



# Lao People's Democratic Republic

*Peace, Independence, Democracy, Unity, Prosperity*

## Report

### The 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015

International Cooperation Training Center,  
Vientiane, Lao PDR

Department of International Co-operation  
Ministry of Planning and Investment

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## I. A Summary of Key Discussion Points

The 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting was successfully organized on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015 (2015 HL RTM) at the National Cooperation and Training Center (NCTC), Vientiane, Lao PDR. It is a very important forum for the Government of Lao PDR and a growing range of stakeholders, including development partners, to engage directly in policy discussion and consensus building around Lao PDR's development strategies.

All participants applauded the Government for achievements and progress made to meet the national development aspiration – the graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status and the internationally agreed development goals – Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Stakeholders also commended the Government of Lao PDR for the excellent HL RTM preparation, quality of documents, and presentations highlighting various aspects of the national development agenda. Minister of Planning and Investment, His Excellency Somdy Douangdy as a delegated Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting summarised the following key points from the Round Table Meeting. These were further discussed and presented to the President of Lao PDR, His Excellency Choummaly Sayasone, by development partners on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

### **A. Macro-economic management and inclusive and sustainable growth**

#### **1. The 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan**

Both national and international stakeholders expressed their strong support of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP 2016 – 2020) and they stand ready to provide assistance during the course of its implementation. The 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM participants also commended the Government for pursuing an integrated approach to inclusive and sustainable development that addresses the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the priorities to achieve graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, and embarking on the new Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets. In particular, the NSEDP was formulated in a participatory manner. It is results and outcome focussed, and builds on the lessons and successes of the 7th NSEDP.

#### **2. Enabling inclusive and sustainable growth**

Sustained economic growth of over 7% per year in recent years has been impressive. However, concern was expressed that growth is currently too dependent on the natural resource and extractive sectors and that growth has not proportionally reduced poverty because it has not been inclusively shared. Improvements to the business environment and competitiveness and a better linkage between higher education and skills training and the labour market are needed—with the ASEAN Economic Community and World Trade Organisation providing a major impetus. Quality FDI needs to generate more jobs, in particular for young people, and be socially and environmentally responsible. Pursuit of 'green growth' is a real prospect for Lao PDR, linking natural resources to conservation as a source of growth in itself. A stronger partnership with the private sector is recommended. Investing in critical infrastructure remains a priority for the country to become land-linked. Maintenance of existing infrastructure also requires more attention.

**3. Enhancing Macro-Economic Management**

Continued efforts to promote macroeconomic stability are a precondition for inclusive growth and sustainable development progress. There is a significant exposure to external economic and financial shocks, risks and vulnerabilities. Efforts are needed to improve oversight of the financial sector, control public debt and enhance revenue generation. Prioritization within, and transparency of the national budget is also needed. A medium-term expenditure framework would provide greater clarity for Development Partners to align their assistance to achieve greater predictability, coordination and effectiveness.

**4. Agriculture**

A significant and phased modernization in the agriculture sector is required to enable the country to proceed on its development path of transformation. Improving agricultural productivity, better linking it to climate change resilience and ensuring land tenure security are among the top priorities. Sustainable management of water resources and the downstream potential of hydropower projects should be fully harnessed.

**5. Increased Investments to the Priority Sectors**

Lao PDR can also benefit from targeting expenditures to priority social sectors to impact both the unfinished MDGs and longer-term SDG targets. Public investments in health and education should accompany formal social protection mechanisms to build resilience. Enhancing productive capacities in rural areas through support for agricultural development and rural infrastructure will have direct development impact at the local level. In this context, Development Partners and Government can increasingly pursue co-financing of investments into these core sectors. In parallel to accelerating infrastructure development, budgeting for, and carrying out periodic maintenance will contribute to longer-term resilience and sustainability.

**B. Social sector and human development**

**6. From Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

All participants acknowledge the significant progress that Lao PDR has made in achieving the majority of the MDG targets—many ahead of schedule. Overall levels of poverty have been reduced from 46% to 23% in a generation. However, some MDG targets have not been reached—such as those for nutrition, school retention, infant and child mortality and deforestation. Geographic disparities persist and inequalities are now growing, especially between urban and rural areas. Poverty is most at risk of affecting disadvantaged people living in remote areas. Promoting gender equality requires further efforts at all levels. Addressing these challenges development partners will support the Government's efforts to localise the SDGs fully to the Lao context, integrating targets and indicators into national planning and monitoring.

**7. Food and Nutrition Security**

Stakeholders expressed appreciation for the Government's 'convergence approach' for Food and Nutrition Security. Tackling malnutrition in particular the acceleration

of the implementation of the ‘convergence approach’ through multi-stakeholders’ involvement will remain one of the foremost priorities of the Government, which is critical for human resource based economic growth.

#### **8. Access to Quality Education and Health**

Participants acknowledged the centrality of health in contributing to graduation from LDC status, attaining the unmet MDG targets and pursuing the SDGs. While recognizing considerable gains, there are further critical targets ahead concerning infant, child and maternal mortality, and child malnutrition, especially stunting and underweight rates. Similarly, in the education sector, we noted MDG progress. However, dropout, repetition & survival rates and skills mismatch, as well as the quality of education remain a concern, as does the need to ensure a good supply of trained teachers across the entire country.

### **C. Green growth, environmental sustainability, climate change and disaster management**

#### **9. Environmental Sustainability**

Four on-going priorities confront the environment sector: forest degradation; land reform, which is crucial for sustainable land management and investment; strengthening and enforcing protection of biodiversity and eco-systems; and climate change action, including enhanced preparedness for disasters. The government should be commended for taking actions early-on, learning from experiences in other countries. The social, environmental and economic price of ‘growing first and cleaning up later’ is too costly.

### **D. Cross cutting matters and development effectiveness**

#### **10. The Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (2016-2025)**

The Vientiane Partnership Declaration is a result of joint effort between the Government of Lao PDR and Development Partners to shift from aid effectiveness to effective development cooperation. All stakeholders are grateful to members of the Vientiane Declaration Secretariat who have contributed to the substance of the Declaration. As such, a high quality Declaration was unanimously approved and endorsed. It does not constitute a legally binding instrument, yet represents a shared aspiration and recognition between the Government and diverse partners on how development work is managed in the country for the next ten years for better and sustainable development results. Action is now required for rapidly putting the Declaration’s principles into practice.

