



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC TO UNITED NATIONS

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STATEMENT

by

His Excellency Dr. Thoungloun SISOULITH

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

**at the High-level Meeting on the Mid-term Comprehensive
Global Review of the Implementation of the
Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries**

for the Decade 2001-2010

(New York, September 18, 2006)

Mr. Chairman,

To begin with, let me extend, on behalf of the Lao PDR Delegation, my warmest congratulations to you and other members of your Bureau, on your respective election as Chairman and Vice Chairman of this important session. We trust your experienced leadership and skills in multilateral diplomacy will lead this High-level event to a successful conclusion. You can rest assured of our full support and cooperation in the discharge of your mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Delegation thanks the Secretary-General for his annual progress report on the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action (BPoA) for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) for the Decade 2001-2010. We commend the tremendous efforts the UN Secretariat has put into the preparation of this Report, the useful conclusions and recommendations of which we note with appreciation.

We support the Statement made earlier by the representative of South Africa, Chairman of the Group of ⁷⁷ and that by the representative of Benin, Chairman of the LDCs Coordinating Bureau, which highlight major progress made and constraints faced by LDCs in the implementation of BPoA, and suggest holistic approaches for its more effective follow-up. Our delegation recognizes the leadership shown by the Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau in the review process.

We also share the concern of the developing countries over the lack of progress made in the implementation of the seven commitments of BPOA, despite some accomplishments achieved by both LDCs and their development partners in implementing the actions assigned to them in the programme of action. The Report indicates that the improvement in economic growth and human development in LDCs have been modest. The absolute levels of deprivation for most people of the LDCs remain highest of all and income poverty largely unchanged. The productive capacities of the LDCs matter as well. This has no doubt affected their competitive participation in the world trade.

Against the above background, the LDCs find it very difficult to live up to their commitments as called for in the MDGs-based BPoA. In order to reverse these trends, therefore, the international community must take the necessary steps to provide the LDCs with the overdue pledged resources to allow for the fulfilment by them of the commitments set out in the Brussels Programme of Action and in the MDGs. The continuing support of the developed countries, the United Nations system, and the international financial and trade is of critical importance. This necessity was underlined in the World Summit 2005 Outcome as well as the GA resolution to implement it. The Declaration we are going to endorse at the end of this session also reaffirms the validity of the BPoA commitments and calls for greater efforts to be undertaken by all stakeholders to implement them in a full, timely and effective manner.

Mr. Chairman,

As landlocked least developed country, the Lao PDR has spared no effort to translate her commitments into action. The BPoA was integrated into the Ten-Year Socio-Economic Strategy (2001-2010) with special emphasis on the promotion of rapid and sustained economic growth, poverty reduction and environmental protection. The fifth Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2001-2005) and associated annual plans all were considered to be the primary tools for implementing the Strategy.

Various measures have been taken to put those plans into practice. As a result, GDP has attained a steady increase averaging 6.3 percent for the past five years. The overall investment rose steadily from 19.7 percent in 2000 to around 26.6 percent in 2005. The GDP per capita improved by US\$ 500 for the same period and poverty downed to 32 percent in 2005 from 39 percent in 1997. The population living under the poverty line accounts for 28 percent in 2006 and life expectancy increased by 61 years against ⁵⁰ in 1980. The under-five and infant mortality rates declined to 98 deaths per 1,000 live births and 70 deaths per 1,000 live births respectively in 2005 from 107 deaths per 1,000 live births and 82 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000.

To further her efforts to fight poverty and pursue sustainable development, the Lao PDR Government launched in 2003 the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) known as a localized poverty reduction strategy paper (PRSP). The objective of NGPES is to sustain economic growth and alleviate poverty, particularly in 72 poor districts across the country. The Strategy addresses four key areas, namely agriculture, health, education and infrastructure development with an emphasis on a number of cross-cutting issues such as gender, governance, environment, information and culture, population and security.

Furthermore, the recently adopted Sixth Five-Year Socio-economic Development Plan 2006-2010 constitutes a framework aimed, first and foremost, at fully and effectively implementing all the goals and targets of the NGPES in pursuit of the Vision of the country graduating from LDCs by 2020.

Mr. Chairman,

Notwithstanding the positive developments, there remains a lot more to be done by the Lao PDR towards the fulfilment of her international commitments. In spite of the strenuous efforts the Lao PDR finds it difficult and constrained to cope with challenges stemming primarily from of her status of underdevelopment and geographical disadvantage. For the country to achieve further progress in the implementation of the foregoing strategies, greater coordinated financial and technical support is needed from the international community, specially the donor community in such critical areas as human resource development and institutional and productive capacity building. We trust these felt needs of the Lao PDR would be met generously and unconditionally in the form of untied ODA as well as, to a less extent, most concessional loans.

I thank you.