

## **Congratulatory Message on the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEM Foundation**

(March 1 1996 - March 1 2020)

On the occasion of the 24<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEM foundation, which falls on 1 March, on behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and on my own behalf, I would like to convey my sincere congratulation and best wishes to the Lao people and the people of ASEM member countries.

Throughout 24 years of its existence, ASEM has evolved and transformed itself into an important and unique platform that connects Asia and Europe as well as to become a forum for political dialogue, economic cooperation and socio-cultural and education exchange, based on principles of mutual respect, equal partnership and win-win cooperation as well as tackling emerging global challenges together.

At the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in December last year in Madrid, Spain, ASEM members adopted the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEM Foreign Ministers' Chair's Statement focusing on revitalising multilateralism, advancing an open world economy, upholding the rules-based multilateral trading system and addressing the global challenges as well as strengthening sustainable connectivity, particularly people to people connectivity between Asia and Europe, as a means of bringing countries, people and societies closer together.

Since joining ASEM in 2004, the Lao PDR has actively engaged and contributed to the ASEM process by participating in activities and regularly attending meetings at various levels. To celebrate this year ASEM Anniversary, the Lao PDR will continue to work closely with ASEM members and partners to further enhance the importance of and support ASEM process.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all ASEM members for their continuous support, cooperation and assistance extended to the Lao PDR. I sincerely hope that the long-lasting and good cooperation between Asia and Europe will be further strengthened and move forwards into a new level for mutual benefits of the people of the two regions of Asia and Europe.

**Saleumxay KOMMASITH**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**