

STATEMENT BY
H.E Mr. Bounkeut Sangsomsak,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR
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Mr. Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguish delegates ,

I would like to join previous speakers to express our thanks and appreciation to the Thailand and ESCAP for elegantly arranging this meeting.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Asia-Pacific economy enjoys a robust growth, which has benefited the majority of the countries in the region in achieving their development objectives. However, the great challenge for most countries in the region is how to sustain this growth and translate this benefit into a tangible social development results. The current rise of global oil and food price and the world economic stagnation are already taking a heavy toll on poor and vulnerable people and has threatened the prospect of regional economic prosperity. It is no doubt that the regional growth would entail a high energy demand and impose a great challenge on long-term and sustainable energy security in the region. To address this challenge, concerted efforts are urgent and it is time for action.

Mr. Chairperson,

Energy is a critical input to economic growth and sustainable development. The impressive economic growth, coupled with rapid industrialization in the region has resulted in high energy demand while imposing consequent pressure on the environment. On the one hand, energy insecurity causes a negative impact on economic growth. The current global soaring energy prices, especially those for oil and gas are a strong case about how energy security influences sustainable development, particularly in the most vulnerable countries like the least developed countries. On the other

hand, mismanagement of energy resources, instead of meeting energy demand, could lead to deterioration of ecological environment, thus destabilizing the global climate that would entail environmental and health problems. A lack of access to energy is another challenge that hinders the progress in advancing sustainable development and poverty eradication in many countries especially in the least developed ones. Therefore, there is a strong linkage between energy and climate change and the lack of access to modern energy services that need to be seriously tackled.

Mr. Chairperson,

Ensuring energy security while protecting environment and meeting the objectives of sustainable development is not an impossible task. However, it would require concerted and common efforts by all stakeholders. There is a need to improve energy efficiency and change the pattern of energy production and consumption through lowering energy and resource intensity as well as diversifying energy supplies. In addition, it is important to seek alternative and affordable sources of energy such as clean and renewable energy that has minimum impact on environment. This would require appropriate technologies that could be made available to all and adequate investment in energy infrastructure, which could ensure access by communities to energy services.

To this end, we are of the view that regional cooperation can play a crucial role. The trade and transboundary energy cooperation can contribute to the promotion of technology transfer and investment in energy industry. This regional cooperation should be built on existing bilateral energy trade within each of the sub-region and among various countries such as the ASEAN Power Grid initiative, the GMS Power Interconnection project, and the East Asia Summit Declaration on Energy among others. In this connection, Laos fully supports the proposed trans-Asian energy system with a view to enhancing regional cooperation, collaboration and integration of energy systems. In this context, UNESCAP can play an important part in facilitating such collaboration.

Mr. Chairperson,

Poverty is directly associated with access to energy services. Therefore, achieving millennium development goals would also depend on the extent energy is made available to the poor. This year marks the half-way point toward achieving MDGs and despite good progress made on its path, however, a lot need to be done in order to make, most if not all, countries in the Asia-

Pacific on track toward MDGs by 2015. In this context, it is important that regional energy policy should be integrated into regional platform for partnership on MDGs so that the issue of access to energy can be adequately addressed within the MDG framework.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Lao Government gives particular attention to energy security and sustainable development. Towards this end, the Government has formulated a long-term national policy strategy up to 2020 to accelerate the development of renewable energy with a view to providing adequate access for all Lao multiethnic people to energy service . Laos is also gradually becoming battery country which will supply electricity to our neighbors such 7.000 Mk to Thailand , 5.000 Mk to Vietnam and 2.000 Mk to Cambodia.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the commitment of my Government to the regional cooperation that would help us overcome our common challenges. Only through this effort, energy security and sustainable development will be achieved in the Asia and Pacific region.

Thank You.