Statement

by

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at the Annual meeting of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

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( Please check against delivery )
Mr. Chairman,

1. As one of the groups of countries in special situations, the group of the landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) with inadequate resources at their disposal continues to face a host of challenges such as lack of direct territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from the world market that concomitantly results in prohibitive transport and trade costs, thus, making them less attractive and competitive vis-a-vis other countries. This has hindered their efforts to realize their national development objectives and meet the global sustainable development agendas. Therefore, the development of LLDCs must be given a special priority as their unique development needs and challenges would hardly be met by themselves. In this regard, the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) for LLDCs for the Decade 2014-2024 provides an important cooperation framework for the international community, including the LLDCs, development partners and the transit countries to strengthen partnership to support and assist the LLDCs in addressing such challenges that stem from their geographical handicaps and structural vulnerabilities as well as to help them achieve the objectives of the 2030 Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

2. In recent years, some progress has been made in the implementation of the VPoA as well as the other international development initiatives in LLDCs. But much more remains to be done as challenges being faced by LLDCs in the process of their national development are enormous. This calls for the increased support and assistance to LLDCs from the international community commensurate to the commitments made in various global development agendas such as the VPoA, Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) and SDGs, among others.

3. 2019 will be the fifth year of the implementation of the VPoA. So, there will be a mid-term review meeting in the end of next year. The mid-term review will be an opportunity to take stock of the achievements and identify challenges faced in the implementation of the VPoA and chart the way forward for the effective implementation of the VPoA. Therefore, my delegation is of the view that the outcomes of mid-term review of the VPoA should reflect the strong political will and commitments of international community to continue to implement the VPoA in a way that is bold and
ambitious so that it can act as a catalyst within the context of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Mr. Chairman,

3. The Lao Government attaches great importance to the implementation of the VPoA. We have mainstreamed many of its elements that are relevant to our country into the national development plans in the pursuit of the policy to turn Laos from the disadvantage of landlockedness into that of a land bridge by developing several strategies and programmes for infrastructure development to connect our country the neighboring countries and beyond through regional and sub-regional cooperation frameworks such as ASEAN. We are confident that this will ultimately help integrate our economy into that of the region and the world. To this end, the Government has increased investment on infrastructure development, particularly, roads and railways to link 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. For instance, the ongoing Lao-China Railway project which will link the capital of Laos with the southern Chinese border will stretch to our ASEAN neighbor. Upon completion, it is expected to cause an increase in the flow of not only goods between two counties but also promote the regional integration in the long-run.

Mr. Chairman,

4. Let me conclude by reiterating that the Lao Government is committed and determined to realizing the VPoA. We, therefore, call upon the international community, including transit countries, development partners, UN agencies, private sector and other stakeholders to support the implementation of the VPoA. Finally, I wish to thank our neighboring countries, development partners, UN agencies, international organizations and other stakeholders for their support and assistance that have contributed significantly to the socio-economic development of our country.

I thank you.