

Congratulatory Message on the 22nd Anniversary of ASEM Foundation

(March 1, 1996 - March 1, 2018)

On the occasion of the 22nd Anniversary of ASEM Foundation, March 1, 2018, 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 people of ASEM Member Countries as well as to the Lao people.

Throughout 22 years of its existence, ASEM has become a forum for cooperation between Asia and Europe, which covers three important cooperation pillars namely: Political, Economic, and Social and Cultural Pillars. The 11th ASEM Summit in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in 2016, adopted the Initiative for Integration between the two regions aimed at fostering cooperation on transportation, trade, investment and people-to-people exchange. In order to implement this initiative, the 13th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Myanmar, at the end of 2017, endorsed the working mechanism of the ASEM Pathfinder Group on Connectivity and assigned the Group to conduct a study on defining ASEM Connectivity and then report to the 12th ASEM Summit to be held in Brussels, Belgium, in October 2018. In 2017, the ASEM Economic Ministers' Meeting was revived after its suspension since 2005. Hence, this achievement has further contributed to the expansion of cooperation between the two continents.

The Lao PDR became an ASEM member in 2004. Since then, it has continuously and actively contributed to and participated in the ASEM activities. In 2012, the Lao PDR had an honour to host the 9th ASEM Summit in Vientiane and in October 2017 organised the 6th ASEM Seminar on Water Resources Management and Sustainable Development in Champasak Province, which reflects yet another commitment of the Lao PDR to the enhancement of Asia-Europe cooperation.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all ASEM Members for their continuous supports, 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 moved forwards into a new level for mutual benefits of the people of the two continents.

Saleumxay KOMMASITH
Minister of Foreign Affairs