#### **11. Good Governance**

Government has adopted SDG 16 in recognition of a number of core principles that are essential for good governance to serve as a catalyst for development. Partnership, participation, transparency, accountability, improvement of public financial management and strong anti-corruption measures are prerequisites for inclusive, equitable and balanced nation-wide growth. Law enforcement, access to justice and people centred justice delivery remain as important challenges. Follow-up is needed to the Universal Periodic Review and development of an Action Plan to address key issues.

**12. Space for Civil Society**

In line with the Vientiane Declaration, the enabling environment for civil society (both foreign and domestic) should be improved, to help shape and implement sustainable development in Lao PDR under Government coordination and leadership. The registration process for civil society organisations should be streamlined.

**13. Illicit Drugs and Other related Issues**

All stakeholders remain concerned with the levels of cultivation, trafficking and use of illicit drugs in Lao PDR. This issue affects so many of the country's vulnerable youth and more attention should be given to promote a public health approach to the issue. Alongside the challenge of illicit drugs is that of illegal wildlife trafficking.

**14. The special case of UXO**

The introduction of the new evidence-based survey methodology has already yielded tangible results and will accelerate the efficiency of clearing contaminated areas linked to human settlements most at risk and development priorities.

## II. The 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM Background

The 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting (HL RTM) was held in Vientiane, the capital of Lao PDR, on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015. 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM participants discussed how to link global and regional agendas to the national agenda; took stock of the work being done in each major development sector; examined together the tangible development results being achieved; and aligned the combined resources and energies of partners around the priorities of the Government's 8<sup>th</sup> National Social and Economic Development Plan (NSED 2016-2020) (please refer to Annex 1 for the agenda of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting 2015).

The 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM was opened by H.E. Mr. Thongsing Thammavong, Prime Minister and Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator and the Chair of UN Development Group. It was then chaired by H.E. Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Foreign Affairs, and co-chaired by Mr. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of UNDP Bureau for Asia and the Pacific.

More than 400 participants attended the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM which include Ministers, Vice Ministers, high ranked government officials, representatives from provinces (Governors, vice-Governor and high ranked provincial officials), representatives from mass organizations, Ambassadors, heads of missions, high level representative of development partners, national non-profit associations (NPAs), INGOs and private sector representatives (please refer to Annex 8 for the lists of participants).

Before the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting, the Government of Lao PDR and its Partners organised a special football match on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2015. In addition, the Development Cooperation Exhibition was formally organized and it was officially opened by His Excellency Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment and Mr. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Another highlight leading up to the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting is a visit to Bolikhamxay province from 25<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015. The merit of having a High Level Round Table Meeting (HL RTM) field visit is to help stimulate thoughts among the HL RTM participants to identify possible ideas on means of the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (8<sup>th</sup> NSED 2016-2020), particularly on how to address unfinished business of the MDGs in Lao PDR and how the country is pursuing its continuation in light of the roll out of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which is the main focus of the High Level Round Table Meeting.

The 2015 HL RTM's field visit focuses on successful stories/activities contributing to the MDG implementation. This focus could potentially be good lessons learnt for other provinces in Lao PDR to galvanise their efforts addressing the unfinished business of the MDGs. This could be in turn a lesson for the realization of 8<sup>th</sup> NSED and the prospects for the LDC graduation by 2020s (please see Annex 7 for the programme of this field visit).

### III. Proceedings of the meeting

#### 3.1 Official Opening

To officially open the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM, His Excellency Thongsing Thammavong, Prime Minister of Lao PDR delivered his opening statement and highlighted achievements made by the Government of Lao PDR in various areas.

The Prime Minister extended his warm welcome to all delegates and especially to Ms. Helen Clark, the UNDP Administrator and the Chairs of the UN Development Group as well as to Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, UN Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for attaching great importance to and honoring us with your presence here at this 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Roundtable Meeting. The Prime Minister stated that High-Level Roundtable Meeting reflects the joint efforts and shared responsibility by the Lao Government and Development Partners which provides a platform for consultation and exchange of views on development in the Lao PDR. His Excellency hopes that all Development Partners will continue to pledge commitments in supporting the Lao PDR to implement our National Socio-economic Development Plan, particularly in addressing the issues of poverty and towards graduating from the Least Developed Country status by 2020.

His Excellency Prime Minister also highlighted that 2015 is of great significance as a number of important events have taken place in the Lao PDR, especially the finalization of implementation of the 7th Five Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the preparation of the 8th Five Year NSEDP (2016-2020). In addition, at a global level it is also the final stage of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the transition into attaining Sustainable Development Goals which include some of the off-track MDGs. Moreover, 2015 also marks the 40th anniversary of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and throughout the last four decades of development starting from healing wounds of war to safeguarding and advancing national development cause through the implementation of the National Socio-economic Development Plans with remarkable achievements have been recorded. The Lao PDR has maintained firm political stability and place social order, which have laid a solid foundation for a steady economic growth and gradually improve the living conditions of our people.

The Lao PDR has deployed all its utmost efforts and attached great importance to poverty reduction and created all favorable conditions in order to graduate from the LDC' status and move towards sustainable development path. Among the most outstanding efforts is the introduction of “three level development” initiative known as “Sam-Sang” that is making a province as the strategic body, a district as a comprehensively strong body, and a village as development body with a view to increasing a sense of ownership and delegating more authority to local administrations. In addition, we have continued to implement existing policies namely in maintaining stable economic growth, give priority to human resources development, modern industrialization, protect sustainable environment and so on.

