

Statement of Lao PDR
at the 66th Commission on Narcotics Drug
Vienna, 13-17 March 2023

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Head of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision, the Government of Lao PDR, it is my great pleasure and honour to have this opportunity to attend the 66th Commission on Narcotics Drug and make a National Statement on behalf of Lao PDR.

Dear Mr Chairman,

Lao PDR is located in one of the main drug producing and trafficking in the region and daily experiences the adverse effects of drugs on our population, our economy and our borders, Lao PDR remains committed in our support to the 3 International Drug Conventions (1961, 1971 and 1988) and to the outcome document of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs from 2016.

The geographical location of Lao PDR means we experience the drug problem from many angles. We are the only country in the Mekong region bordering all other countries of the region, thereby providing a transit route for illicit products including drugs. In 2022, the inflow of produced drugs in the Golden Triangle area, especially Amphetamine Type Stimulants (which had been seized more than 12.816 kg of ATS), 175.77 kg of Heroin, 240.36 kg of Opium, 7.994,27 kg of Cannabis, 2.196,64 kg of ICE, 11.571,44 kg of unidentified powders, 1.813,28 kg of Ketamine, 168 g of caffeine and precursors chemicals pass through our borders as they move from production sites in one country to consumers in another.

For these reasons, Lao PDR is strongly supportive of the UNGASS outcome document and has taken important steps to follow up on its recommendations. Together with neighbouring countries, Lao PDR is an active

participant in the Mekong MOU on drug control, where countries in the region come together to discuss the challenges and identify joint solutions. The Mekong MOU celebrated 30 years (1993-2023) of drug control cooperation in the Great Mekong Sub-region. The Mekong MOU on Drug Control brings together six countries in East and Southeast to address the threat of illicit drug production, trafficking and use and come together around joint priorities and policy initiatives. One example of this is the Safe Mekong initiative, where countries of the region work together on patrolling the Mekong river. Lao PDR recently hosted the operations centre for the Safe Mekong initiative, and will continue to support the initiative in the years to come.

Following the 2016 UNGASS, Lao PDR has also taken important steps towards enhancing the access to evidence based drug treatment services. Amphetamine Type Stimulants are the main drug of concern in the country, and a priority for the government in later years has been to expand the access to Community Based Treatment services across the country. Since 2016, we have expanded the number of district hospitals offering CBT from one to twenty eight. We are committed to continue to work with partners to improve and expand these services.

Currently, we have been implemented the National Agenda for Drug and Precursor Chemical Control 2021-2023, this agenda composes of 6 programmes: 1. Program re-education and dissemination of legal information and adverse consequences due to drug abuse, 2. Program of the formulation and improvement on drug law and regulation, 3. Program on data collection, law enforcement, 4. Enhance supervision for implementing Drug Control program, 5. Streamlining the organization for Drug control at Centre and Local level, and 6. International cooperation program. We also amended some articles of the Law on Drugs, the purpose of amendment aims to put in place stricter, tighten and more comprehensive legal measures and penalties against drug-related offenders to appropriate the present situation and the government issued several orders to be our reference. Thus, I would like to urge all countries and NGO to consider and continue to support us in order to work together for all member countries.

Dear Mr. Chairman,

To conclude my statement, I would like to reaffirm that Lao PDR remains committed to working with the Commission, UNODC, and international partners on funding and implementing solutions to the world's drug problem both in our own country, in our region, and in the world. We also remain

supportive of the 2016 UNGASS outcome document, and will continue to implement our national Drug Control Master Plan in line with the recommendations from the UNGASS. I would also like to urge the Commission, UNODC and international communities to continue support in the area of drug control of the Lao PDR.

Thank you very much