

**Statement by**  
**H.E. Mr. Saleumxay Kommasith,**  
**Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao People's Democratic Republic**  
**at the Ministerial Segment of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the UNESCAP**  
**Bangkok, 28 May 2015.**

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Mr. Chairperson,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao PDR, I would like to convey through the Delegation of Nepal our deepest condolences and sympathy to the people and the Government of Nepal for the massive loss of lives and properties caused by the recent devastating earthquakes in Nepal.

I would also like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on your election as chairperson of the 71<sup>st</sup> Session of the UNESCAP, under the theme “*Balancing the Three Dimensions of Sustainable Development: From Integration to Implementation*”. My delegation would also like to commend the ESCAP Secretariat the excellent arrangements made for this session.

Mr. Chairperson,

Today the world is filled with enormous unpredictability and phenomena, let alone armed conflicts and man-made disasters that frequently occur. Natural calamities have become the biggest killer of human being. The earthquakes in Nepal last month speaks for itself. In this context, sustainable development is more than relevant and is a must if we are to survive. All nations in the world seem to have shared the goals and objectives on what to do to pursue sustainable development but have diverse approaches to realize these goals. Balancing three dimensions of sustainable development is an appropriate topic for our discussion. This is where we may have different approaches. How to balance of environment economic development, protection of environment while advancing social development is an ongoing debate. Over the past decade, the international community has been contemplating on implementation of MDGs, which has rendered mixed results. Achieving MDG requires, among other things, extensive resources, which often come from economic development. For developing countries, development cooperation and ODA play crucial role in meeting MDGs. However, in the wake of scarce resources promoting national economic development or economic growth would be alternative. We share the view that we should integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development in a balanced manner where possible into the future development strategies. Such strategies should promote an allocation of adequate resources and investments that can maximize synergies and minimize trade-offs among

the objectives of economic growth, inclusive social progress and environmental protection for all countries in Asia and the Pacific, especially countries in special situations.

In the meantime, we should bear in mind the limitation of the less developed countries in terms of financial and human resources, institutional capacity, infrastructure and technology gaps. All of this is considered instrumental in pursuing balanced and integrated sustainable development and building economic resilience to external shocks, including natural disasters. In addition, we should take into account the national governments' development priorities, comparative advantages and domestic potentials while addressing the special challenges in the country and immediate needs of its people. In this context, we are of the view that in implementing the soon-to-be adopted Sustainable Development Goals which are global in nature and universally applicable to all countries, the international community should take into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respect national policies and priorities.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Lao Government is currently in the final year of implementation of the 7th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-2015) while accelerating the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals and preparing itself to take part in ASEAN Economic Community by the end of 2015. In pursuit of sustainable development based on national characteristics and development priorities as well as the regional and international environment, the Lao Government is drafting Vision 2030 aiming at turning our country into an upper middle-income country with balanced and sustainable development, economically, socially and environmentally, while maintaining firm political stability and social order.

Despite being both a least developed and landlocked country, the Lao Government is firmly committed to the development of the country in all three dimensions of sustainable development. We have been mobilizing resources, exploiting potentials and building our national capacity to achieve the said development objectives. In addition, it is instrumental to enhance development cooperation with other countries and regional and international organizations so as to ensure that sufficient support and cooperation is guaranteed in pursuing our development cause.

In this connection, the Lao PDR has attached great importance to regional cooperation and integration, especially in the ASEAN cooperation framework in order to build an ASEAN community which forms a solid ground for the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and prosperity in the region. We are of the view that ASEAN integration and connectivity have made important contributions to ASEAN efforts to narrowing the development gap as well as the sustainable development of individual ASEAN member state.

Mr. Chairperson,

Let me conclude by emphasising the importance of national ownership and responsibility for balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development and its integrated implementation based on the national realities. Likewise, it is necessary for the development partners to not only

honor their commitments and obligations but also to enhance their development cooperation and support to the most vulnerable countries like LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS to implement the development agenda beyond 2015. Finally, we underline the important role of other stakeholders in supporting sustainable development in our region, including countries of the south, the UN system and international and regional financial institutions, regional groupings, civil society, the private sector and foundations while upholding the principle of "Common But Differentiated Responsibilities".

I thank you.