To guide discussions at the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM, His Excellency Thongsing Thammavong stated that the Government is committed to deploy great efforts in the implementation of the 8th Five Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020) by

ensuring successful and tangible result with particular attention given to the following areas:

- 1) Redoubling greater efforts in the implementation of the 8th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan by adopting more concrete measures in order to achieve 3 main objectives namely economic, socio-cultural and environment. Continue to sustain economic growth and ensure macroeconomic stability with GDP growth rate of not less than 7% per annum.
- 2) Enhancing ownership in the implementation and fulfilling of the given tasks and mandates at all levels namely within the line ministries, departments and local administrations in a harmonized manner in streamlining the Sustainable Development Goals and the off-track MDG targets in to the National Social-Economic Development Plans.
- 3) Ensuring readiness and putting in place all necessary preparations in all aspects within the framework of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by improving and enhancing some of the key areas and responsibilities namely institutional capacity building in order to ensure quality of growth and sustainable development, promote greater participation of the private sector in development, strengthen effective development cooperation including the South- South and Triangular cooperation.
- 4) Promoting advocacy initiatives and programs on environmental protection among the local population especially the youth on environmental friendly measures in development so as to ensure green growth as well as the implementation of sustainable socioeconomic development and environmental protection. At the same time, various measures must be put in place in order to mitigate the impact caused by unpredictable natural disasters.
- 5) Promoting good governance and sound management through the implementation of the Sam Sang initiative in a tangible manner.

In conclusion, the Prime Minister expressed his sincere thank you and appreciation to all Development Partners, friendly countries and international organizations for unwavering financial and technical support and assistance extended to the Government in the implementation of the 7th Five Year NSEDP (2011-2015) and in attaining MDGs in the Lao PDR, which have led to some significant outcomes. His Excellency reiterates that Lao PDR has made considerable efforts to reduce poverty. We've laid strong foundations to graduate from Least Developed Country status by 2020. In the years to come, we'll focus all our efforts on the implementation of the 8th five-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan to 2020. We'll determine clear measures, in a clear action plan, to achieve development in the economic, socio-cultural and environmental spheres.

In this regards, the Prime Minister hopes that Development Partners will continue to render support and assistance to the Lao PDR for the successful implementation of the upcoming 8th Five-Year NSEDP and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

On behalf of the Lao Government, the Prime Minister reaffirmed the Government's commitment and determination in ensuring strong partnership and management of Official Development Assistance and other sources of development financing in a

transparent, effective, sustainable manner, and to reach-out to the people who are in need. With existing friendly and traditional cooperation between Lao PDR and all the friendly countries, international organizations and Development Partners, the Prime Minister is confident that this High-Level Roundtable Meeting will be convened in a constructive atmosphere and achieve successful outcome (Please refer to Annex 2 for the Official Opening Keynote Address by the Prime Minister of Lao PDR).

Contributing to what highlighted by the Prime Minister of Lao PDR, Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator/the Chair of UN Development Groups also delivered her official key note highlighting that the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting is a very important forum for the Government of Lao PDR and a growing range of stakeholders, including development partners, to engage directly in policy discussion and consensus building around Lao PDR's development strategies. Ms. Clark especially encouraged to see the broad spectrum of stakeholders gathered, including senior government policy and decision makers, senior representatives from development partners and international organizations, colleagues from across the UN family, and - important for enriching our discussions – representatives from the business community and civil society.

The UN Administrator applauded the Government of Lao PDR for its leadership and progress on the MDGs. In particular, the Government gave strong leadership on the MDG agenda, fully integrating the goals and targets in its national plans and programmes. The country achieved many MDG targets ahead of schedule. Significant development gains have been demonstrated in education, child health, maternal health, gender equality, and access to safe drinking water and sanitation. The designation of an “MDG 9” on the clearance of cluster munitions by Lao PDR was an important national innovation. The Government has recently adopted a new methodology for locating and clearing bombs which is expected to make UXO clearance operations more effective. Ms. Clark encouraged all development partners to accelerate efforts to support Lao PDR on this life and death matter, and commend the country on its global leadership in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

The UNDP Administrator also stated that a key driver of prosperity for a landlocked country is regional integration. She is pleased to see this continue to feature prominently in the Lao PDR's agenda. This country is a keen member of ASEAN and can benefit from the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN's new Community Vision 2025. Lao PDR assumes the Chair of ASEAN for 2016. UNDP stands ready to support the Government any way it can during its year as Chair of this vibrant regional community.

Lao PDR is intent on tackling its economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities, which will be necessary for achieving its aim of graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. Ms. Clark expressed that the 8<sup>th</sup> five-year national plan (2016-2020) is rightly directed towards more balanced, broad-based, inclusive and sustainable growth and development. She confirmed that as UN partners, UNDP stands ready to support Government in the implementation of this plan, to help meet the unfinished business of the MDGs, and to assist in securing a smooth transition from LDC status upon graduation.

In term of the new global development framework, Ms. Clarks highlighted that the implementation of the SDGs recognizes the need for whole of government approaches across the three strands of sustainable development – the economic, social, and

environmental. This requires “whole-of-government” co-ordination, and requires well co-ordinated UN Country Teams and development partners too. In this regard, the 8<sup>th</sup> National Social and Economic Development Plan is a very important document which comes at a pivotal time. If implemented successfully, it will drive graduation from LDC status, complete Lao PDR’s unfinished MDG business, and deliver early progress on the SDGs. In particular, Ms. Clark commended the Government for formulating the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP through a consultative process, and for adopting a results and outcome based approach to its national plan for the first time. This has helped to reduce the number of targets and indicators needed to monitor progress. The efforts made to integrate the new Sustainable Development Goals into the fabric of the plan, its major programmes and monitoring framework, is very encouraging.

Given the scope and scale of the new global agenda, we need partnerships for development which are more diverse and inclusive than ever before. The role of the private sector and of civil society will be vital alongside those of governments and development partners. The “*Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation*” helps to break the mold of the traditional donor-recipient approach. It seeks to build a more diverse partnership, which can also expand the envelope of resources available for development.

The UNDP Administrator is pleased to see that the core provisions of the Vientiane Declaration are aligned with elements of the new SDG 16 on building peaceful and inclusive societies and with SDG 17 on partnerships. It is vital that we have recognized that the generation of adequate domestic revenues, provides a pathway to long term financial self-sufficiency. Domestic revenues are the primary source of investment in development, including in education, skills training, and health services. Investment in these drives the human development on which inclusive and sustainable growth depends. Lao PDR has clearly indicated that it wishes to go in this direction in its new national plan.

