5-year National Digital Economy Development Plan in 2022, Lao

PDR is well-positioned to take advantage of digital connectivity to improve growth, competitiveness, and services provision.

4. In this connection, we have been pursuing these objectives through integrating the international agenda into its national socio-economic development plan and working closely with the UN country team and all relevant stakeholders to formulate the Smooth Transition Strategy that lays out policies and actions critical to our smooth, quality and sustainable graduation from LDC status by 2026. Furthermore, we continue to work and cooperate with all partners to implement the international agenda for development such as the SDG, DPoA, VPoA, concerned ASEAN frameworks, Belt and Road Initiative, and the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks. This includes our plans to link the Lao-China Railway and Highways projects with these networks in the future. However, the supports from the international community are still needed to ensure that Lao PDR does not fall further behind regional peers.

Mme. Chair,

5. In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm the Lao PDR's strong commitment to working with all ESCAP member states and the Development Partners to uphold multilateral cooperation and partnership for seamless and sustainable connectivity of the Asia-Pacific.

I thank you, Mme. Chair.