



Statement

by

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**Mr. Chair,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to you, Mr. Chair, and your team for the able chairmanship in guiding the work of our group, especially during this time of global pandemic.

My delegation shares the view that the COVID-19 pandemic has triggered unprecedented socio-economic impacts worldwide, especially on the most vulnerable countries like LLDCs, by hindering the LLDCs' integration into global economy as well as reversing the progress made thus far on Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA) and SDGs implementation. Moreover, as a result of stringent lockdown measures applied globally, coupled with projected decline in global output, LLDCs are facing even greater challenges given their lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness from international markets and heavy reliance on transit countries.

In this regard, my delegation would also like to call on development partners, transit countries, UN system, regional and international organizations and private sector, amongst others, to take necessary actions for immediate response, mid-term recovery, and long-term strategic measures as outlined in the LLDCs statement and call for actions on COVID-19, which will be crucial to safeguard the progress made over the years and to accelerate the VPoA implementation in this decade of action and delivery for sustainable development.

Mr. Chair,

At national level, the Lao Government has attached great importance to the implementation of the VPoA. Therefore, priority areas contained therein have been incorporated in our national development plan and strategy, especially in the area of infrastructure, trade facilitation and transit transport system with a view to transform our country from a landlocked into a land-linked one, aiming to become an inland transit route and a logistic hub. Towards this end, considerable progress has been made as reflected in our midterm report, particularly, in the areas of development and improvement of infrastructure and economic

corridors; for instance, the construction of highways, bridges and railways connecting the country with its neighboring countries, as well as the development of dry ports and logistics parks of which the Lao PDR became a party of the 2013 Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Port last year.

Despite the progress made, the Lao PDR continues to encounter numerous challenges in its VPoA implementation such as financial constraints, logistic cost, logistic capabilities, business promotion and technology. Additionally, the country has also been facing other challenges related to the impact of climate change, particularly heavy rains causing severe floods, landslide, and roads and highways damage. With COVID-19 pandemic, the country is encountering even more obstacles, as economic and social sectors have borne the brunt from a sharp decline in tourism, investment and trade activities, resulting in revenue losses, unemployment increase, among others. Therefore, the considerable amount of resources is needed for recovery, and we need to address the matter in a more holistic, strategic and long-term approaches of linkages between infrastructure development, climate resilience and adaptation, trade facilitation and economy stimulated packages.

Mr. Chair,

In conclusion, I wish to call upon the international community to honor their commitment to the full, effective and timely implementation of the VPoA as stated in the Political Declaration of the Comprehensive High-level Midterm Review of the Implementation of the VPoA, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 5 December 2019. On our part, we reaffirm our strong commitment to working closely with all transit countries, development partners, UN system and private sector to accelerate the implementation of the VPoA for the remaining five years. On this note, the Lao PDR is appreciative of the continued support and assistance extended to us by all partners and international community, in order to overcome this challenging time and build back better.

I thank you.