With what highlighted, Ms. Clark also shared a few insights from UNDP’s experience over fifteen years working with the MDGs which could have implications for the SDG implementation. In particular, the explicit interconnectedness of the new goals and targets needs to be reflected in the design and implementation of policies and initiatives, and also in the institutional relationships which drive and oversee them. As this development round table proceeds through its respective economic, social and environmental segments, it will be important to realize the policy linkages between these. For example, in the last two decades, the key drivers of economic growth in Lao PDR have been hydropower, minerals, and forestry – essentially deriving from the environment and natural resources sector. Being predominantly capital intensive, these sectors have not always delivered sufficient or timely gains for human development as might have been originally hoped for. Nor have the benefits which have accrued been shared widely enough.

Nowhere in the world is economic growth alone a guarantee of substantial poverty reduction. The quality of growth and of public policy settings matters in delivering human and sustainable development. Development partners present at the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting are well placed to step up their policy and technical advice to assist the Government to achieve increasingly higher quality and more inclusive growth in future. The evolution and strengthening of the partnership for development with the private sector will be critical for achieving the aims of the 8<sup>th</sup> national plan.

Another challenge which cuts across the economic, social, and environmental spectrum is climate change. SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Lao PDR already has a well-developed climate change strategy, and has completed both its first and second national communications to the UNFCCC ahead of time. The country is also strengthening its institutional arrangements to ensure a ‘whole of government’ response to climate change.

There is tremendous optimism and hope that COP 21 in Paris will deliver a new global climate agreement. As United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon has said, "Ours is the last generation that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change." Climate change is intensifying the impacts of weather-related natural disasters. Laos is located in the most disaster prone region in the world – the Asia Pacific. Ms. Clark encourage the efforts Lao PDR is making to implement the outcome of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan in March this year. The bottom line here is that ‘if development is not risk informed, it is not sustainable development’.

Ms. Clark, as the UNDP Administrator and the Chair of the UN Development Group confirmed that the UN system stands ready to support the Government and its development partners with the full implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> national plan and the Vientiane Partnership Declaration, and to support the full integration of the SDGs into the national development agenda. The UN Development Group has already developed elements of a common approach to SDG implementation called ‘MAPS’, which stands for Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support. MAPS is an approach which can be readily adjusted to the development context, challenges, and opportunities here in Lao PDR.

To conclude, Ms. Clark underlined that sustainable development is not something which happens to somebody else, somewhere else. We all have a stake in it, and Lao PDR, like every country, has work to do to progress towards it. There are challenges in the new Sustainable Development Goals for every country on earth. The good news is that our world has more wealth, more knowledge, more technologies and stronger partnerships at its disposal than ever before. The challenges we face are mostly human induced. We can tackle them, but not if we keep doing business as usual and expecting different results (Please refer to Annex 3 for the Keynote Address by Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator/Chairs of the UN Development Group).

### **3.2 Formal Signing and Launching Ceremony of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**

The Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (VD II or Vientiane Partnership Declaration) was briefly introduced by His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice Minister of Planning and Investment. The Declaration is a result of joint effort between the Government of Lao PDR and Development Partners to shift from aid effective to effective development cooperation.

H.E Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury also highlighted that the Vientiane Partnership Declaration is a vital tool to ensure greater development results in the country and will help Lao PDR to graduate from Least Developed Country Status by 2020 including an effective implementation of the post 2015 development agenda – Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs). This Vientiane Declaration builds on the five principles of the 2006 Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and adds three new principles to help ensure all funds and other forms of development assistance bring about increased impact. It calls for new, broader and smarter partnerships for results. The three new principles include – 1) Domestic Resource Mobilization, 2) South-South Cooperation, Triangular Cooperation and Knowledge Transfer and 3) Private Sector As a Development Partner.

On behalf of the Government of Lao PDR, Vice Minister stressed that the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation does not constitute a legally binding instrument, yet represents a shared aspiration and recognition between the Government and our diverse partners on how development work is managed in the country for the next ten years for better and sustainable development results.

The Government of Lao PDR is grateful to both our national stakeholders and development partners through the Vientiane Declaration Secretariat who have contributed to the substance of the Declaration. As such, a high quality Declaration has been finalised and to be formally launched during the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM with a number of signatories. To conclude the introduction, Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury stated that the Government of Lao PDR appreciates that some Development Partners are not yet in a position to sign this Declaration before or at the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM. Under these circumstances, the Government welcomes DPs' signatures as soon as possible.

Following the introduction by the Vice Minister of Planning and Investment, a formal and symbolic singing of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation was done by His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs (on behalf of the Government of Lao PDR) and Ms. Kaarina Immonen, United Nations Resident Coordinator/United Nations Development Programme Resident Representative (on behalf of Development Partners and other stakeholders).

28 Development Partners adhered to the Vientiane Partnership Declaration (15 DPs signed the Declaration and 13 endorsed the Declaration). List of these Development Partners is as follow:

#### **Signatories**

1. Asia Development Bank
2. Australia
3. Canada
4. Indonesia
5. Japan
6. Mongolia
7. New Zealand
8. Philippines
9. Russia
10. Thailand
11. Timor Leste
12. The Republic of Korea
13. The United States of America
14. United Nations
15. World Bank

### **Endorsement**

1. Brunei Darussalam
2. European Union Delegation to Lao PDR
3. Germany
4. India
5. International Monetary Fund
6. Italy
7. Cambodia
8. Malaysia
9. Myanmar
10. Norway
11. Sweden
12. Switzerland
13. The United Kingdom

After the symbolic signing of the Vientiane Partnership Declaration, Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations & Executive Secretary of The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, delivered her remarks. With the acknowledgement of the Government's leadership and the progress made in many areas for instance, a stable growth trajectory, averaging 6.9 per cent over the past two decades. This supportive environment has helped the country, among others, to halve the poverty rate, achieve gender parity in primary education, lower maternal and child mortality and improve access to basic services.

Building on the success and to tackle unfinished and emerging challenges, Dr. Akhtar stated that implementation of the SDGs calls for national and governance transformation, and addressing the vulnerabilities to which the Laotian economy is exposed. In the interests of time, Dr. Akhtar focused her remarks on a few areas which include.

