

## **Welcome Remarks by Mr Khamkhank Chanthavisouk Governor of Luang Prabang, LAO PDR**

Brig Gen Somphon Keomixay,  
President of VECONAC and Lao National Veterans Federation, Presidents  
and Vice Presidents of Veterans Organisations of ASEAN Member States,  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Luang Prabang's board of administration and citizens of Luangprabang, it's my great honour and pleasure to be invited to come and deliver the welcome remarks at this Executive Board Meeting here today.

On this very significant occasion, I would like to warmly welcome heads of delegations, delegates and all guests to Luang Prabang City, the World Heritage City and I would like to thank the LNVF to select Luang Prabang City as the meeting venue for this 31<sup>st</sup> Executive Board Meeting.

Now I'd like to briefly tell you about Luang Prabang Province.

Luang Prabang Province is one of the northern provinces of Laos. It is located in the centre of the North and it is the corridor between the northern provinces, ASEAN Member States and the region. There is an international airport with direct international flights to several countries. Luang Prabang has a total area of 16.875 square km and the terrain mostly is mountainous. The province shares borders with 6 northern provinces of Laos and two provinces of Vietnam. There are 12 districts with the population of 445.353.

Luang Prabang is one of the oldest cities in Laos and it was built, preserved and developed for more than 1.200 years and in 1560 BC it used to be the capital of former Lao Lan Xang or the Land of Million Elephants. Luang Prabang is rich in beautiful nature, temples and unique old architecture and arts. As a result, the city was registered and accepted as the world heritage city of culture and nature by UNESCO on 9 December 1995.

Based on such potentials and unique characteristics, we have assigned the Luang Prabang as the pathway and the heart of services, tourism and human resources development as part of the strategic development and tourism has been set as the priority for the provincial development.

In 2017, the economy of the province continued to grow with the GDP of 8.2% which cost approximately 6.527 billion kip or US\$815 million or about 13.96 million kip or US\$ 1.877 per head which US\$ 131 more than 2016.

GDP in agriculture and forestry covers 31%.

GDP in industry and handicraft covers 23%.

GDP in service covers 46%.

Luang Prabang has got 228 tourist sites of which 108 are natural related, 86 are cultural related and 34 are historical related. Among these, 111 places have been developed and open to the public. There are 93 travel agencies, 81 hotels and resorts with 1 five-star hotel, 341 guesthouses and 289 restaurants. We can receive up to 8000 guests per day.

There were 655.412 tourists to Luang Prabang in 2017 of which 472.942 were foreign. This generated an income of US\$ 170 million. 432.414 tourists visited Luang Prabang in the first two quarters of this year.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I understand that VECONAC is an organization that plays an important role in promoting livelihood of officials, veterans and retirees to ensure their quality of life, progress and safety while contributing to the enhancement of external relations and cooperation in order to maintain regional peace, stability and sustainable development.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I believe that this 31<sup>st</sup> EBM under the chairmanship of LNPF will be organised in a warm, friendly and constructive manner with success.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to wish all delegates and distinguished guests health, happiness and every success and I hope that you will return and suggest your friends and families to visit Luang Prabang.

Thank you

