ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC
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(Block letter)

Country/Organization: Vice Minister, Ministry of Public Works and Transport
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(Block letter)

Please indicate the agenda item on which you wish to speak:

Agenda Item No: ITEM NO: 9

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Statement of H.E Dr. Santisouk SIMMALAVONG
Vice Minister of Public Works and Transport, Lao PDR

3rd Session of UNESCAP Transport Ministerial Conference in Moscow, 8 December 2016
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- Excellencies,
- Chairpersons,
- Distinguished Delegates,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor and privilege to attend this very important and meaningful and
high-level conference on transport held in the historic and beautiful Capital City, Moscow
here today.

On behalf of Lao delegation, and on my own behalf, I would like to take this
opportunity to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to UNESCAP for inviting us
and to the Russian Federation, for the warm welcome and hospitality extended to me and
my delegation since we arrived here.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Concerning the sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, please
allow me on behalf of the outgoing ASEAN Chairmanship to share with you some of the
initiatives and progresses of the implementation that recently concluded under the theme of
"Turning Vision into Reality for a Dynamic ASEAN Community". ASEAN recalled the
importance of individual and collective efforts to achieve the twin goals of implementing
the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and attaining the SDGs, and of
realising the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and its Blueprints, to help ensure that no
one is left behind.

ASEAN recognised the importance of dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN
and the UN in taking forward the work on enhancing complementarities between the UN
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, as
reflected in the ASEAN-UN Plan of Action 2016-2020. The Ministers looked forward to
further developing concrete activities with the UN, including UNESCAP and other
relevant UN agencies, on this matter on the basis of mutual benefit. In addition, ASEAN
underscored the importance of sharing home-grown experiences and best practices of the
ASEAN Community and noted with appreciation the readiness of UNESCAP to work with
ASEAN and ASEAN Member States, and international community, in the area of
sustainable development and community-building, including through fora such as the Asia-
Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development.
Ladies and Gentlemen;

For Lao PDR as a sole landlocked and least developed country (LLDC) in both ASEAN and GMS region, I therefore would like to share with you some experiences and policies on transport and logistics that we have been adopting and implementing in the recent years. The government set the policy to move the country from “land-locked” to “land-linked” or “transit transport service” for subregional and regional connectivity and integration as a top priority. Lao PDR has been a member of UNESCAP’s Intergovernmental Agreement on Asian Highway, Trans-Asian Railways and Dry Port.

With the limited funding, we have been trying our best efforts to develop and improve most of the regional transport infrastructures in our country. However, we are now facing with many challenges such as:

1. to balance between the construction of new roads and the maintenance of existing ones, since the budget is tight.
2. to encourage the participation from private sector in the form of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in developing the logistics and transport sector.
3. to upgrade of prioritized ASEAN Highways (AH) in the country to at least Class III of ASEAN standards. There are now eight ASEAN Highways in the country, with a total length of 2,860 km. Of these, only 2 roads meet Class III standards: AH3 (Road No.3) and AH16 (Road No.9).
4. to include a disaster resilience factor into the construction of new infrastructure, taking into account the global warming and climate change.

As for the logistics sector, the government last year endorsed the National Logistics Strategy and preparing to ratify the UNESCAP’s Intergovernmental Agreement on Dry Ports because we recently successfully tested the operation of the first Dry Port in Savannakhet along the AH 16 and expect this Dry Port to be a model for remaining eight designated locations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I strongly believe that this Conference will form the fundamental platform among our UNESCAP friends, colleagues and development partners working together and pursuing good initiatives on logistics and transport network for the coming years. So I look forward to partnering all of you to strengthen logistics and transport network in Asia and the Pacific.

With this, I would like to conclude my statement by wishing excellencies, all delegates and disinguished guests an engaging and rewarding time at symposium and wish the symposium with great success. Thank you very much for your kind attention.