- While expansionary and pro-cyclical fiscal policies will generate macroeconomic vulnerability, fiscal consolidation through development expenditure cuts will not augur well for sustainable and inclusive development. In this context, tapping the remaining tax potential of the country is one way to proceed. ESCAP's analysis confirms that most Asia-Pacific LDCs have a tax/GDP ratio potential of about five per cent. Without raising tax rates, the broadening of the tax base, elimination of exemptions and strengthening of tax administration will generate higher revenue levels.
- Focusing on agribusiness-led growth is critical, given that the Laotian population is projected to grow from about 7 million people today to about 8.8 million by 2030 and this will generate additional pressures and concerns about food and job security. This will require, among others, the promotion of greater productivity through the strengthening of farmer organizations, land concessions and developing contract farming to commercialize agriculture. Farming communities would also benefit from greater access to low-cost finance and appropriate technologies to help promote small-scale agribusinesses, including greater access to regional markets.

- Trade diversification and investment policy reform will also be critical, given Lao PDR's high dependence on commodities, the export of hydro-electric power, as well as its exceptionally high regional trade – Thailand and China alone account for a combined 83.1 per cent of Laotian exports and 86.5 per cent of imports. There is also considerable scope for the country to expand its involvement in global value chains (GVCs), as it is presently less engaged in the intermediate and processing stages of production.
- Climate Change and Natural Disaster Risk Reduction. The total estimated losses due to natural disasters in Asia-Pacific LDCs from 2004-2014 amounted to more than \$11.5 billion. Lao PDR incurred disaster losses of more than \$221 million during this period. ESCAP can support the identification, planning and implementation of policies, practices and technologies on mitigation and adaptation, which are aligned with national priorities of Lao PDR, consistent with the targets set out in Lao PDR's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution submitted to the UNFCCC.

In conclusion, Dr. Akhtar stressed that Lao PDR has an excellent opportunity to graduate from LDC status and its new National Socio-Economic Development Plan does much to advance this goal and to align national development initiatives with the new 2030 Agenda. (Please refer to Annex 4 for Dr. Akhtar's remarks on Enhanced Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation)

After the formal signing and endorsement of the Vientiane Partnership Declaration, two events were organized.

- Photo Session with the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, UNDP Administrator, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP and UNDP Director of Asia and Pacific
  1. Ministers/Vice Ministers and Governors/Vice Governors
  2. Head Delegations of Development Partners/Ambassadors and Heads/Deputy Heads of International Organisations
- Official Tour of the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM Development Cooperation Exhibition

**Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting**

His Excellency Thongloun SISOULITH  
Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

**Co-Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting**

Mr. Haoliang Xu  
UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and  
Regional Director of UNDP Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

**3.3 Session I – From the 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's to the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's – Achieving to the LDC Gradation by 2020**

**Presentation**

By H.E. Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment (Please refer to Annex 5 for the presentation slides)

**Plenary Discussion Focused Area I - Macro-economic management and growth  
Balanced regional and local development and greater regional/global integration**

- Joint statement delivered by H.E Dr. Khamlien Pholsena, Vice Minister of Ministry of Planning and Investment on behalf of Macroeconomic Working Group
- Joint statement delivered by H.E Mrs. Khemmany Pholsena, Minister of Industry and Commerce on behalf of Trade and Private Sector Working Group
- Joint statement delivered by H.E Dr. Bounchanh SINTHAVONG, Minister of Public Works and Transport on behalf of Infrastructure Sector Working Group
- Joint statement delivered by H.E Dr. Khammoune Viphongxay Vice-Minister of Home Affairs on behalf of Governance Sector Working Group
- Participants' feedbacks and comments (Australia, European Union, World Bank, Republic of Korea, INGO network, United Nations, Switzerland, Japan, Thailand, ADB, Canada, France, IMF, Indonesia, Malaysia and combined foreign chambers in Lao PDR.)

**Key discussion points**

Despite all achievements made during the past years, the macroeconomic situation remains challenging. Despite some fiscal consolidation, the situation continues to require careful attention. Debt is also an important issue to be seriously taken into account as the government puts all efforts to reduce and control debt. Further increases in public debt will crowd out resources for other priorities and may test the solvency of fiscal accounts. At the same time, growing Non-Performing Loans (NPLs) and lending to large infrastructure projects that have re-financing risk heighten the threat to financial sector and macroeconomic stability going forward.

Importantly, therefore, growth needs to become more inclusive going forward. Despite falling, poverty continues to affect around a fifth of the population while inequality widened slightly. This underscores the need to make the Budget more pro-poor, but also introduce reforms that will help generate good jobs in the private sector. In order to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth in the long term, more focus is needed on provision of job opportunities for a young population, better management of natural resources and the environment, enhancement of competitiveness of the non-resource based sector, investments in public infrastructure, and better health and educational outcomes.

The experience of the last few years has confirmed and highlighted the importance of prudent macroeconomic policies to safeguard the solvency of fiscal accounts, the health of the financial sector, and more involvement of the private sector in achieving Lao PDR's development goals.

To achieve all of these goals, some key issues that need greater attention are:

- **Government revenues:** improving revenue collection administration, reducing leakages, expanding revenue base and improving timeliness of revenue collection as well as enforcement of fiscal disciplines and law and regulations are very important. Revenue collection mechanism across the country should be consistent and streamlined in order to improve transparency. Potential revenue sources should be identified in order to improve sustainability prospects and transparency of the budget.
- **Public Expenditures:** Meeting spending targets and properly monitor disbursements. Ensure meeting debt service obligations for both domestic and externals public debt based on the fiscal capacity and debt obligations and strictly enforcement that are approved by the National Assembly. Modernize a system for managing and monitoring public expenditures in order to allow timely monthly, quarterly and annual budget reporting in a transparent and auditable manner. This can also help prevent off-budget spending. Strengthening public financial management systems and improving public budget transparency are essential elements to make best use of domestic resources for development and to reassure the markets that Laos is a place where business can invest. Also, effective budget transparency is a precondition for stronger reliance on country systems.
- **A stronger monetary transmission mechanism** helps Bank of Lao PDR to maintain low and stable inflation; while a well-regulated and supervised banking sector keeps non-performing loans (NPLs) low, which will help manage lending and provide affordable access to finance. The exchange rate policy should be managed within a range that does not jeopardize macroeconomic stability but help promote competitiveness of the Lao economy. Monetary Policy should determine the interest rate levels that help promote access to finance by the private sector.
- **Investment promotion policies for domestic and foreign investment** is also an important contributor to meeting the financing needs of the NSEDP and help reduce financial burden of the Government. It is important to promote private sector development and participation in order to foster development of the country through Public-Private Partnership channel. This will help expand the quantity and

quality of the production base, create more jobs especially for the poor but the focus should be placed on sectors that create more benefits to the society such as promoting small and medium size enterprises that are labor intensive jobs so that income generation can be more inclusive and leads to poverty reduction. Promote value chains in which large enterprises are connected with the SMEs to a certain degree in the supply chain. This will help domestic firms to survive in a more competitive environment.

