



# *Lao People's Democratic Republic*

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Statement By

H.E. Mr. Somchit Inthamith

Vice Minister

Ministry of Planning and Investment

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At the Forty-seventh session of the  
Commission on Population and Development

New York, 7-11 April 2014



**Statement**

**By H.E. Mr. Somchit Inthamith**

**Vice Minister, Ministry of Planning and Investment**

**At the General debate on national experience in population matters: assessment of the status of implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.**

Mr. Chairman,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on assuming the chairmanship of the Forty-seventh session of the Commission on Population and Development. I assure you of my delegation's support and cooperation.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished Minister of the Plurinational State of Bolivia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation welcomes the Secretary General's global ICPD review report "Framework of Actions for the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD beyond 2014," which is consistent with the General Assembly Resolution 65/234, and confirms our agreement with its findings and recommendations. We are of the view that the 47th session of the CPD provides a critical opportunity to advance our efforts in addressing population issues in a comprehensive manner to ensure equitable, inclusive economic growth and sustainable development for our peoples.

We are pleased to note that the report addresses ways to enhance individual capabilities and resilience and ensure sustainable development. We share the conclusion that investing in individual human rights, capabilities and dignity-across the multiple sectors of the ICPD and throughout the life-course-is the foundation of sustainable development.



We are pleased to see a focus on addressing inequalities in the report, particularly on the increasing wealth and income inequalities; unfulfilled gender equality and empowerment of women; the need for lifelong learning and building human capabilities especially for young people; addressing the inequalities in universal access to sexual and reproductive health services, including through strengthening health systems both in rural and urban areas. These are issues that are extremely relevant to Laos as we advance towards reaching MIC status. The Lao Government is committed to addressing these issues reflected in the report, and have set in motion several strategic actions, including the five-year Health Sector Reform Plan, which aims to improve service provision at the primary health care level; a Human resource development Plan; a pro-poor policy to provide free maternity care services and the health insurance pilot scheme that covers Maternal health.

With 50% of our population below 20 years of age, addressing needs and aspirations of young people is a challenge, particularly in view of the high adolescent fertility rate, which is 94 for every 1000 girls aged 15-19. Hence, addressing young people's needs is a priority for us in Laos. In this regard, we are currently conducting an Adolescent and Youth Situation Analysis which will form the basis of a multi-sectoral action plan and are committed to investing in young people with a view to fulfilling their rights so that they can reach their full potential.

In addition, in line with the findings of the report, ensuring gender equality and enhancing women's empowerment are priorities of the Laos government. The Education for All Action Plan and Programme aims to improve education for the poor, ethnic group and girls. We are also currently conducting a national level survey on violence against women; drafting a law on domestic violence; and have developed 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 agree with the findings of the report that emphasize the need for planning and building sustainable cities and strengthening urban-rural linkages. Given the impact of population dynamics on the micro and macro levels, we agree that population



dynamics have to be integrated into development planning at national, regional and international level.

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 UN. In this regard, we at Lao PDR note 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. In addition, given the importance of data collection, analysis and dissemination, the Lao Government has developed its national statistical system by adopting, among others, the strategy for the development of national statistical system 2010-2020. We believe that the upcoming population and housing census 2015 will be of great importance for the socio-economic development of our country.

Before concluding, we are pleased to reiterate our support to the review report and the regional plan of action for the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. We look forward to the adoption of the resolution that reflects the findings and recommendations of the ICPD review, and sufficient support of the international community especially the development partners. We believe that these are crucial for the implementation of ICPD Beyond 2014 and that population issues must be further addressed and comprehensively elaborated in the post-2015 Development agenda.