



**Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity**

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**WELCOME REMARKS BY
H.E. VONGSAVANH THEPPHACHAN,
DEPUTY-GOVERNOR OF LUANGPHABANG PROVINCE,
TO THE OPENING OF THE 21ST SUB-REGIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM (STF),
(LUANGPHABANG VIEW HOTEL, 19-20 JULY 2017)**

- Excellency Viengsavath Siphandone, Deputy Minister of Public Works and Transport,
- Excellencies Leaders and Delegates from Lao MPWT and other Line Ministries, ADB, GMS member countries, and Dialogue Partners;
- Distinguished Lao and Foreign Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good afternoon – Sabaidy !

I feel very happy and honoured that the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (MPWT) has chosen Luangphabang province as venue of the 21st STF.

I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Provincial Administration Committee, as well as on behalf of the whole people of Luangphabang, to warmly welcome all delegates to Luangphabang, the City of World Heritage.

Luangphabang is the center of Northern provinces of Lao PDR. It has an area of 16,875 km², 12 districts, 754 villages, 78,619 families, with a total population of around 451,765 inhabitants, of which 220,808 are women. Luangphabang has a lot of cultural and natural touristic sites; it's rich in natural resources, and has the Mekong river and many of its tributaries, such as Nam Ou, Nam Xeuang, Nam Khan, etc...

COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION:

- **Road transportation:** Besides local roads linking villages to districts, districts to province, Luangphabang also has the National Road 13 North, or ASEAN Highway 12 (AH12), 680 km long, and Luangphabang is located at km 386 from Vientiane Capital, a 7 to 8 hours trip by road. This road is double bitumen surfaced treatment (DBST), and can be used all year round. But there are a lot

of sections with steep slope and sharp curves, which I hope this Forum may discuss to find solutions to improve.

- **Air transportation:** by air, Luangphabang is 40 minutes from Vientiane Capital. Luangphabang has one international airport. Every day, there are around 20 flights to Luangphabang, both domestic and international, from Vietnam, China, Cambodia, Singapore and Thailand.
- **River transportation:** The Mekong and its tributaries are still used as transportation route from Luangphabang upstream to Lao-China border. There are still quite a lot of touristic and transportation boats serving villages situated along the rivers which don't have road access, and have to rely on river transportation.

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Luangphabang has a long history of more than 1,200 years, with good traditions and cultures. It has a suitable location, rich in natural resources, which give Luangphabang a specific beauty and special characteristics. Luangphabang has been awarded Top Tourism City for 10 times, from 2006 to 2016, of which 6 were First Class, in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2011, 2012 and 2015. Luangphabang has been selected as Environmentally Sustainable City since 2014. Luangphabang has also been selected as Smoke-Free City in 2011. In 2011, Luangphabang has won an award from the World Health Organization.

Besides that, Luangphabang is proud of its contribution to Lao PDR selection to be the World Best Touristic Country in 2013, for which the European Board of Tourism and Commerce has presented the award to Lao PDR on 9 May 2013.

Luangphabang was approved by UNESCO on 9 December 1995 to be the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

Luangphabang has 228 touristic sites:

- 108 natural,
- 86 cultural, and
- 34 historical touristic sites.

In Luangphabang there are 78 tour companies, 60 hotels, 20 resorts, 341 guest houses, 289 restaurants, able to take 5,000 visitors per day. During the first 6 months of this year 2017, there were 220,000 foreign tourists visiting our city, an increase of 30% compared to the same period of last year. This has brought in an income of over 70 million USD, and becomes the main potential for income for Luangphabang, pushing its economy to continuously and steadily increase by 9% per annum, bringing security and justice to our society, and progressively improving the livelihood of our people.

I am sure that, during your participation to this meeting, you will spare a bit of you busy time to visit the beauty of Luangphabang.

Finally, I wish all Lao and Foreign honourable delegates a strong health, happiness in your private life and success in your career.

Once again, I warmly welcome You All to the World Heritage City of Luangphabang, and I wish a great success to the Forum.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.