- In addition, **a priority needs to be given to a promotion of private sector's initiatives in combining the utilization of modern technology with labor skills and disciplines as well as local knowledge** in order to create niche products and diversify the forms of investments.
- Over the past few years Lao PDR has become a better place to do business for both domestic and foreign firms. A number of new regulations consistent with WTO and ASEAN principles were introduced to improve predictability and transparency in regulatory environment. **Despite significant improvement in the business environment, there are still certain gaps between policy and implementation** and without reducing this gap the potential of key economic sectors is likely to go unrealized. Further improvement in the enabling environment will require a wide range of sectoral and cross-sectoral initiatives. **In particular, economic expansion must be accompanied with accordant controls to protect an already fragile and at risk environment.**
- Another key challenge will be to follow through with fuller implementation of legal reforms enacted in recent years. This will be especially challenging in a post WTO accession environment when, evidence from other post accession countries shows, reform momentum may begin to slow. Similarly, as trade and investment flows become increasing driven by the natural resource sectors, substantial efforts will need to be made to ensure that growth in the more labour-intensive non natural resource sectors is not hindered. **It is important to use existing comparative advantage in natural resources to develop other parts of the economy through the efficient use of revenues to develop skilled labor and promote export industries with proven potential.**
- **Private sector engagement must be sustained, inclusive and founded on two-way-dialogue**
  - Importance of FDI – the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and the VD II should not attempt to pick winners but promote a balanced and diverse economy focused on competitive advantage with a place not only for agriculture, tourism, energy and ICT but also services and the resources sector
  - Enabling Environment – should focus on enabling environment rather than what can be extracted from business – key priorities include:
    - Trade practices
    - Publicly accessible information and better national economic and business statistics
    - Enhanced cross-border arrangements
    - Single-Window customs to provide transparency and eliminate corruption risk
    - Improved implementation of the laws by officials
    - Ease of capital flow

- Engaging the private sector and FDI
  - o More efforts
  - o Promoting Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)
  - o Various diversity initiatives such as EITI and others
  - o Gender and Women's Empowerment
- **Quality infrastructure development is indispensable for achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth in Lao PDR.** It ensures effective and efficient utilization of resources available in the country, and helps to ensure access of local residents to basic services. By improving connectivity in the Mekong region, road networks contribute to facilitating the movement of people, goods and services, thus stimulating economies. The Lao Government is determined to play a role as a logistic center in the region by transforming the country from a 'land-locked' country to a 'land-linked' one. Prioritized investment in infrastructure will accelerate the ongoing process of regional integration, and enable Lao PDR to enjoy greater benefits from such integration.
- **To save the overall cost for road maintenance, we should take into account the life-cycle cost and pay particular attention to the quality of the work being done.** Trucks and trailers which run on trunk roads are often overloaded. Such overloading must be regulated as it causes enormous damages to the roads. Road traffic crashes are a major cause of mortality and serious injury in Laos, and lead to substantial loss of economic productivity and national resources, which is estimated at 2.7% of GDP in 2010. Reported road fatalities doubled between 2000 and 2010 (from 358 to 790) and increased to 1,054 in 2014. Improved access to safe drinking water, urban transport and CBTA are also important issues to address. Fiscal and economic feasibility needs to be taken into account in considering investment in mega projects. It is also necessary for the Lao and local Governments, to prioritise investment in infrastructure, by paying special attention to cost-effectiveness, financial feasibility of each project, etc.
- In the context of AEC integration, **LDC graduation and balanced economic growth, effective Governance will be an increasingly important catalyst in achieving national and international goals.** The past years have witnessed several successful examples of local service improvements, including the delegated responsibility to district authority to take decision on investment priorities plans. As we know, the District Development Fund model has demonstrated that if given a small untied budget, the local administration and communities can provide key MDG services for themselves. Building up from this lesson and on the self-reliance approach under Sam Sang that encourages Districts to become full-function units, **it is recommended that a percentage of the annual State Budget could be assigned for Districts and communities to directly address their off-track key services priorities.**
- In the spirit of Vientiane Partnership Declaration (or VD II), all efforts of the Government and Development Partners should be aligned to discussing and implementing ways of **strengthening local administration capacities for local poverty reduction to support the Government realize all of the MDGs/SDG and meet the LDC exit criteria.** The next thrust of our implementation must penetrate the rural and less accessible areas with improvements in public services in order to support unfinished MDG delivery and localize SDGs.

