



# **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

**Special Remarks by**

**H.E. Mr. Sonexay SIPHANDONE,**

**Prime Minister**

**At the Eightieth Session of the Economic and Social  
Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**Bangkok, 22 April 2024**

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H.E. Mr. SONEXAY SIPHANDONE, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR

- H.E. Madam Armida SALSIAH ALISJAHBANA, Executive Secretary of the UNESCAP,
- Chairperson,
- Excellencies,
- Distinguished Delegates,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Government and people of the Lao PDR, I extend my warmest greeting and heartfelt congratulations to the 80th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) under the theme: “Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”. This theme holds profound significance and resonates deeply with the current era in accelerating the implementation of the internationally agreed development agenda, as well as in addressing challenges at the national, regional, and global levels.

Excellencies,

Almost eight decades, the UN-ESCAP has been pivotal in fostering cooperation for socio-economic development in the Asia-Pacific region. It has progressively expanded and widened its efforts and cooperation from the post second world war’s recovery to addressing various challenges, including poverty eradication, promoting trade and investment, developing transportation networks, advancing social development, protecting the environment, and tackling climate change, among others.

The Lao PDR is of the view that UN-ESCAP is indeed an important intergovernmental platform to discuss and share experiences, policies, and strategies for regional development. It plays a vital role in building capacity and providing technical support to assist its member states, including the Lao PDR in implementing its national development plans and the relevant internationally agreed development goals, as well as the commitment to poverty eradication and the development of green economy in an inclusive and sustained manner, with the aim to graduate the country from the least developed country status by 2026 and transform itself from a landlocked to a land-linked one.

Excellencies,

According to the United Nations report, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals are well on track only 15%. Therefore, the utilization of digital technology and innovations will be one of the most important tools to accelerate the SDG implementation in our respective countries from now until 2030.

Against this backdrop, the Government of Lao PDR has adopted the 20-Year National Digital Economic Development Vision (2021-2040), the 10-Year National Digital Economy Strategy (2021-2030), and the 5-Year National Digital Economic Development Plan (2021-2025). This digitalization effort of the Lao PDR is closely aligned with its national socio-economic development plan that aim to foster the transformation of the national socio-economic growth, while promoting balanced sustainable development and green growth. The transformation includes 3 main pillars, namely:

1. Digital Government
2. Digital Economy, and
3. Digital Society

These three pillars also underline the focus on the development of high-quality human resources, build modern ICT infrastructure, safeguard the environment and ensure strong cyber safety and security.

To ensure the implementation of the aforementioned strategic plans, the Lao PDR must build conducive conditions and facilities within the country by enhancing both regional and international cooperation in parallel with attracting more foreign investment and transfer of modern technology, and bringing in emerging technological and scientific know-how and achievements and innovation to the country, with the aim to contribute to the socio-economic development of the Lao PDR.

Excellencies,

The Lao PDR remains committed towards implementing the Sustainable Development Goals by integrating the targets and indicators into the National Socio-Economic Development Plan, the national priority work plan and the relevant sectoral plans. Currently, the Lao PDR is in the process of preparing its 3rd Voluntary National Review (VNR3), which will be presented at the up-coming 2024 High-Level Political Forum. The process includes all relevant sectors and stakeholders with technical assistance from the UN country team and UN-ESCAP.

Most importantly, the year 2024 holds great significance for the Lao PDR, in assuming the Chair of the ASEAN, under the theme “ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience”. This year also marks the Visit Laos Year. In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to invite you all to come and visit our country. The Government and the people of the Lao PDR are ready to warmly welcome you on this occasion.

Excellencies,

To conclude, I wish to reaffirm the Lao PDR's unwavering commitment to implementing the internationally agreed development goals, particularly the Sustainable Development Goals, and on the same note I call upon the international community to assist the developing countries especially groups of countries in special situations in building their capacity in the area of digital innovation, in order to help advance the sustainable development path. I firmly believe that in promoting the development cooperation, the member states, the United Nations and the international organizations will uphold the principle of "Leave No One Behind". I wish this year UN-ESCAP's Session a great success.

Thank you.