



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

Statement by

H.E. Dr. Souphanh KEOMIXAY
Minister of Planning and Investment
of the Lao PDR

At the 52nd Session of the Commission on Population and Development

New York, 1-5 April 2019

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of the Lao Government, it is my great honor to attend the Fifty Second Session of the Commission on Population and Development. In our collective progress towards the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, the pathway to success is through human development. The ICPD Programme of Action (PoA) emphasises investing in the well-being of all segments of the population as an imperative for equitable and sustainable development.

The overall development policy of our country is demonstrated in the vision 2030, strategy 2025 and 8th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED) which consist of three main pillars: sustained economic growth, social development and environmental protection. The social development pillar gives priority to human development. The Lao Government attaches importance to the implementation of global development agendas. To this end, the relevant goals and targets of global development agenda such as SDGs, ICPD have been mainstreamed into the national development plan.

To ensure the effective implementation of ICDP PoA, the Lao PDR has integrated of ICPD across planning mechanisms such as the 8th NSED as well as for the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The implementation of ICDP PoA has recorded important achievements, among others, as follows:

1. Improved health of women and youth, availability of age and sex disaggregated data, reproductive health and rights of people, in particular women and adolescents which have an exponential impact on the overall well-being of society.
2. The implementation of MDG1 and ICPD PoA also contributed to poverty reduction by half from 46% in 1992 to 23% in 2015 and is expected to further reduce in 2018.
3. Continue to improve household welfare.
4. Number of midwives and trained health personnel has increased significantly which contributed to the decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio from 1,100 per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 206 in 2015.
5. Continue to improve access to voluntary family planning.

Despite the above mentioned achievements and the fact that the Lao PDR is being an LDC and LLDC, we still face various challenges such as high adolescent pregnancy rates, unmet need of 74% for contraceptives amongst unmarried young women, high rates of secondary school drop outs.

To address these challenges we recognise the need to invest in the 1.6 million Lao youth between the ages of 10-19, develop macro policies for labour and social welfare, working with the private sector, whilst ensuring that the opportunities are equally available to women and men, continue to improve quality of care through the reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health strategies and policies.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to also share a particularly innovative component that the Lao PDR has integrated in its development vision, the “**Noi Framework 2030**”, which focuses on investments for Adolescent Girls as a subgroup critical to the country’s development objectives and it has been included in the Lao PDR’s 2018 Voluntary National Review.

To ensure the effective implementation of ICPD PoA, our focus will include:

1. Analysing population trends and adjusting investments in order to reap the potential benefits of demographic dividend;
2. Strengthening resource allocations so that youth, women and men and those living in remote areas can access quality sexual and reproductive health and family planning services;
3. Implementing programmes that contribute to gender equity in light of CEDAW and CRC recommendations.
4. Strategies to address the climate change;
5. Ensuring that no one is left behind, thus considering the needs of the most vulnerable, including disabilities and the aged.

Mr. Chairman,

The achievements were possible because of our own efforts and support and assistance from development partners, UN agencies, in particular, UNFPA, international organizations and other relevant stakeholders. Therefore, we would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all and call for enhanced partnerships in order to ensure the effective implementation of ICPD PoA in the years ahead.

I thank you for your attention.