

**Welcome Remarks By
Lt Gen Chansamone Chanyalath, Minister of National Defence
of Lao PDR
18th VECONAC General Assembly, Vientiane, Lao PDR
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- President, Vice-President of VECONAC
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

On behalf of the Ministry of National Defence of Lao PDR as well as all military personnel, I would like to warmly welcome the heads of delegations, delegates, observers and distinguished guests to Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Ladies and gentlemen

Lao PDR is very proud and honored to host this 18th VECONAC General Assembly right after our celebration the 43rd anniversary of the founding of the Lao PDR, which is the triumph of our national revolution derived from the collective contribution and efforts of the Lao people from all walks of life, Lao People's Army as well as Lao veterans.

This meeting is one of the historical events of the Lao Veterans Federation and it has demonstrated the strong commitment and obligations that Lao Veterans Federation has for VECONAC.

The Government of the Lao PDR as well as the Ministry of National Defence attach the importance of ASEAN cooperative mechanisms as they significantly contribute to the enhancement and promotion of unity, mutual trust, confidence and understanding between and among ASEAN Member States which vitally pave the way for promoting peace, stability, security and sustainable development of the region and the world as a whole. For instance, under the ASEAN Political-Security Pillar, which is one of the three pillars of ASEAN community, there is ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) and ASEAN Chiefs of Defence Forces Meeting (ACDFM) which are held annually according to ASEAN

Chairmanship rotation. These two meetings allow ASEAN defence ministers and ASEAN chiefs of defence forces to meet and exchange views on security challenges so as to discuss means to enhance the cooperation in order to address traditional and non-traditional challenges in an effective and timely manner.

Ladies and gentlemen

Our region is still facing various threats such as terrorism, natural and man-made disasters, cyber security, illegal migration so on and so forth. Some of our ASEAN Member States, especially Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam are still being confronted with legacy of war especially Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) which has not only posed threats to life and property of the people but also hindered national socio-economic development. It will take several decades for us to be able to overcome such a problem.

In order to cope with such threats, I view that ASEAN needs to continue to work together and VECONAC which is the organisation comprising experienced personnel can play a vital role in addressing the problem by sharing and exchanging your lessons and experiences to help us deal with these threats effectively and efficiently.

Ladies and gentlemen

Once again, on behalf of Ministry of National Defense of Lao PDR, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you all for participating and supporting Lao Veterans Federation in order to enable Lao Veterans Federation to successfully host and chair the 18th VECONAC General Assembly.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to encourage you to explore Vientiane to learn more about the history and culture of Laos.

Last but not least, I wish all distinguished delegates good health, happiness and every success in your noble tasks and I wish the meeting to be concluded with fruitful outcome.

(Thank you)