

The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR)
National Statement of Commitment to Action
Transforming Education Summit

The Lao PDR attaches great importance to upholding the right to education for all. The COVID-19 provides an opportunity to transform how the education sector is delivered and to strengthen the quality of education for all. Our country has faced several challenges in education pre-pandemic and has likely been exacerbated by the pandemic. In this context, the Government of the Lao PDR reaffirms its commitment to the following:

1. *Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic disruption to learning*

We reaffirm our commitments:

- 1.1. To keep all educational institutions open and safe for learners, wherever possible. We will ensure that the State's public health and social measures for COVID and other diseases are followed in all educational institutions. Mental health and psychosocial support for learners and teachers will be provided, and the health, well-being, nutrition, and protection of all learners prioritized.
- 1.2. To ensure schools have access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), electricity, and other facilities to support continuity of in-person learning. We will support strengthened school-based management, so that schools are more responsive to the needs of all learners.
- 1.3. To accelerate learning recovery efforts and ensure children stay in school, particularly disadvantaged children by working with parents and communities.
- 1.4. To transform the education system to be more resilient and responsive in light of disruptions caused by COVID-19 and future disasters, including through improved access to digital and flexible learning approaches.

2. *Innovation in Education*

We reaffirm our commitments:

- 2.1. To digital transformation in education aligned with the National Digital Economy Development Plan and also to expand to age-appropriate and safe digital learning for all learners to complement face-to-face learning starting with improved existing digital platforms like Khang Panya Lao, enhanced ICT infrastructure and equipment access, especially in rural areas. We will strengthen synergies with key ministries, development partners, and the partnership with the private sector to make internet access free for schools.
- 2.2. To review, implement and formulate policies that support upskilling of teachers and civil servants in ICT and digital and flexible approaches to learning. This includes the use of ICTs for Continuous Professional Development, provision of digital resources to teachers, and establishing professional e-learning networks. This supports teacher development in areas like inclusive education, subject knowledge and pedagogy, formative assessment and multi-grade teaching. Over the medium- to long-term, we will review the Teacher Education Curriculum to integrate the ICT Competency Standards for Teachers, digital literacy and digital pedagogical approaches.
- 2.3. To improve quality of education by ensuring all schools meet fundamental quality standards and provide inclusive education and deliver appropriate 21st century skills and soft skills. We

will prioritize the provision of learning materials, including digital learning resources, educational television content and its dissemination to the general public.

- 2.4. To expand good practices in the integration of general vocational courses in secondary education; TVET and STEM, including AI for improved relevance and quality; expansion of Early Childhood Education and establishing more boarding schools; introduce a Competency-Based Training curriculum approach; improve cooperation with the business and private sectors to develop new qualifications in emerging sectors, workplace-based training including in new and green technology for economic development and modernization and improved regional competitiveness.

3. Adequate and Sustainable Public Financing of Education

We reaffirm our commitments:

- 3.1. To adequate and sustainable public financing of education and foster partnerships with stakeholders for shared responsibilities: work towards achieving education's share in the national budget to meet the 18% benchmark under the Education Law, including increasing the share of non-wage allocation.
- 3.2. To strengthen financial data management, analysis and utilization to ensure equitable allocation of limited resources and greater efficiency and accountability.
- 3.3. To improve the efficiency of Education Sector budget execution, including prioritizing activities to improve the quality of teaching and access to quality education, such as in-service teacher training, scholarships for students from poor families and those who have continued their studies in the government's priority areas, providing school meals and school block grants.
- 3.4. To an improved efficient system for the recruitment, replacement, allocation and deployment of trained teachers across the country.
- 3.5. To strengthen the efficiency of financial management in public educational institutions by piloting financial autonomy.
- 3.6. To explore innovative approaches to education financing with stakeholders including the private sector starting with TVET.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1. We, with support of development partners, commit to integrate these commitments into existing governmental mechanisms to facilitate implementation and monitoring, starting with the mid-term review in 2023 of the Lao Education and Sports Sector Development Plan, and the National Socioeconomic Development Plan. We recognize that implementation of these commitments is an important contribution to Lao PDR's graduation from Least Developed Country status and in accelerating progress towards SDG4.