



# **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

**Statement by**

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**Minister of Foreign Affairs**

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

**Agenda Item 2: Theme topic, “Leveraging digitalization  
innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific”**

**Bangkok, 23 April 2024**

**(Please Check Against Delivery)**

- **Chairperson,**
- **Madame Executive Secretary,**
- **Excellencies,**
- **Distinguished Delegates,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

1. At the outset, it is my privilege to deliver the national statement on the theme: "Leveraging digitalization innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific", which is timely and relevant, given the pressing need to harness digitalization for advancing sustainable development goals in our region.

- **Excellencies,**

2. The advancement of digital innovation constitutes a pivotal accelerator for the achievement of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Across the globe, nations are embracing digitalization to fuel socio-economic development; ranging from production, trade, finance, education to services, among others. However, while many countries are making significant strides in adopting digital technologies, there is still a big gap among countries in this digital transformation. This digital divide can deepen existing inequalities, while also hampering access to resources and opportunities. Therefore, bridging this divide requires concerted efforts to address barriers such as limited infrastructure, digital literacy, and affordability, ensuring that no one is left behind in this journey towards sustainable development, powered by digital innovation.

3. Recognizing this, the Government of the Lao PDR has embarked on its 20-Year National Digital Economic Development Vision (2021-2040), including 10-Year National Digital Economy Strategy (2021-2030), and 5-Year National Digital Economic Development Plan (2021-2025).

4. These initiatives demonstrate the Lao PDR's commitment to leveraging digital technologies and innovation for economic growth, social progress and public services over the next two decades. As an LDC and LLDC, the Lao PDR prioritizes ICT and innovation to graduate from its LDC status by 2026, in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. By aligning policies, strategies, and action plans, we aim to leverage the digital economy's transformative potential to improve wellbeing, to leapfrog the national development and to enhance the country's regional digital standing.

5. At the global level, the Lao PDR has been working closely with the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries to jointly conduct its Technology Needs Assessment. This process is crucial to clearly see the country's technology needs so as to better formulate relevant policies and actions that could accelerate the country's socio-economic development progress. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of mobilizing necessary support from the international community to help LDCs to bridge digital divide and to leverage technology for sustainable development.
6. At the regional level, the Lao PDR also supports the ASEAN Digital Masterplan 2025, which aims to accelerate digital integration across the region by enhancing connectivity, fostering innovation, promoting inclusions, and strengthening governance. In this connection, the Lao PDR, as the ASEAN Chair in 2024, has adopted the theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience" under which one of the nine priorities is the transition to the Digital Future which aims to support ASEAN's emergence as a leading digital economy, building deeper connections across ASEAN and the world.
7. The digital divide within the region, disproportionately impacts nations with limited resources. Therefore, we urge the international community to support countries with special needs. By bridging this gap, we will be able to foster inclusive development and unlock potential for sustainable growth. Together, let us forge partnerships and commit resources to ensure that no nation is left behind. These efforts will not only uplift the development of the Lao PDR, but also contribute to the realization of our common agenda for sustainable development.

– **Excellencies,**

8. In closing, I reaffirm the Lao PDR's commitment to fostering fruitful collaboration and achieving impactful outcomes. With shared dedication and collective efforts, let us strive towards harnessing the power of digital innovation to advance the sustainable development goals for our region and the world at large.
7. The Lao PDR stands ready to cooperate with all stakeholders, and is eager to embark on this journey together. Thank you.