

Statement

made by DrKukeo AKHAMONTRY, Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the
Lao PDR National Assembly at the 8th plenary session of the ASIAN
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (APA),
(7-12 December 2015, Pnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia)

Mr Chair,

Excellencies Speakers, Vice-speakers and heads of delegation,

Honorable delegates, distinguished guest, ladies and gentlemen.

I have the great honour to represent the National Assembly of Lao PDR at this APA plenary session excellently organized at Phnom Penh, the beautiful capital city of the Kingdom of Cambodia. First, allow me to convey the best regards and wishes of H.E. Madam Pany YATHOTOU, President of our National Assembly, and, on Her Excellency's behalf, to express our sincere thanks to Samdech Akka Maha Ponhea Chakrei Heng Samrin, President of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia and Mr M.H. Nejad Hosseinian, Secretary General of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly for the kind invitation to this plenary session, the cordiality of the welcome as well as the warm hospitality of the Cambodian Parliament. The Lao National Assembly is actually having her last plenary session before going to the poll next year. The agenda is rather heavy with the amendment of the constitution, the implementation of the 8th 5-year socio-economic development and the consideration of more than 10 bills at the core. Madam President has a high responsibility for the chairpersonship of the session and I am the only MP to have the privilege to leave the session for abroad. I would ask, Mr Chair, your kind understanding for our limited participation.

I have a very high appreciation to the Parliament of Cambodia for the efforts and dedication in the arrangements of different ceremonies, events and meetings which, no doubts, will bring great success to this APA session and closer friendship among participants. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Islamic Parliament of Iran for hosting the 1st APA Executive Council Meeting in Iran last month and providing the favorable conditions to the

meeting for the preparation of necessary documents that we have here tabled for consideration. APA as a regional forum for Asian parliamentarians to get closer to each other and to exchange views on issues of common interests is always committed to promote peace. The APA's original name, " the Association of Asian Parliaments for Peace " or AAPP is a real testimony of her noble ideal. Since her creation APA has had a significant contribution in promoting and safeguarding peace in Asia. The theme chosen for our present plenary session, namely " Promoting Peace, Reconciliation and Dialogue in Asia " at the time when the global community is achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and preparing for the implementation of the Post 2015 Development Agenda including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is very relevant and timely for the stability and prosperity of Asia in accordance with the recently declared ASEAN COMMUNITY Vision 2025. Peace is one of the 5 Ps (People, Planet, Peace, Prosperity, Partnership) of today's world development agenda we all agreed upon, and without it, partially or globally, the other Ps are in great danger. Peace, typically the Asian way through reconciliation and dialogue, has to be established and firmly maintained for the well-being of our people and we have no other alternative.

It is fortunate that the prevailing trend of our era is peace, security and cooperation for development. Nevertheless, the international environment continues to face great challenges. Armed conflicts, terrorism, poverty and hunger, infectious diseases, climate change and natural disasters have seriously damaged, and are actually threatening peace and development of our region. I fully recognize as a great contribution to the promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue the efforts made and the commitments expressed by leaders from ASEAN and her dialogue partners at the last ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia last month to strengthen the ASEAN Political and Security Community for the long lasting peace in the region. South East Asia is at this moment in the process of economic integration through ASEAN cooperation frameworks. The nations of this region have continuously enjoyed peace, stability and economic growth. ASEAN has broadened and strengthened her external relations with different countries and regional groupings, e.g. China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, India, The United States and Australia to name just a few. Next year is the first year of the ASEAN Community and Lao PDR will have the honour to chair this community towards the successful realization of the ASEAN vision through the implementation of different blueprints. In assuming the role of community chairman, first of its kind, we look forward to effective support and cooperation from Asian countries particularly from our ASEAN dialogue partner.

Laos, a country of 6.5 million people, has just finished the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Since 1975 we have gone through different development periods, hard at the beginning to heal the wounds of the past 30 year destructive war and to survive the post-war deprivation, then, a gradual improvement of the

living standards of the people reaching now a GDP per capita of more than 1500 USD which allowed for the step-by-step strengthening of peace and national solidarity, the broadening of external relations and the steady socio-economic development of the whole country towards sustainable development goals.

The Lao government has carried out a foreign policy of peace, independence, stability, friendship and cooperation with all nations of the world based on equality, mutual interests and peaceful coexistence. Actually Lao PDR enjoys diplomatic relations with 136 countries, has 26 embassies, 2 offices of the permanent representative, 8 consulates and 17 honorary consuls. We are also a member of many international and regional organizations, e.g. the United Nations, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the Group of 77 (G-77), the International Development Association (IDA), the Interpol.

With neighboring countries we pay great attention to the development of good neighborhood through bilateral and multilateral mechanisms to create a long lasting frontier of peace, friendship and cooperation, mutual understanding and assistance as well as multi-sectoral and multi-level exchanges. The mechanisms such as the Great Mekong Sub-region (GMS), the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam Development triangle (CLV), the Cambodia-Laos-Thailand Emerald Triangle (CLT) or the Cambodia-Laos-Myanmar-Vietnam Quartette (CLMV), joined by development partners like China, Japan and the Republic of Korea are the main regional cooperation fora to maintain peace, facilitate reconciliation and engage dialogue among concerned parties in the region.

Together with the countries of ASEAN we are committed to the purposes and principles enshrined in the ASEAN Charter that reflect our collective will to live with one vision, one identity and in one community in a region of lasting peace, security and stability, economic growth, shared prosperity and social progress, to embrace the values of tolerance and moderation and to uphold the ASEAN fundamental principles, shared values and norms. The ASEAN Community we are going to build will be rules-based, inclusive and responsive. We will resolve differences and disputes by peaceful means including confidence building and preventive diplomacy. The Community will be free of nuclear and other mass destruction weapons, and will actively develop friendly and mutually beneficial relations with dialogue partners to respond collectively and constructively to global issues of common concerns.

On domestic plane we will firmly uphold the policy of building a society based on reconciliatory solidarity, democracy, justice and civilization. The history of our country has taught us that the well-being we have, the level of socio-economic development we are at, the peaceful, secured and stable environment we live in, the international recognition and respect we enjoy today and

other great achievements in our nation building are the fruits of a policy that is based on the reconciliation and dialogue among people from all different ethnic groups, social strata, ages and religions to create a platform of firm national unity and solidarity. This undeniably is a significant contribution to the safeguarding of peace and stability in the Asian region and in the world at large.

Mr Chair,

Excellencies, Honorables,

To conclude, allow me to express our deepest gratitude and greatest thanks to the countries of Asia for their kind understanding, support and cooperation in different periods of development of our country. Lao PDR, particularly the Lao National Assembly will spare no efforts in contributing to the promotion of peace, reconciliation and dialogue in Asia.

I wish this APA session in Cambodia a great success.

All the best to the Excellencies Speakers, Vice-speakers and Heads of delegations, the honorable delegates and distinguished participants !

Thank you for your kind attention !

