

## Welcome Remarks

by **H.E. Sonexay SIPHANDONE**,  
**Prime Minister of the Lao PDR**

at the **Opening Ceremony of the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits**

**9 October 2024, National Convention Centre, Vientiane**

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- *Your Excellency Thongloun SISOULITH, President of the Lao PDR,*
- *Your Majesty, Excellencies Heads of State and Government,*
- *Secretary-General of ASEAN,*
- *Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

1. **First and foremost**, on behalf of the government of the Lao PDR, I would like to extend my warmest welcome to ASEAN Leaders, the Secretary-General of ASEAN, and distinguished delegates to Vientiane Capital for the **Opening Ceremony of the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits**.
2. I would also like to express my sincerest appreciation to His Excellency **Thongloun Sisoulith**, President of the Lao PDR, for gracing this Opening Ceremony with his presence today.

*Your Majesty,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

3. Since its inception in 1967, maintaining and promoting peace, stability, and cooperation for development have been ASEAN's long-standing goals. Over the past 57 years, ASEAN has strengthened cooperation among its Member States and with its external partners to achieve these vital objectives.
4. ASEAN is poised to encompass all Southeast Asia nations as we continue the necessary procedures to enable Timor-Leste's full membership in ASEAN. Since its establishment in 2015, the ASEAN Community has been continuously strengthened, making ASEAN a widely recognized region and attracting growing interest from external partners. Our dialogue and external partners remain steadfast in their

support for ASEAN Centrality within the evolving regional architecture, including the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP). The number of High Contracting Parties to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC) continues to expand, with many states seeking accession to this significant Treaty. Simultaneously, a growing number of countries and regional organizations are engaging with ASEAN in various capacities. The Lao PDR firmly believes that ASEAN's achievements are built on mutual trust, support, and cooperation among Member States, guided by the ASEAN Way and its fundamental principles.

***Your Majesty,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

5. Today, like other regions of the world, ASEAN faces a multitude of challenges, including conflicts, armed confrontations, economic and financial hardships, climate change, natural disasters, and transnational crimes, among others. Furthermore, the geopolitical and geo-economic landscapes are undergoing rapid and complex changes. In this context, ASEAN must remain resolute in taking ownership of efforts to strengthen cooperation, enabling it to effectively and promptly address these challenges while seizing opportunities as they arise.
6. In light of these challenges, our focus in 2024 is on building a more connected and resilient ASEAN to better navigate challenges and seize opportunities, thereby further strengthening the ASEAN Community.
7. The Lao PDR takes immense pride in assuming the ASEAN Chairmanship for the third time in 2024, under the theme “**ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience.**” We have identified nine priorities for our Chairmanship. So far, notable progress has been made in advancing ASEAN-related work, including the development of strategic plans to implement the ASEAN Community Vision 2045.

***Your Majesty,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

8. The 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits present an excellent opportunity for us to review the progress of the ASEAN

community-building process and the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025. Additionally, we will chart the course for future cooperation, particularly under the ASEAN Community Vision 2045, and continue to enhance cooperation with external partners to further strengthen the ASEAN Community in the pursuit of our common cause of promoting peace, stability, and sustainable development for our region and beyond.

9. I would like to take this opportunity to extend my sincere appreciation to all ASEAN Member States, Dialogue Partners, External Partners, friendly countries, regional and international organizations, and the ASEAN Secretariat for their invaluable support, cooperation, and assistance to the Lao PDR during our ASEAN Chairmanship in 2024, especially in the implementation of our priorities.
10. I am confident that, with your continued support and partnership, the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits will be a resounding success.
11. **On this auspicious occasion**, I have the distinct honour of inviting His Excellency **Thongloun Sisoulith**, President of the Lao PDR, to deliver his keynote address for the 44<sup>th</sup> and 45<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summits and Related Summits

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