- **Sustainable development cannot be achieved by governments alone, as it requires active participation of all people.** In this sense, civil society helps channelling and encouraging the engagement of citizens at large. EU notes with concern the reports of the cancellation of the 2016 ASEAN People's Forum, as this event would be an opportunity for dialogue and partnership with civil society at ASEAN level. Partners look forward, and are committed, to work together with the Government on improving the environment for not-for-profit associations (NPAs) and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), notably by facilitating their registration and ensuring a swift and timely implementation of civil society projects. Their role as a genuine partner goes beyond, and is not limited to, the implementation of national development plans: **civil society plays a vital role in development processes and is important for putting local communities and villages at the heart of any development approach.** Till date approximately 155 Not for Profit Associations have formally registered and are able to contribute through community development activities, and development of policy formulation and advocacy. However, **there is an ongoing need to further improve the registration process by streamlining processes and continuing capacity development for all concerned parties.**
- **The legal sector has demonstrated its ability in bringing together stakeholders from all spheres to discuss and influence important changes.** The law making process has been engaging more stakeholders, Government, civil society, international community (e.g. penal code drafting process). Several evidence generation initiatives have been undertaken such as country wide public justice survey, legal sector indicators, survey on legal aid, training needs assessments which will help in advocacy, acceleration and measurement of justice sector reforms. Establishment of National Institute of Justice has furthered the agenda of human resources development in the legal sector. **This is a critical area with continued emphasis needed for promoting role of lawyers and prosecutors amongst others.**
- **Access to justice** has been improving through better legislature environment such as the PM Decision (pending) on Village Mediation Unit and draft Legal Aid Decree. Despite several ongoing **efforts to raise awareness on laws among general public law enforcement and people centered justice delivery remains a critical challenge** and should be addressed specially in the context of Asian Economic Community (AEC). Within this context, there is an appreciation of the government's reassurance to thoroughly investigate, and report on, the 2012 disappearance of Mr. Sombath Somphone, consistent with international practices and standards. There is also a request for further update on the case which will be carried out, as stated by the Government, under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process. The participants also noted that the recent UPR process was more inclusive than previous years with a wide range of stakeholders collaborating with the Government in preparing the national report. While a number of recommendations have been accepted, there is **a need to agree on an action plan and a monitoring mechanism for comprehensive follow up on UPR.**

## **Plenary Discussion - Focused Area II - The multisectoral (convergence) approach to address food and nutrition security, human development, service delivery and social sector development**

- Joint statement delivered by H.E Dr. Phouang Parisack Pravongviengkham, Vice Minister of Agriculture and Forestry on behalf of Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Working Group
- Joint statement delivered by H.E Prof. Dr. Eksavang Vongvichit, Minister of Health on behalf of Health Sector Working Group
- Joint statement delivered by H.E Mrs. Sengdeuane Lachanthaboun, Vice Minister of Education and Sports on behalf of the Education Sector Working Group
- Joint statement delivered by H.E Mr Kou Chansina, Chairman, Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision on behalf of the Illicit Drug Sector Working Group
- Participants' feedbacks and comments (United Nations, European Union, New Zealand, ADB, Luxembourg, JICA, INGO Network, France, Thailand, LNCCI and USA)

### **Key discussion points**

The 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's ambitious targets also raise attention to the need to make rapid progress in meeting the 2015 MDG targets particularly when it comes to reducing maternal mortality, addressing food and nutrition security issues, protecting environmental resources, ensuring better completion rates in education and ensuring access to clean water and sanitation in rural areas. Specially, the prevailing high rates of both stunting and underweight in children under five have fallen significantly short of MDG targets and if the same pace is maintained, it will be insufficient to meet the nutrition-related targets of the new Sustainable Development Goals.

Overall, Lao PDR has made progress in promoting gender equality. However, girls continue to face challenges in accessing and completing secondary education, the proportion of women in decision-making positions remains low, and women continue to occupy the lower rungs of the labour market.

Key discussion points relating to the second outcome of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP are summarised as follows:

#### ***Food and nutrition security***

- The proportion of undernourished people has more than halved since 1990. However, Lao children remain among the most undernourished in South-East Asia. The sustainability of results achieved for children through immunization, Vitamin A supplementation and deworming support is fragile. **Decisive action, by all partners and at all levels, will be required in the areas of food-based approaches, health, water and sanitation, as well as education, ranging from nutrition-**

**sensitive agricultural interventions to behavioural change campaigns, in order to provide integrated and sustainable solutions.**

- The 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM participants welcome the significant efforts to expand government's plans to improve nutrition. With the outcomes of the very first "National Nutrition Forum" took place two weeks before the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM, all partners fully support **the commitment to boldly tackle the nutrition challenges, including the significant scaling up of the efforts at the decentralised and community level.** The evidence shows there is **a strong correlation between agriculture, education, women's empowerment, health and nutritional outcomes.** Essentially this means that giving greater voice to women in all aspects of governance and service delivery is essential to arresting the worsening levels of nutrition and stunting. At the same time, **stakeholders urge the Government to meet its own commitments to increase spending on education and health and to increase those targets further to at least in-line with international benchmarks.** Further strengthening of health systems especially at local levels, will be crucial not only to reach off track MDG targets related to health but also to fulfill human development related LDC graduation criteria.

### *Education and human development*

- Lao PDR's integration into **the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)** will also present a number of opportunities and challenges. The 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP special importance should be assigned to **training and qualification of the labour force.** Currently, 58 percent of the population of Lao PDR is under 25 years of age. The demographic dividend, with an increase in the working-age population and a falling dependency ratio, will potentially benefit the country for decades to come. This highlights the need to increase investments in human capital development, and to create a more competitive labour force. Starting with early childhood and basic education, it will be crucial to increase access to quality education, and to move from rote learning towards high quality teaching. **Higher education as well as vocational education and training will have to increasingly respond to the requirements of the labour market. In this context, it is important to increase partnerships with the private sector.**
- Participants congratulates the Government of Lao PDR for the high priority it gives to education, as a prerequisite for sustained economic growth and poverty reduction, and for achieving its goal of graduating from least-developed country status. In particular, participants congratulate the Government for successfully expanding education access, particularly at the primary level (grades 1-5). However, rapid increases in primary school graduates continue to strain capacities to **provide good quality secondary education in Lao PDR.** Stakeholders congratulate the Government for its critical secondary education system curriculum reforms, which will extend secondary education to a 7-year cycle with **improved curriculum quality and relevance to Lao PDR's new socioeconomic context.** At the same time, further investment will be needed to ensure the effective implementation of the new curriculum, including revised contents, pedagogy, and student assessment. **Effective implementation of these reforms will be key to raise enrolment and completion rates, and to enhance the quality of the secondary education system feed-in to subsequent learning and employment.**

