

## **Remarks by Dr. Sanya Praseuth**

*Member of Parliament and Vice President of the Economic, Technology and Environment Committee of National Assembly of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao P.D.R.)*

- His Excellency Chairman,
- Distinguished guests and participants,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning to all of you!

This my first time that I attend this kind of Conference. I am very delighted to be gathering here among your distinguished guest and participants. First of all, allow me, on behalf of the Lao National Assembly and government to extend my warm congratulations on the convening of this 9th Annual United Nations Platform for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response (UN-SPIDER) Conference being held in Beijing to commemorate 10 Years of the UN-SPIDER Office and to acknowledge efforts of the UN-SPIDER network in providing practical interventions to improve disaster management and emergency response practices in developing countries. Also, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the organizers of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Ministry of Emergency Management of the People's Republic of China, the host Chinese government, and all relevant agencies and individuals who have contributed to the successful preparation of this Conference.

Lao PDR is one of the most disaster-prone countries in South East Asia's region. It has many types of disasters, a wide geographical distribution, high frequency of occurrence, and heavy losses. This is a basic national situation. The Lao government has all along attached great importance to disaster reduction and vigorously implemented the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction in Action 3 and 4 (Sendai 1 and 4), as well as relevant, polices and measures such as:

- First, we have adopted the new Law on Prevention Disaster Management in order to assign the responsibility, role, and mandate between the central and local governments to tackle the disaster risk management, focusing on preventing, reducing the disaster risk and implementing the early warning system for evacuating the affected people to the save places. Also, we have proceeded with the issuance of the National Strategy on Risk Management from 2018-2025;
- Second, we have been improving the new National Disaster Prevention and Control Committee which has made clear the relationship between disaster prevention and relief;
- Third, we have undertaken the institutional reform of disaster prevention, reduction and relief systems and formulated the disaster reduction plans both at national and local levels in an attempt to improve the all-round prevention capacity of the society in case of disasters through the strengthening of disaster reduction infrastructure,

the application of science and technology, publicity, training and awareness. In 2018, the national preparedness plan for disaster's response was issued. We have proceeded with the issuance of the National Disaster Risk Protection Funds. In October 2018, we have co-organized the DBAR/AOGEOSS training workshop on earth observation big data for agriculture and environment in Mekong Basin in Vientiane Capital, Lao P.D.R.;

- Fourth, we have scientifically and effectively responded to massive natural disasters such as landslides, typhoons, floods, and droughts, minimize disaster losses, and effectively promote the reconstruction of the affected areas. In July this year, we have been hit by Typhoon called “Wipha” causing a flash flood over the country. Hence, we improved the application of disaster data accessible for the planning ready to deal with the disaster, protection, and mitigation. We also improved the coordination mechanism and responsibility among the disaster stakeholders;
  - Fifth, in March this year, we organized the UN-SPIDER Training on “Earth observation-based mechanisms and tools for assessing flood risk and rapid response during floods” that successfully completed in Vientiane Capital, Lao P.D.R., considering the recent experience of the collapse of the dam in Lao PDR in 2018. The training program provided knowledge and skills to the stakeholders of disaster management to how Earth observation is to be used to understand flood risk and how to use Earth observation-based mechanisms and tools. The training program was delivered by experts from UN-SPIDER, International Water Management Programme and Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre.
  - Sixth, we have been deepening international cooperation in disaster reduction with many partners such as United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Asian Foundation, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Caritas Organization, AOGEOSS, Deqing Academy of Satellite Application, Digital Belt and Road Initiatives, ASEAN Sub-Committee on Space Application in general and particularly the cooperation with UN-SPIDER in emergency and disaster reduction.
- The first UN-SPIDER technical mission (TAM) was conducted on July 2015. The mission was also facilitated by the Office of UNRC and UNDP in Lao PDR. The purpose of the mission was to support Lao PDR in improving disaster risk management and emergency response through effective use of space technology applications and proposing recommendations taking account of relevant issues such as data sharing, National Spatial Data Infrastructure, policy-level interventions and capacity building, strengthening DRR Decision making, strengthening early warning and preparedness, and strengthening emergency response;
  - The second TAM Follow up activities conducted in 2016 offered capacity building programs on “space-based technologies exploring the use of earth observation data and modeling tools in flood risk mapping and flood early warning”;
  - The third TAM Follow up activities was conducted in March 2019, in Vientiane Capital, Lao PDR, followed by the Training program on the “Earth observation-based mechanisms

and tools for assessing flood risk and rapid response during floods. The efforts of UNOOSA, UN-SPIDER, IWMI, and ADPC at the training were appreciated by the participants and it was indicated that the course was relevant to the risk management, has provided a useful understanding of current geospatial technology and solid foundation for assessing flood risk and rapid response during floods.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and gentlemen,

In the disaster risk reduction work, the Lao government has received extensive support and assistance from the international society, that we are highly appreciated. There is no end for the human being to understand the natural laws, and disaster risk reduction is an eternal subject for human survival and development. Understanding the law of disasters scientifically, effectively reducing disaster risks, and achieving a harmonious relationship between human and nature require the joint efforts of the international society.

TAM and Follow up Activities have generated enormous awareness in Lao P.D.R. about incorporating space-based information to support provisions of the Sendai Framework. An informal Group LaoNGUM created during UN-SPIDER mission is the first voluntary association of its kind which aims at coordinating specific activities related to remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) in the country. LaoNGUM was active during floods caused by a Xe-Pian Xe-Namnoy Hydropower Dam Collapsed in 2018. During the floods the international charter was activated and the maps were generated with the collaboration of UN-SPIDER, IWMI, MOST-Lao, Research Program on Water, Land and ecosystems, Research programme on climate change, Agriculture, and Food Security, JAXA, Sentinel Asia, RADI, China GEOSS, AOGEOSS, NSMC, CRESDA, CGSTL, Space View, 21AT, CNIC, CAST, SPEL, TOPRS. These maps were forwarded to the decision-making and all disaster stakeholders to take the appropriate actions and measures.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and gentlemen,

On this note, may I wish the 9th annual United Nations Conference for Space-based Information for Disaster Management and Emergency Response in 2019 a complete success! In disaster reduction endeavors, the Lao National Assembly and government is willing to work together with all parties hand in hand. Let's learn from each other and work together to build the community of shared future for our people. Let's embrace a world with more resilience, sustainability, openness and inclusiveness, a world of lasting peace, common prosperity, and a clean and beautiful world.

Thank you for your kind attention!