

**SPEECH TO THE 9<sup>th</sup> COUNCIL OF ASEAN CHIEF JUSTICES MEETING  
THURSDAY, 7 OCTOBER 2021 (ONLINE MEETING HOSTED BY INDONESIA)  
SESSION 9: UPDATE BY ASEAN JUDICIARIES ON COVID-19 EFFECTS AND  
SOLUTIONS SINCE THE 8<sup>TH</sup> CACJ MEETING**

**Present by:** Hon. Justice Khamphanh BOUNPHAKHOM  
Deputy Chief Justice of the SPC  
(5 minutes)

- Mr Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Indonesia
- Mr Chief Justice of the Supreme Courts, the heads of delegations
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very honored and proud to represent the delegation of the Supreme Court of the Lao PDR with an exchange of views on the topic: Update by ASEAN Judiciaries on Covid-19 effects and solutions since the 8th CACJ Meeting.

As we all know, the outbreak of COVID-19 on a global scale has direct impacts on socio-economic development of countries, including impacts on livelihood of people, development of infrastructure, trade and investment, both national and globally.

**Distinguished guests!**

Lao PDR is among countries that have been directly and severely affected by the outbreak of Covid-19, especially in the second wave, which started from April 2021 to the present. The outbreaks also have new variants and widespread in communities. There are increasing number of new cases, especially in urban areas, factories, service and commercial facilities. In such areas, there are also many disputes or court cases.

Under such situation, the Lao Supreme People's Court has paid great attention and strictly enforces Covid-19 prevention measures as issued by the Covid-19 Task Force Committee at both central and local levels on a regular basis on the basis through regular monitoring, evaluation, and lessons learned.

In order to prevent the outbreak of virus, aiming at protection of lives and properties of Lao citizens and foreigners living, doing business and performing official duties in Lao PDR, Lao courts have also put in place measures, especially relating to the implementation of court activities as follows:

1. In areas with high prevalence of cases in the community or larger number of infected cases, we have allowed court personnel to work from home through online communications, the adjudication of cases that need to be present or face to face have been suspended

2. In areas where Covid-19 outbreak does not exit, activities allowed to operate and prosecute in accordance with the procedures and related laws, but certain measures have to be followed, such as social distancing of at least one meter, wear face mask, wash hands with disinfectant and so on.

These measures are consistent with procedures as set out by the task force, which require 14-day reassessment through encouraging court personnel to access and Covid-19 vaccination.

**Distinguished guests!**

However, through the implementation of the above measures, we see that there have been direct impacts on the implementation of court activities, such as court administration and especially court case administration. As a result, it has caused adjudication of many cases delayed and could not resolve the disputes according to the defined timeframe.

Based on lessons learned from the above mentioned difficulties, our Courts would focus on developing and implementing appropriate measures aiming at facilitating case proceedings complete on timely manner, ensuring the rights and interests of participants in the best possible proceedings by establishing the following mechanisms:

1. to improve the mechanisms to increase more participation in online litigation, avoid paper-based filing of cases, but increase electronic filing, giving testimony and hearing in online courts, with a view to streamlining court proceedings.

2. to create and improve litigation-related legislation to better meet the demands of online litigation.

3. for criminal proceedings, coordination with the police and public prosecutor needs to be well established, to create mechanism and to save time to be more agile and able to adapt to the situation of the Covid-19 outbreak effectively.

4. to establish mechanisms and procedures to ensure that those who would interact people's courts do not transmit the virus to our organization and personnel, along with continuing to implement certain necessary measures, such as social distancing and ensuring everyone is vaccinated.

All of the above mentioned are some measures and lessons learned through recent actual implementation and the way forward of the Supreme Court of the Lao PDR.

Last but not least, on behalf of the Supreme People's Court of Lao PDR, I would like to thank all delegates and wish the meeting fulfill the goals set forth.

(Thank you very much)