Statement by

H.E. Mr. Bounkeuth Sangsomsak, Minister to Prime Minister Office, Chairman of the Lao National Steering Committee on Human Rights, Head of the Lao Delegation to the 123 Session of ICCPR on 11-12 July 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. Chairperson,

Eminent Members of the Committee

It is a great honour for the Lao Delegation to have the privilege to engage, for the first time, in interaction and dialogue with the 18 eminent experts on international law and human rights sharing lessons and experiences for the best implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Your sincere advices and consultative guidance will surely assist the Lao government to discharge its obligations with the most satisfactory results.

I also would like to take this auspicious opportunity to convey to you, Mr. Chairperson, and through you to the secretariat of the Committee for the impeccable arrangement of this significant dialogue.

Mr. Chairperson,

Laos is a small but very old country. Lao people have a very long history of nearly 6000 years. During this long journey the Lao people have gone through serious difficulties threatening, at some point, its existence. For a period of nearly six millennia of its existence, Laos, as people and as country, were 4 times under foreign aggression and occupation.

The longest foreign occupation lasted almost 300 years and the shortest foreign domination was 60 years. Foreign occupation denied Lao people their dignity as human beings and deprived Lao people of liberty, freedoms and
End of quotation.

"Tomorrow, we will eat deliciously and will dress beautifully.

"Today, we eat full and dress warm.

To this purpose, the Lao Government has adopted a popular theme as a grand strategy for Laos development. The theme says and I quote:"

For a new independent state like Laos, the deep sense of human rights

the Lao Government policy.

our former foreign occupier so that today human rights is the key, the heart of
human rights, We have asked bilaterally and particularly the human
basic rights, we are now, more than happy to uphold and cherish our basic
people did enjoy liberty and freedom. For 500 years of being denied our
the first time, in 1975, after 500 years under different foreign occupations,
government have deployed tremendous efforts to continue on nation
From 1975-2018, it is only about 43 years. Lao people and Lao

Mr. Chanthasorn

Genuine national Independence.

Foundation of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic opening new era of a
Fortunately, in 1975, our long struggle has finally led us to the

world map.

about to come to extinction, Laos, as country, disappeared 4 times from the
With the foreign occupation lasted nearly 500 years, Lao nation was
heroic and sacrificed struggle to ensure the survival of their nation.

fundamental rights. Therefore, Lao people have no other choice but to lead a
Mr. Chairperson,

In establishing the Lao PDR, the Lao people have exercised their rights to choose freely its national political existence in accordance with its particularities. In its nation building and development, the Lao government upholds the rule of law, good governance, the principle of people’s democracy, promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as promotion of social justice.

By adhering to these principles, the Lao PDR has enjoyed over the past 43 years political stability, sustained economic growth of more than 7% per year, the living conditions of the Lao people have gradually improved. The Lao Government has adopted policies and measures by implementing the 8th five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2016-2020, the ten-year Development Strategy 2016-2025, the Vision 2030, which will ultimately ensure Laos’ graduation from LDC status and categorization as a high-middle income country by 2030. The recent review on Laos LDC status by the UN committee for development policy in March this year indicated that the country has fulfilled two out of three eligibility criteria, namely the thresholds for Gross National Income and Human Assets Index on the way to graduating from LDC status.

Mr. Chairperson,

Promotion and protection of human rights is at the heart of the Lao Government’s policy. Political, economic, social and cultural rights of the Lao multi-ethnic people are enshrined in the national Constitution, laws and other legal documents, which are in conformity with the obligations and commitments of the Lao PDR at the international and regional levels. As of today, the Lao PDR is a party to 7 UN core human rights treaties: ICCPR, ICSECR, ICERD, CAT, CRPD, CEDAW, CRC and also two Optional Protocols to the CRC.

On the regional context, Laos plays a leading role in the process of drafting the T.O.R. of the ASEAN human rights body as well as ASEAN Declaration on Human Rights. All these demonstrate how much importance that Laos has accorded to this issue.
Government has put in place a policy governing the judicial sector in the
implementation of the provisions of the Covenant.

