

## **Statement of Mouavixay Palee**

**in the meeting of LLDCs, Geneve, Swiss land, 16-17 June 2022**

Excellency Ms. Heidi Schroderus-Fox, High Representative (Acting) for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States

Excellency Dr. Athaliah Lesiba Molokomme, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Botswana to the United Nations Office.

Distinguished colleagues, friends from LLDCS, ladies and gentlemen good morning.

I am Mouavixay Palee Deputy Director General of Import and Export Department, Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR.

First of all, I would like to express my sincerer appreciation for the UN-OHRLLS to invite me to join this inaugural meeting of the LLDCs National Focal Points Network in Geneve. This is also my first time in Europe which I have to fly from Laos to Switzerland for more than 13 hours.

I am so happy to be appointed as the Lao LLDCs National Focal Point. Actually, in Laos we have four ministries like ministry of planning and investment, ministry of foreign affairs, ministry of public work and transport, and ministry of industry and commerce, that have similar roles related to the implementation of the Vienna Programme of Action (VPoA), but I don't know why the ministry of industry and commerce was selected as the focal point.

Acting as the focal point of different areas of work, it is very challenging because my background is from economic, trade and investment sectors, however, transportation, road connectivity and others areas are the responsibilities of other ministries. However, I wish to share experience and exchange views on the related issues to improve my work as the focal point.

As a LLDC like Laos, we are facing a lot difficulties, particularly in the Covid-19 pandemic, goods and trucks could not cross the border as usual because of the strict prevention of neighboring countries, seriously affecting perished goods and other agricultural products, some become bad and destroyed at the border.

Land lock directly impacts the economic development of the country, particularly trade and investment. In terms of trade, a case of Laos, we have less competitiveness compare to others because of high transportation cost and other measures. Some products are required unnecessary transit permit or even restricted by the transit country. As for investment, the Lao government gives a lot tax incentives, raw material imports tariff exemption, longer land concession period and so on so forth, but we still cannot find good quality of investment due to the geographical location.

To change the status of landlock, the Lao government is trying all efforts to invest in infrastructure, road connection with neighboring countries like Thailand, China and Vietnam. Last year Laos just successfully completed the construction of Lao-China Railway project. The project has been put into operation since December 2021 to facilitate the movement of goods and people with less transportation costs. Now the train is not only carrying Lao and Chinese goods, but also carrying Thai and Chinese goods and will extend to other countries in the region. At the moment numbers of high ways are under construction and survey.

To achieve the land link dream, trade and transport facilitation is so important so that in 2018 the Lao government set up the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) which is chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and the minister of ministry and commerce is the standing member of the committee. And our import and Export Department under the MOIC is the Secretariate of the Committee (NTFC), having a role to collaborate with other line ministries and agencies to implement the TF agenda of Laos.

Thank you