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Statement by

**H.E. Dr. Thongloun SISOULITH,
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at the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs

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Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the Fourth United Nations Conference on LDCs. Let me also express our sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of Turkey for the excellent organization of this significant conference and for the generous support that makes our participation in this meeting possible.

Mr. President,

Ten years have passed since the adoption of our Program of Action from 2001-2010, we have witnessed some progress in socio-economic development in the LDCs. However, this progress has not yet been translated into a more tangible and significant outcome. The number of least developed countries remains relatively the same. Over the last three decades only three countries have graduated from the LDC status. The poor of the poor remain poor, they account for more than 800 million people in the world. Despite various efforts by LDCs themselves, their per capita income is still low, their productive capacity continues to be limited and national economy remains vulnerable and most of them are likely to miss MDG targets by 2015.

In 2001, when the European Union hosted the Third UN Conference on LDCs, it was evident that there had been a very strong enthusiasm to make commitments to helping the LDCs achieve their development goals. The Brussels Program of Action had been full with commitments with a view to assisting LDCs to overcome their socio-economic constraints thus graduating from the LDCs status. However, we must admit that we have not lived up to our commitments that we made ten years ago.

Mr. President,

The unfinished business of the Brussels Program of Action and the lack of significant achievement in its implementation should not be treated as pessimism. We should draw the best practice and good lessons learnt from the past ten years. We should continue to make further effort in realizing the goals and objectives of Brussels Program of Action. This is the task of the Fourth UN Conference on LDCs, which should produce a renewed and concrete commitment by both the LDCs and their development partners aimed at overcoming the structural challenges faced by them. We have to adopt a program of action that is based on a genuine renewed and strengthened partnership for development. It should take into account the undone duties of the Brussels Program of Action and translate them into more concrete measures to be implemented by all stakeholders. While recognizing that the prime responsibility of national development lies on the LDCs themselves, the development partners should continue to provide assistance and supports including, making the international financial and economic environment conducive in order to minimize the vulnerability of LDCs to the external shock. This has to be clearly reflected in the Istanbul program of action.

Mr. President,

Over the past years, the implementation of BPoA in the Lao PDR has rendered a relatively steady progress. Since 2006 GDP has steadily increased on average at 6.3 percent per annum and exceeded 7%.

Despite this progress, the Lao PDR is yet to face various challenges. The child and maternal mortality rate remains high compared to some other countries in the region; diseases such as malaria continue to impose a serious threat to the health and life of the Lao people. These challenges would become even more

severe with other constraints such as a lack of strong management capacity, low human resource capacity, inadequate infrastructure and others.

In spite of all this, the Lao Government strongly reaffirms its commitment to realize goals of the Brussels Program of Action. These goals have again been mainstreamed into the National Annual, the Sixth Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2006-2010) and they would also remain in the 7th Five-year Plan (2011-2015). In order to ensure that full and effective implementation of BPoA, we acknowledge that the Government of the Lao PDR has to mobilize all efforts and domestic potentials for development especially addressing the issue of poverty and graduating from LDC status by 2020. Nevertheless, we are still in need of supports from the international community in our effort to develop various economic sectors and to carry out our policy on important areas such as human resource development, education and health, socio-economic infrastructure development. All this requires enormous financial resources and qualified human capacity.

Mr. President,

We need to look into the next decade and chart a medium and long term target for all of us. We need to ensure that by 2020 more LDCs be able to graduate from LDC status. Only by doing this, should we be proud to say that we achieve the goals of LDC IV. To ensure this success, it requires a renewed political commitment from all stakeholders, the LDCs and their development partners, the UN system and civil society.

The developed countries should realize their commitment to meet their international obligations of 0.15-0.20% of their GNI for LDCs. The United Nations system should continue to play a pivotal role in assisting the least developed

countries to achieve their objectives and goals through mainstreaming LDC related activities into their policies and work-plans. In this context, effective system-wide approach and delivery as one by the UN system at the country level is crucial as it would ensure alignment and harmonization towards the national development goals of LDCs. The Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS should play a more active role, particularly in the area of inter-agency coordination and resource mobilization.

Mr. President,

The Lao PDR has high expectation from this Fourth UN Conference on LDCs, an expectation that by the time we review the Istanbul Program of Action ten years from now, the Lao PDR would be graduating from LDCs status. We believe that this conference would once again consolidate the strong and renewed commitments by all of us, the least developed countries and their development partners, for development that would benefit all LDCs. Let work together toward the aspiration of all LDCs.

Thank you