Statement

by

H.E. Mr. Saleumxay KOMMASITH,

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

at the High-level Forum of Landlocked Developing Countries

(LLDCs)

New York, 22 September 2016

(Please check against delivery)
Mr. Chairman,

1. At the outset, I wish to commend you on your election as Chair and other members of the Bureau of the High-level Forum of the Landlocked Developing Countries. I wish also to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Zambia for its re-election as the Chair of LLDCs for another term and for its tireless efforts in leading the work of our Group. I pledge my country’s full support in the discharge of your duty.

Mr. Chairman,

2. The convening of this important Forum is timely as it takes place after the adoption of the historic global development agendas such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 in which all of them, in particular, the VPoA seek to address the special development need and unique challenges of the LLDCs. Thus, the most important task before us now is the need to effectively implement these global development agendas. LLDCs, including my own country, the Lao PDR, are committed to implementing all the six key priorities of the VPoA which are fundamental transit policy issues, infrastructure development and maintenance, international trade and trade facilitation, regional integration and cooperation, structural economic transformation and means of implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

3. VPoA is an important framework for the international community through the renewed and strengthened partnerships between LLDCs, their transit neighbours and their development partners to increase the support and assistance to the LLDCs in the implementation of the six priorities of VPoA to help address their special development needs which include, among others, infrastructure development, productive capacity, improved market access and competitiveness.
4. In addition, we welcome the 5th meeting of trade Ministers of the LLDCs in Geneva this year as this event has further underlined the importance the LLDCs attach to the implementation of priorities of VPoA and the WTO’s trade facilitation agreement.

Mr. Chairman,

5. At the country level, the Lao Government has increased investment on infrastructure development, particularly roads and railways linking the country with the Asian Highway and Trans-Asian Railway networks though the implementation of various bilateral and multilateral agreements, including sub-regional road networks and economic corridors in order to facilitate trade, investment and tourism in the region. Moreover, the outstanding achievement was the accession of our country to the WTO in early 2013, which led to the deepening of economic integration into the regional and global economies and resulted in the substantial increase in trade and services. Currently, the Lao PDR continues to integrate its economy into the regional economy through the participation in the ASEAN Economic Community and free trade areas with dialogue partners of ASEAN. Consequently, over the last decade the value of trade has risen by an average annual rate of above 20 percent.

6. Despite some progress made in term of economic integration and trade facilitation, there remains challenges lied ahead for us to overcome and needs more coherent manner and comprehensive cooperation with our neighboring countries and other development partners in addressing the development special needs in my country.

7. In this connection, I wish to thank our neighbouring countries, namely Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar as transit countries for their support and assistance on the development cooperation of such infrastructures that links Laos with their countries and the wider region. I also wish to thank China for its efforts to develop a rail road through Laos to Thailand as part of the Singapore Kunming Rail Link Project.
Mr. Chairman,

8. Let me conclude by reiterating that the Lao Government is committed and determined to realizing the VPoA. We, therefore, once again call upon the international community, including transit countries, UN agencies, development partners, private sector and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the VPoA.

I thank you.