Mr. Chairperson,

Political rights as contained in the ICCPR,
adopted many sub-laws related to the promotion and protection of civil and
criminal law. In addition to the Constitution and laws, the Government has
implemented the International obligations and commitments of the
Presidency. The drafting of the Penal Code was based on the Penal Law of
ICCR. The draft Penal Code has been circulated and approved by the
National Assembly and which is now awaiting promulgation by the
President. At the same time, the National Assembly has already adopted more
than 120 laws in the implementation of the Constitution and the provisions of
the Law.

„Fundamental rights of the 140 citizens,„
human rights is now enshrined in the Constitution, together with the terms
establishment of the people's assembly and the law. The current Constitution is the
system of the country under the new amended Constitution is the
central, participatory and consultative. One of the new developments in the political
amended Constitution in 2015. This amendment process was transparent,
In the area of legislation, the National Assembly adopted the new

Protection of human rights of women, children and persons with disabilities,
inter-government commissions concerning specifically the promotion and

performance and efficiency. The Law Government has also established other
important role in ensuring promotion and protection human rights in the Law.

Committee on Human Rights in 2012. The Steering Committee has played an
important role in ensuring promotion and protection of human rights obligations and
improvement of international and regional human rights obligations and

In this connection, to enhance higher level coordination in the
effort towards strengthening the rule of law and access to justice in order to fully ensure equality before the law and the court, as well as the due process of law and fair trial in accordance with the ICCPR. Human rights are closely linked with the rule of law. Today, the Lao government is implementing the second phase of the Legal Sector Master Plan with the aim that by 2020 Laos would become initially a State of Rule of Law.

The rights to freedoms of expression, assembly and association are guaranteed in the Constitution, laws and decrees. Violation of these fundamental freedoms is a criminal offence punishable by the Penal Law 2005 and is also a criminal offence in the draft Penal Code.

The Government continued to improve the prison conditions and attached importance to training of prison officers to strengthen their capacity building and their understanding of the laws, international norms and principles on prison management and treatment of offenders in accordance with the human rights treaties to which the Lao PDR is party, particularly the ICCPR. The rights and dignity of inmates are protected by the law, those prisoners who have good behaviors are entitled to receive amnesties or reduced sentences.

The Lao Government attaches importance to the rights and legitimate interests of specific groups in the country. The Lao PDR is a multi-ethnic nation consisted of 49 ethnic groups living together in peace, harmony and solidarity. The Constitution and laws, policies and measures of the Government encourage unity, solidarity, non-discrimination and equality of all ethnic groups. Any acts of division of solidarity among ethnic groups are prohibited and punished under the Penal Law. The rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities are protected and promoted through the implementation of the relevant constitutional provisions and specific laws, decrees, national strategies and action programmes.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Lao Government has focused its efforts on raising awareness and dissemination of the ICCPR and other human rights treaties to which the Lao PDR is party. To this end, seminars, workshops and training courses on
will match to the realities of our country, Laos.

MR. CHAIRPERSON,

In this respect, the Lao deforestation is particularly pleasing to have a further dialogue with the esteemed Committee which would provide assistance and guidance on the full implementation of the ICPR in the Lao’s context. Lao participations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Students of law schools across the country and research institutions as well as organizations, civil society, academic and research institutions, mass the National Assembly, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement officials, members of government officials at the central, provincial and district levels, members of human rights were organized for different target audiences including
Mr. Chairperson,

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

In concluding my statement, I would like, with your permission, to emphasize that the communality of the understanding and the implementing process will strengthen the cooperation and partnership between Laos as a State Party and the 18 eminent experts as a wise body guardian of the ICCPR which in turn will ensure the highest quality of the success of the spirit of ICCPR. This cooperative partnership should rely on the high sense of morality characterized by sincerity, understanding, compassion, trust and confidence, and respect of the diversity and particularities. The Lao government always believes that Lao Government and the Committee could work with each other but not against each other. This wise partnership kindly reminds us that ICCPR was conceived and adopted in 1966 where the majority of the members of the United Nations were just emerged from colonization where as today and by next decades the new independent and developing countries will become the top five world economic power and therefore, we will witness the appearance of a New World Economic Order based on the true reality of the twenty first Century which will be a century where all States that had emerged from colonization will stand high to offer without any restraint to their people and citizens to enjoy their fundamental rights as human beings, thus, human rights becoming “People’s Rights” as they can exercise all political, economic and social right as enshrined in the noble cause of the ICCPR.

Thank you