



# **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

**Remark by**

**His Excellency Mr. Thongphane SAVANPHET,  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs**

**At the 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of  
Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)**

**(4 minutes)**

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**Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, I would like to express my delegation's appreciation to the Government of Botswana for the able chairmanship of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). It is my great pleasure to attend this annual Ministerial Meeting of Foreign Ministers of LLDCs convened under the theme "From Vienna to Kigali: Building momentum towards a new decade of action for prosperity and transformation of LLDCs" which is of great relevance and timely as we are approaching the final stage of implementing the Vienna Plan of Action (VPoA).

**Mr. Chair,**

Over the past nine years of the VPoA implementation, we have made notable progress and achievements in infrastructure development, increased access to quality transportation services, enhanced regional and sub-regional integration efforts. Nevertheless, we continue to encounter numerous challenges, including the significant setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, persistent structural and geographical vulnerabilities, elevated inflation and interest rates, global economic fluctuations, supply chain disruptions, and rising food and fuel price, all of which have compounded trade and transit-related vulnerabilities for the LLDCs.

My delegation is of the view that the VPoA has laid a solid foundation for mobilizing international support and cooperation to help addressing the challenges faced by LLDCs. In this connection, we have integrated the VPoA's relevant priority areas into our national and sectoral development plans, resulting in significant progress in its implementation. One of the most noteworthy achievements is the development of our infrastructure linkages including the construction of bridges, highways, and railways that have not only helped improve domestic connectivity but also bolstered our capacity to engage in regional trade and cooperation. Furthermore, substantial investments have been made in the development of dry ports and logistics parks, essential elements of efficient and effective trade facilitation. These have not only enhanced our trade and investment potentials but also played a vital role in advancing

regional economic cooperation and integration efforts. A good example within our infrastructure initiatives is the successful construction of the Lao-China railway. This landmark project serves as a testament to our commitment to regional connectivity and integration, and thus facilitating the movement of goods and people and enhancing economic ties and cooperation in the region.

**Mr. Chair,**

Toward the next Programme of Action, we believe that it is crucial to refocus on the most pressing needs and priorities of the LLDCs, which include infrastructure development, regional integration, trade and transport facilitation, digital connectivity, energy transition, among others, in order to mitigate the vulnerabilities LLDCs are facing and help support their sustainable development and structural transformation.

Furthermore, it is our strong belief that a transformative, yet achievable programme must be formulated and fully implemented not only by LLDCs, but also transit countries, development partners, trading partners, and international financial institutions in genuine partnership. We also emphasize the critical need for LLDCs, transit countries, and their partners to actively implement transit trade agreements, such as the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and regional frameworks, while investing more in advanced technology solutions to streamline customs processes and enhance the efficiency of transportation infrastructure. Through these collective efforts, we will be able to foster sustainable economic growth, reducing trade and transport costs, and increasing competitiveness for LLDCs in the global economy.

**Mr. Chair,**

Let me conclude by reiterating the Lao PDR's unwavering commitment to further pursue the VPoA's objectives and calling for enhanced support and partnership with transit countries, development partners, UN agencies, international organizations and the private sector in the development and implementation of the next programme to be adopted at the upcoming Third UN Conference on LLDCs, scheduled in June 2024 in Kigali, Rwanda.

I thank you.