

**Statement by
H.E. Mr. Bounnhang VORACHITH,
Prime Minister of
the Lao People's Democratic Republic
at the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of the Brussels
Program of Action for the Least Developed Countries
for the Decade 2001-2010**

Bangkok, Thailand, 14 March 2006

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Mr. Chairman,
Mr. Executive Secretary of UNESCAP,
Mr. High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed my pleasure and privilege for the opportunity to address this important review meeting on the implementation of the Brussels Program of Action in Asia and the Pacific. Allow me hereby to commend UNESCAP and the Office of the High Representative for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS (UN-OHRLLS) for the excellent arrangements and organization of this regional review, which is a crucial preparation for the global review of the implementation of Brussels Program of Action to be held later this year.

Mr. Chairman,

In an effort to address the global concern, particularly, poverty and sustainable development, the world leaders at the Millennium Summit held in 2000 endorsed the Millennium Declaration, which set out concrete measures including time-bound targets to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability and develop global partnership for development. These goals and targets have been reaffirmed in the Brussels Program of Action (BPoA) for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010. Therefore, the BPoA has become a principle platform for all least developed countries to achieve the millennium development goals, thus attaining their objectives in poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The review of Millennium Development Goals at the High-Level Plenary Meeting held in New York last September reiterated that we must exert greater efforts if we are to attain MDGs by 2015. This has reflected that MDGs have not been attained as scheduled. The Asia-Pacific is successful in reducing the poverty rate. However, the progress is often tainted by the fact the region is still a home to 700 million people or two third of the world poor, who are living in an extreme poverty. Furthermore, most of the achievements recorded have only been made in a small number of developing countries whereas the progress in the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states has remained sluggish.

The UNDP 2005 Human Development Report ranks the country as 131 out of 177 countries.

Despite this progress and achievements, the Lao PDR is yet to face various challenges, particularly, the child and maternal mortality rate still remains high compared to some other countries in the region; HIV/AIDS and other 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, limited supply-side capacity in terms of export, as well as inadequate resources and reliance on ODA to finance development programs. Furthermore, there are other difficulties such as inefficient and inadequate infrastructure that makes the Lao PDR less attractive to more foreign investment regardless of a favourable and investment friendly environment.

In spite of all this, the Lao Government strongly reaffirms its commitment to realize MDGs by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals and Brussels Program of Action have been mainstreamed into the National Annual, Five-Year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2006-2010) and the National Strategy 2020. In order to achieve MDGs within the timeframe set by us, we acknowledge that the Government of the Lao PDR has to mobilize all efforts and domestic potentials for development and fundamentally addressing the issue of poverty by 2010. 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, particularly, irrigation, roads, telecommunication and communication system, market expansion and development of various industries. All this requires enormous financial resources and qualified human capacity. In this regard, we hope that all countries and international organizations would continue to render their support to the Lao PDR as well to all landlocked least developed countries as well as small island least developed countries.

Mr. Chairman,

This Regional Review meeting is a timely and crucial one. I believe that this meeting would help ensure that the Brussels Program of Action be fully and more effectively implemented over the remaining five years. I am convinced that all delegations would be able to reach a consensus on issues raised in this meeting with a view to attaining the goals and targets set by us at the Third UN Conference on LDCs and the Millennium Summit. In addition, I am sure that the outcome of this Regional Review would constitute a significant input to the global review of the implementation of Brussels Program of Action to be held in New York later this year. On this note, let me wish you all a great success in your deliberation.

Thank you