

**Statement**  
**by HE Mr. Saisy SANTYVONG, Minister of Justice of Lao PDR**  
**at the opening session of the 14<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime**  
**Prevention and Criminal Justice**  
**7-12 March 2021, Kyoto, Japan**

President and Co-Chairpersons of the Congress,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I, the Minister of Justice of Lao PDR, representing the Government of Lao PDR as a member of the United Nations, feel very privileged to be invited to attend this 14<sup>th</sup> United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice being held in Kyoto, Japan. The Delegation of Lao PDR feels regretful for not being able to physically attend the Congress but is happy to virtually participate via video conference due to the difficulties for travelling following the outbreak of COVID19 pandemic that is widely spread across the globe. Nevertheless, the delegation of Lao PDR is confident that this Congress will be a great success and provide common directives for effectively preventing and combating crime and further developing the justice sector in the coming years.

Lao PDR acknowledges that crime in new context has become a transnational issue and increasingly complex. In general, crime has adverse impacts on socio-economic development and constitutes a threat to peaceful livelihood of all nations across the world. The Government of Lao PDR has mandated the Ministry of Justice to coordinate with other relevant agencies for their participation in this international gathering devoted to the specific theme: “*Advancing crime prevention, criminal justice and the rule of law: towards the achievement of the 2030 Agenda*”, in particular in relation to the protection of women from acts of violence.

Lao PDR is still a source, transit and destination country for domestic and international human trafficking. The Government of Lao PDR always regards this phenomenon as an important issue and attaches great importance to preventing and combating human trafficking by laying down policies, enacting laws and regulations, adopting a National Action Plan on the prevention and suppression of human trafficking for the period 2017-2020. Currently, Lao PDR is implementing its action plan for 2021-2025. Lao PDR has established coordination committees from the central to local levels with a Secretariat based at the Ministry of Public Security. Up to now, the Lao PDR has adopted relevant domestic laws, joined ASEAN Conventions, signed Memorandums of Understanding with many countries and enjoys good cooperation at different levels. Furthermore, Lao PDR has become party to, ratified and signed a number of regional and international instruments against crime.

With respect to the treatment of female detainees, Lao PDR always attaches a particular attention to the rights of women at detention centers by separating female detainees from males and regularly providing them with health cares. Furthermore, female detainees receive other identical necessary services as male detainees.

The Ministry of Justice receives good cooperation from many projects in establishing legal aid offices across the whole country.

Distinguished delegates,

Our participation at this Congress constitutes an important milestone for the legal and justice sector of Lao PDR to gain better understanding about policies and trends of preventing global criminal practices and activities, to learn about mechanisms, experiences in handling and combating crime and also legal assistance that will help improve the justice system in Lao PDR. Lao PDR remains firmly committed to more effective cooperation with all nations in combating crime in all forms and fulfilling its international obligations under international conventions to which Lao PDR is a party and in compliance with its domestic laws.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to take this opportunity to extend to the President, the Co-Chairpersons and all distinguished delegates at this Congress my best wishes of good health to continue your noble tasks with great successes and may I wish this Congress a great success.

Thank you