Statement by
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On Agenda Item 3:
Special Body of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDs)
At the 77th Session of the UNESCAP

Bangkok, 28 April 2021
Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,

1. At the outset, on behalf of the Lao Delegation I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the Secretariat for its comprehensive Special Body annual report just presented to the meeting.

Mr. Chair,

2. Despite tireless efforts made to achieve the ambitious objectives set forth in a number of international development agendas and relevant frameworks, including the IPoA, VPoA, the progress has been minimal. On LDC alone, since the inception of the UN-OHRLLS only six countries graduated from the LDC status. Nonetheless, during the triennial review by the Committee for Development Policy (CPD) this year, five countries, including Lao PDR met the criteria in two consecutive reviews and will be recommended to graduate from the LDC status in the next few years.

3. Being both LDC and LLDC, the Lao PDR’s disadvantages are multiple and more challenges than other countries in the region. Over the past years, the Government of Lao PDR has been putting great efforts to overcome those challenges by adopting strategies and visions that will transform itself from a landlocked to land-linked country and better connectivity. As a result, high economic growth at the average of around 6 percent per year during the past years prior to COVID-19 pandemic has enabled Lao PDR to meet two out of the three criteria for LDC graduation in the 2018 and meet all 3 criteria at this year’s review by the CDP. Given the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, it will be very challenging for my country to maintain continued high economic growth. The uncertainty is still lying ahead, depended on the scope, severity and prolong of the pandemic in the region and the world.

Mr. Chair,

4. How to help those qualifying countries for LDC graduation in the region from falling short of the threshold or sliding back to LDC during the preparatory period, which is the CDP has granted 5 years instead of a normal 3 years to qualifying countries, required concerted efforts and assistance from international and regional communities. In this regard, a smooth graduation
strategy should be formulated for each qualifying country, by taking into account the specific needs of the particular country. In addition, we have to strengthen the implementation of IPoA and VPoA that have provided global cooperation framework on addressing the specific needs of the LDCs and LLDCs. And given the current context of COVID-19 pandemic, the most important and urgent needs are to address the issue of outbreak prevention and recovery from COVID-19 pandemic. My country supports multilateral cooperation in addressing the global pandemic and support the COVAX Facilities for the access to vaccine for all countries. In this regard, my delegation would like to thank the friendly countries and international organizations for providing invaluable assistance to my country, be medical equipment, medicine and vaccine and hopes to receive continued support.

Mr. Chair,

5. Allow me to conclude by stressing that graduating from the LDC status is not an end in itself. The ultimate objective is to ensure the inclusive wellbeing of all people in the society, so that we can meet the slogan of leaving no one behind and we can all realize the international sustainable development goals.

I thank you.