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## Opening Statement

by

**His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury**

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Planning and Investment

Lao People's Democratic Republic

- His Excellency Mr. Liu Kun, Minister, Ministry of Finance, People's Republic of China,
- Excellency Ms. Zou Jiayi, Vice Minister, Ministry of Finance and GMS Minister of the People's Republic of China, Chair of the Meeting
- Excellency Minister of GMS member countries
- Mr. Ahmed M. Saeed, Vice-President, Asian Development Bank, Co-chair of the meeting.
- Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my great honour to join the 24th GMS Ministerial Conference today, on behalf of the Lao delegation; I would like to express my appreciation and thank the People's Republic of China and ADB for organizing and hosting this virtual meeting. Even though, the GMS countries like others have been confronted with COVID-19 pandemic; global economic recession and natural disasters.

Those challenges have also caused impacts to the socio-economic development of the Lao People's Democratic Republic as well as many countries in the region, this year, the economic growth is estimated to be at 3.3% which is lower than the planned target. However, I believe that the collective actions of GMS countries with the support of ADB, Development Partners and all respective stakeholders, Lao PDR and GMS member countries can turn obstacles into opportunities for leveraging development and competitiveness of the GMS countries in order to facilitate integration and the accession of global trade and market

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lao PDR highly considers the contribution of the GMS program in realizing the national development objective on connectivity especially the efforts on the physical connectivity of infrastructure. For instant, roads, electric transmission network, railway; and on software integration which we are now implementing “Early Harvest” of cross border transport facilitation agreement (CBTA). However, there are some requirements for the strong support of GMS member countries, ADB, Development Partners and Private Sectors to achieve the planned objectives.

The GMS Strategy 2030 is a very important document for the GMS member countries to join efforts and solutions in order to enhance the growth to the subregion. Moreover; I observe that the strategy has been adapted to member countries’ development requirements which indicating the urgent support for Lao PDR and other GMS countries on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The outbreak has indicated that the GMS countries as a whole have to strengthen the system on data sharing, robust surveillance system and readiness in order to handle the unforeseen contexts in all existed cooperation areas as to ensure earlier responds and stops the issues at the initial stage. Thus, encouraging all of us to closer cooperation and foster practical policy on enhancing regional and subregion integration with an inclusive manner.

Excellencies,

On behalf of the Lao Delegations, I would like to express my sincere thanks and congratulation to the People’s Republic of China for hosting this very important conference and excellent arrangement. My special thanks and appreciation to ADB and the Secretariate for hardworking and supports to our national development objective and GMS’ development requirement. Lastly, my sincere appreciation also to our valuable Development Partners, Research Institutions and Private Sectors for your kind supports and advisories on driving the achievement to the GMS goals as a whole.

Thank you very much.