



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

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STATEMENT BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR KANIKA PHOMMACHANH, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS
AT THE FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
New York, 22 FEBRUARY 2011**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Lao PDR delegation, I would like to express my warm appreciation to the Chair and the members of the Bureau of the Commission for their untiring efforts to ensure the successful direction of this Fifty-Fifth session of the Commission of the Status of Women. The priority theme chosen for this year is most relevant and timely.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

Mr. Chairman,

Evidence has undoubtedly proved strong linkages between the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and women's economic empowerment in the context of global economic and financial crisis. Success has been achieved by also eliminating violence against women, implementing the internationally agreed goals and commitment to gender equality and women's political participation. Many positive developments are acknowledged since Beijing in 1995; however, the Beijing +15 assessment demonstrates the great need for stronger political action to achieve the much desired objectives.

The Lao PDR Government is making very diligent efforts to follow up on the BPfA and the Outcomes of the Twenty Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly, which have led to major strides of progress in the fields of education and employment. In conformity with these directives, the government devised the National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) and adopted the National Strategy for the Advancement of Women which is all comprehensive, and encompasses many interdependent sectors related to gender equality.

In the past 15 years, the education sector has developed both in quantitative and qualitative terms. The Government has amended legislation and adopted the Education Sector Development Framework (2009-2015) to ensure gender mainstreaming in the educational

system. The thrust has been to create highly qualified personnel to meet the new and growing needs of national development. The Promotional Education Centre for Women, Ethnic Peoples and Persons with Disabilities (CEWED) was created to execute policies of justice, equality and humanitarian spirit in favour of disadvantaged people, in particular, women, ethnic groups, and persons with disabilities. The implementation of the policy of compulsory education by 2015 will help eliminate disparities between these various groups.

To ensure gender equality in the work place, the Government has implemented a number of measures, including an economic reform policy, appropriate legislation and training programmes for empowering women with new labour skills. The Law on the Development and Protection of Women gives women the scope to pursue legal and other careers in any field of their choice, and to be appropriately compensated, as well as offered incentives for their advancement. The new labour legislation prohibits women being debarred from work on grounds of pregnancy or child birth. The Lao Women's Union (LWU), which operates from the central to local levels, has among its many objectives, the promotion of technical and vocational training for women throughout the country. The Lao PDR Government has, especially during the current severe global economic crisis, directed the Ministries of Education and Labour, as well as the Lao Women's Union, the Trade Union and other institutions, to fully and effectively implement all legislation related to women's labour, and their work conditions with requisite and adequate safeguards for training and protection. Gender equality priorities, in fact, have become central to national, local and sectoral planning, and the budgeting of national institutions and their programmes.

I wish to reaffirm that the Lao Government remains strongly committed with its consistent political will to seek appropriate measures for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and for the effective implementation of the BPfA. Since gender mainstreaming in the sectors of health, education and welfare are interconnected, my country lays great emphasis on upgrading also the health and welfare services for women. We are thus, in addition, responding earnestly to the call made by the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, as part of his global campaign, to end violence against women.

There are many challenges that my country, like other developing and least developed countries, is facing, which demand nothing less than robust multilateral action to address them at the national, regional and global levels. I would like to express my sincere gratitude for the support given by the UN Country Team and our partners of bilateral and international assistance. We look forward with great anticipation, particularly, the collaboration with the new entity of UN Women for the advancement of Lao women as key determinants of our national development. In closing, I reiterate my Government's support to the shared vision of true women's equality in my country and globally.

Thank you, Mr. President.