

Opening Remarks

**By His Excellency Dr Phouangprarisak
PRAVONGVIENGKHAM, Vice-Minister of Agriculture
and Forestry, Lao PDR**

The 7th East Asia Plant Variety Protection Forum Meeting, 7 August, 2014

Distinguished guests, Ladies, and gentlemen

A very Good Morning,

It is my privilege and honor to join the opening session of this meeting, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao PDR, I would like to extend a very warm welcome to all of you to the 7th East Asia Plant Variety Protection Forum Meeting in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Honorable guests, ladies and gentlemen!

Lao PDR is agricultural backbone economy country, which Agriculture and Forestry sector contributes about 27 % to GDP since recent years. Agriculture and Forestry sector plays important role to assure the food security which is assured the stabled food supply in the country as well as the main sources of commercial commodities for income generation of Lao farmers nationwide.

As the importance of Agriculture and Forestry mentioned above, Lao PDR has enriched with biodiversity of plant varieties and remain their purities, **for rice varieties, we are the second after India**, which are potentials for breeders and improved quality and high yield varieties. The government of Lao PDR has regarded the varieties as one of important factors to improve the productivity, in particularly the improved varieties and local varieties that adapted well to Lao conditions, soil fertility improvement, sufficient water supply and applying

appropriate technologies. Recognizing the importance of varieties, we try our best efforts to protect the uniqueness of native varieties through synergizing capital and knowledge resources from local and international sources in research and development of varieties in Lao PDR. As the result, we have successfully bred new varieties and widely utilized among Lao farmers.

In order to integrate with regional and global organizations, Lao PDR has actively involved in the implementation of East Asia Plant Variety Protection and UPOV through participating in several meetings to discuss related issues. Such closely coordination above, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao PDR has brought in both direct and indirect experiences and lesson-learnt such as Distinctness Uniformity Sustainability (DUS), human resource development as well as the dissemination of information on steps and processes of plant varieties protection for central and local officers. Furthermore, Lao PDR has created and improved related regulations to certify the quality of new improved varieties to make sure that such varieties are used appropriately and compliance with technical recommendations. However, Lao PDR needs further support from ASEAN and dialogue partners (Japan, China and S.Korea) as following:

- To facilitate Lao PDR to enhance capacity building and set up Plant Variety Protection System to be harmonized and equivalent with ASEAN member countries as well as international regulations.
- To continue and provide further support for human resource development and the establishment of DUS testing system.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

In accordance with the agreement of 6th EAPVP Meeting held in Malaysia, 2013, Lao PDR has been arranged herself to host the 7th EAPVP, this is the opportunity platform for ASEAN countries and ASEAN+3 (China, S.Korea and Japan) as well as the international organization to exchange experiences and lesson-learnt, most importantly to provide the information, highlights of the development of plant varieties in their respective countries.

On behalf of the host country, I would like to take this opportunity to request all participants to dedicate your efforts both physical and mental strengths and exchange the lessons to make this meeting effectively and successfully as well as to enhance and support the action of plant variety protection and DUS testing system. I hope this meeting will come up with concrete action, in particularly **“the harmonization and equivalency of Testing Guidelines among ASEAN countries”**

Last, but not least, on behalf of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, I would like to express sincere thanks to ASEAN member countries and our dialogue partners, in particularly Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery of Japan, UPOV and other organizations to have your valued time for joining this 7th EAPVP meeting.

Finally, I wish all guests with pleasure during your stay in Lao PDR. Also, wish you have successful meeting and achieve the expected objectives. On behalf of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Lao PDR and the host country, I would like to announce the official opening meeting since this onward.

(Thank you)