



# **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

## **Statement by**

**His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**At the General Debate of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of  
the United Nations General Assembly**

**New York, 23 September 2023**

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**Mr. President,**

At the outset, I would like to extend my profound congratulations to His Excellency Dennis Francis on his election as President of the 78<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly and I wish him a very successful presidency.

Today the international community is facing multiple crises at a level we had never experienced before. Following the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the major challenges facing developing countries varies from an increasing extreme poverty, external debt, and unjust international financial architecture to extreme natural calamities as seen in many parts of the world, especially the recent natural disaster that occurred in Morocco and Libya. I join other speakers in expressing our sympathy and condolences to the peoples of Morocco and Libya. This has already been compounded by regional tensions and unilateral measures as a result of geopolitical rivalries. All this has not only hampered the hard-earned development progress during the last decade, but also threatened the survival of all humankind.

At this critical juncture, the most appropriate solutions are needed in order to address such challenges. It requires unified and collective actions that are guided by the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and we must firmly uphold multilateralism in tackling them. To save our world from

another catastrophe, our shared wisdom and united political determination are more crucial than ever. This must be done by putting aside any unilateral interests and resolutely avoiding greater confrontation and division among the UN member states.

To this end, the United Nations must be reformed in a way that it can effectively fulfill its mandate. We need the UN that is more relevant and effective in the rapidly changing geopolitical landscape and be able to address the challenges threatening international peace, security and sustainable development. We believe that we are now better equipped to tackle global challenges, which include among others, scientific and technological advancement, and innovation. Yet, without our common desire, shared responsibilities and collective actions, the most vulnerable peoples in the world will continue to be left behind.

**Mr. President,**

Resolving global conflicts and disputes by peaceful means is the only viable way to ensure long-lasting peace and coexistence. In this regard, we urge an immediate end to the conflict in Ukraine through peaceful dialogues without which we all would continue to be impacted. We also demand a peaceful solution to the Middle East problem. The Lao PDR calls for the parties concerned to resume dialogues and restore mutual trust for solving the long overdue Palestinian issue through the establishment of two

sovereign states, coexisting peacefully in line with the relevant UN resolutions.

Like many others, the Lao PDR believes that unilateralism, particularly unilateral coercive measures, not only contravene the principles of the UN Charter and international law, but also severely cause negative consequences to innocent people and hinder national development of many developing countries. In this regard, my delegation continues to join the global call for lifting the economic embargo against Cuba and removing it from the list of "state sponsors of terrorism as well as ending all unilateral coercive measures.

**Mr. President,**

Approaching the midpoint of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, many countries are still lagging behind. Therefore, we must further strengthen and scale up our collective efforts, which include harnessing scientific and technological achievements to accelerate sustainable development, and unleash new impetus for innovation-driven growth. At the G77 and China Summit held in Havana last week, Heads of State and Government of developing countries echoed that science, technology, and innovation, including information and communication technologies, have become fundamental for addressing global challenges and are one of the driving mechanisms of the

transformation to accelerate progress towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. In this context, a global governance system based on science, technology and innovation is essential to identify problems and find effective solutions for sustainable economic development, environmental conservation, poverty reduction and addressing inequality.

Likewise, to scale up the implementation of the SDGs, the UN development system, development partners and international financial institutions must act together in a more coordinated manner. The UN Development system at all levels must also play an essential role in resource mobilization and coordination, including supporting countries in special situations namely LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to address their specific challenges.

It is evident that one of the key obstacles to SDGs implementation has always been insufficient financing. Let me quote the call by the UN Secretary General Guterres, “the Global Financial System is biased, morally bankrupt and skewed to benefit wealthy countries” end of quote. This is a clear signal that the reform of the international financial architecture is an urgent and long-overdue task, and this cannot be done without strengthening the participation of developing countries in international economic decision-making, norm-setting and global economic governance, in order to adapt to the changing global economic landscape.

**Mr. President,**

The SDG is not just a global development goal, but for the Lao PDR, it is national commitment. In addition to the 17 global SDGs, the Lao PDR has SDG18 “Achieve lives safe from unexploded ordnance (UXO)”. Although most of its indicators have advanced to different degrees, the UXO remains a threat to our national development and poses an obstacle to other SDGs. We therefore take this opportunity to call for continued support and assistance from the international community to address this prolonged and challenging task.

For the remainders of the SDGs, their integration into our national strategies signifies our unwavering dedication. Despite our great efforts, the progress made remains less than desirable as many have stagnated or regressed. The Lao Government is now carrying out the third Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) process, conducting track analysis for selected SDGs to identify what need more attention and support. We will present our VNR at the 2024 High-Level Political Forum. In addition, the Lao Government has taken various measures, including development of a Financing Strategy as part of the Integrated National Financing Framework with a view to building a more resilient national financing architecture as well as opening a window of opportunity to meet the financing needs.

As for LDC graduation effort, we are embarking on the adoption of the national Smooth Transition Strategy (STS) which will help the Government, development partners and relevant stakeholders to stay focused more on development priorities, addressing the most pressing needs and challenges that may disrupt the country's graduation process.

**Mr. President,**

The Lao PDR has considerable natural capital, rich biodiversity, and abundance water resources with opportunity for renewable energy development and investment in carbon capture and storage, which can provide the country with significant development potentials. In this context, we see the important role of science, technology and innovation in advancing the country's national development agenda to promote green and inclusive growth, as well as digital economy over resource-driven economies with a view to enhancing sustainable use of natural resources. In this connection, the Lao PDR has adopted its National Digital Economy Development Vision and Strategy.

Although the Lao PDR is amongst the countries who contribute the least to global emission, like others we are the victims of climate change. Nevertheless, we are strongly committed ourselves to the international climate obligations. The Lao Government has already adopted the National Strategy for Climate Change, but to ensure its full and effective

implementation, it requires sufficient financial resources as well as technical assistance that means an access to climate finance and other funding sources, which would greatly support developing countries. In this regard, my country urges to realize the international commitment, particularly \$100 billion in climate finance for countries in need the most. To this end, our delegation trusts that the outcome of the Climate Ambition Summit 2023 will lay a foundation for concrete actions in the lead up to the COP 28.

**Mr. President,**

This year marks the 56th Anniversary of the establishment the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). As an intergovernmental organisation for regional cooperation, ASEAN has not only upheld regionalism and multilateralism, but has also played a central role in maintaining and promoting peace, security, and development in the region. We in ASEAN, are committed to further strengthening the ASEAN Community, as well as enhancing ASEAN unity and centrality in our engagement with external partners, including through ASEAN-led mechanisms in order to promote an enabling environment for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and beyond. In 2024, the Lao PDR will assume the ASEAN Chairmanship with the theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience". The Lao PDR will continue to build upon the past achievements of ASEAN in strengthening the ASEAN Community and



enhancing ASEAN external relations with our partners for more connected and resilient ASEAN.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate the Lao PDR's firm commitment to enhance close cooperation with all member states and support multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core as well as the firm determination to advancing the implementation of the three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental, so no one is left behind.

Thank you.