



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

**H.E. Mr. Somchith Inthamith, Vice Minister
of Planning and Investment at the Special
Session of the General Assembly on the
Follow-up to the Programme of Action of the
ICPD beyond 2014**

22 September 2014, New York

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour to participate in the 29th Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development beyond 2014.

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, A/69/62 and the Index Report on the interactive debate of the 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development.

The issues addressed in the report are extremely relevant to our country as we advance towards graduating from the least developed country status by 2020 and reaching middle-income country status. The Lao Government has set in motion several strategic actions, including the five-year Health Sector Reform Plan; a pro-poor policy to provide free maternity care services; the health insurance pilot scheme covering Maternal health; the Education For All National Plan, an Adolescent and Youth Situation Analysis which will form the basis of a multi-sector action plan; and a national action plan on Violence against women. Similarly, as a country facing rapid socio-economic changes with increasing migration and a youthful demography, we see the importance of planning and building sustainable cities and strengthening urban-rural linkages.

In addition, given the importance of data collection, analysis and dissemination, the Lao Government has implemented the strategy for the development of national statistical system 2010-2020. Next year, we will conduct the population and housing census which will be of great importance for the socio-economic development. In this regard, we would like to seek support from the international community.

Mr. President,

We are of the view that strategic responses to the development challenges require systematic and active participation of all stakeholders as well as partnership and global leadership through the United Nations. We agree that population dynamics have to be integrated into development planning at national, regional and international level. In this regard, we recognize the importance of the ICPD Programme of Action for the achievement of national development priorities and confirm that considerable progress has been made. Lao PDR is one of a few LDCs that has achieved improved life expectancy drastically from 54 years to reach 68 years over the world average since ICPD inception two decades ago.

However, we note that more needs to be done to ensure the well-being of all our people and achieve sustainable development including increasing investment on young people and strengthening their participation in decision-making and planning; promoting programmes to keep girls in school and to respond to violence against women and girls; addressing unmet needs for family planning especially for young people; and increasing efforts to ensure equitable development and economic growth.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by reiterating our support for the further implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD taking into account the outcome of our regional review and the findings and recommendations of the ICPD beyond 2014 review, and by calling for population issues to be further addressed and comprehensively elaborated in the post-2015 development agenda.