

Lao PDR's statement on the 58th session of the Joint Advisory Group

25 June 2024, 10:00 am in WTO Room W

I would like to congratulate Madam Chair and ITC for organizing this meeting successfully.

It is my great pleasure to attend in this event and thank you to ITC for inviting our mission.

As you may be aware, Lao PDR and Ministry of Industry and Commerce are committed to collaborate with all development partners, including ITC to implement ambitious trade and private sector development program in Lao PDR;

For the ARISE Plus Laos, what we have achieved so far is very meaningful and still an exciting journey through the effective project implementation. The main objectives of the project are to promote and support the integration of the Lao economy into global production chains through supporting both the public and private sectors, with a focus on smallholders and small businesses. It aims to improve the business environment in targeted sectors through regional economic integration (ASEAN); and to increase trade and participation in global value-chains in targeted sectors to facilitate economic diversification.

The other main focus areas are related to quality and standard activities particularly the TBT, SPS, ISO, food safety that are the main factors for export of Lao products to international market. In addition, the capacity building to enhance knowledge on the requirements and procedures to export to EU market, e-learning courses, trade data collection systems, trade negotiation skills are provided to the public and private sectors.

Therefore, we would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the ARISE Plus and ITC. The ARISE Plus project which has achieved numerous key achievements to the project. As you may know for instance the Department of Foreign Trade Policy, Ministry of Industry and Commerce is one of the main responsible departments that overlook some activities such as 1) the Lao PDR Foreign Trade Negotiations Roadmap; 2) the study on 'Trade implications of Lao PDR's graduation from LDC status; 3) Gap analysis of ATIGA implementation in Lao PDR; 4) E-Commerce Regulatory Support and many more activities that I cannot mention all here. At the moment, ITC is implementing 2 projects in Lao PDR:

- Enhancing business opportunities for SMEs of Lao PDR in China: a project tackling export potential for Lao SMEs to China, through capacity-building and business matchmaking; and
- UK Trade Partnerships Programme – component in Lao PDR which activities around Lao coffee brand.

We believed that all activities were aligned with the overall project objectives and confidently that the successful implementation of all proposed activities made an important contribution to achieving intended project outcomes. As we look to the future, we are excited to continue this

partnership and build on the solid foundation that has been established. Together, we can achieve even greater milestones and ensure that Lao PDR continues to thrive in the global economy.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to express once again our sincere thanks to European Union for its commitments to trade and private sector development in Lao PDR, especially for providing financial resource to ARISE Plus at both regional as well as national level. We also thanks ITC for its efforts in sharing its rich and diverse expertise in promoting trade and investment, enhancing SME competitiveness and export through implementing ARISE Plus and other projects in Laos.