- **Investments in early childhood education** have a disproportionate effect on improving education outcomes, through the duration of a student's school years. In addition to protecting children from physical and emotional dangers they encounter, early childhood education contributes to positive health outcomes through improvements in hygiene, sanitation, and access to safe water.
- **The transition from primary school to lower secondary school** is the time when many children drop out. There are many reasons for this, including cost, distance, safety, and work. Additional efforts should be made to enable children to successfully make the transition to lower secondary school to continue their education.
- Education is a key contributor to reducing inequality and scaling down poverty. Ensuring that all children are able to go to school will lead to a more empowered Lao citizenry. In order for all children to be given the same opportunities for education; **special consideration should be made to students with disabilities** so they are not left behind. A lot of work has been done by the Lao government as well as civil society to ensure that education is accessible to all. Additional efforts and investments should be made in this area to ensure that disabled Lao citizens are educated and afforded the same opportunities as everyone else.
- **More efforts are greatly needed to enhance linkages across the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Higher Education System (HES), and Upper Secondary Education (USE) subsectors to produce qualified young people with relevant skills.** Training, research and academic programs must be demand-driven to meet the needs of the labor market. In addition, more engagement of companies in program development and research is needed. Professional support for teachers and trainers should be strengthened, including increased practical experience, in particular for TVET staff. Curricula must be uniform and competency-based. Reliable employment and labor market information need be readily and publically available. Management must be strengthened at levels. Going forward, it is important that we work together and focus our efforts to address these critical issues.
- Despite improvements, financing remains a key cross-cutting issue. The share of the national budget allocated to education has risen from below 12% in fiscal year FY2004/05 to 15.6% in FY2015/16, but remains below the 18% figure set in Lao PDR's Education Law. **A credible medium term budget framework with predictable budgets to enable long term planning and financing of priority education outcomes is key for the sector going forward** to achieve the objectives in the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, the Education Sector Development Plan 2015-2020 and the National Human Resource Development (NHRD) Strategy to 2025. All stakeholders stand ready to support the Government in these efforts.
- **For the immediate term in support the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP,** Ministry of Education and Sport together with development partners will focus their efforts on the following areas:
  - The 56 most educationally disadvantaged districts will need to be checked again to identify districts with poor primary education indicators such as net enrolment rate; dropout, repetition rate and survival rate. Then it needs to

place internal and external investment in school construction, dormitories, water and sanitation facilities, training teachers and village education development committees and provide financial resources for communities to apply it to school development

- Extend pre-primary classes for 5 year old children and increase pre-primary construction, implement community based readiness program to increase enrolment of 3-5 year old group children while at the same time improve the quality of learning outcomes
- Continue providing school block grant so that schools will have a budget for school management and necessary teaching and learning materials
- Develop a literacy based primary curriculum for primary education, provide additional inputs to schools to improve teaching and materials, and develop a strategy to support a literacy based primary curriculum
- Regularly conduct labour market surveys in coordination with other Ministries such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare to provide more information for students and unemployed people in order to promote opportunities in the areas of specific labour shortages
- There is a need to commit to increase the efficiency within our sector with efficient and equitable teacher supply.

### *Health*

- Lao PDR has made significant achievements in reforming the health sector and building resilient health systems. It is among the top three countries worldwide for reducing maternal mortality. However, **increased focus is required on areas, such as maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, non-communicable diseases, as well as emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases.** There is still only 1 doctor for every 5,000 patients, limiting universal access to healthcare, a critical component of sustainable development and poverty reduction. A focused approach on **investment in human resources for health** is therefore crucial in ensuring access to quality health care services. **Sustained commitment for accelerating water and sanitation in rural areas will also be essential.**
- Some key challenges and lessons learnt for health sector include
  - The increased input such as **workforces and domestic budget allocation to health sector** must be more efficiently used by improving managerial capacity such as planning and monitoring at all level, especially at sub-national level, shifting from input-based to result-based management with effective use of the national core indicators for M&E.
  - **Service availability and readiness** at all health facilities need to be regularly monitored and continuously improved.
  - **Quality of the health services** that satisfy people's demands is challenge.

- **Inequity between the urban and the remote** as well as the rich and the poor should be carefully addressed.
- **Public and Private Partnership** needs to be innovatively sought.
- To help address key challenges, an overall objective of health sector in the next 5 years is to contribute to graduation from least developed country status, which requires reduction of mortality rate of child under five years old from 71 per 1,000 live births in 2014 down to 45 and reduction of malnutrition status, especially child chronic malnutrition (stunting) and underweight from 44% and 27% in 2011 to 28% and 15%, respectively, by **scaling up the implementation of action plans under the new national Nutrition strategy and Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) strategy**. Reduction of maternal mortality is still priority because of the unacceptably high rate compared to the neighboring countries in this region. In the long run, **Universal Health Coverage with an adequate package of services and appropriate financial protection** should be assured for a vast majority of the population by 2025.
- Specially, in order to achieve the health objectives and address the challenges mentioned above, it is important to accelerate the implementation of health sector reform with 5 pillars: Health Human Resource, Health Financing, Governance/Management/Coordination, Service Delivery and Health Information Systems. Also, **we must build nutrition as a main streaming issue across all sector programmes**. For the central Government, **allocation of at least 9% of the national budget to the health sector and at least 1,136 quotas to the sector every year** need to be materialized. Critically, **the local Government will need to assure deployment of such new workforces allocated to health facilities**.

#### *Agriculture and rural development*

- Strategically, trade expansion in agriculture products is a policy to reduce poverty, with linkages upstream to smallholder producers and downstream to domestic agribusiness. However, **public investments in transport and trade infrastructure are needed to attract quality foreign direct investment that contributes** to (i) capital investments for mechanization, technology transfer, increased productivity, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) development; (ii) access to regional markets; and, (iii) private financing for agricultural modernization, value-added processing, and cross-border trade. In addition, **further public and private investments in irrigation** are required to increase rice productivity for food security, reserves, and export; to diversify farming systems for nutrition security; and to strengthen resilience to climate instability.
- Going forward, there should be a strong focus on value addition, both in terms of **improving the value of agricultural products, and inclusive benefits at all stages of the value chain**; this is the key to sustainable commercial growth in the agriculture sector. Interventions across agriculture value chains need to be carefully considered. What is needed to add value and what is affordable? Poorly planned and executed interventions may skew benefits towards one group at the cost to another. This can undermine the long-term development of the agriculture sector and may

create market distortions. Careful consideration is needed of where public spending can do the most good for the most people. Public sector spending should be targeted to reduce risk and facilitate high quality private sector investment. Infrastructure supporting higher value agriculture activities and agri-business needs to support the livelihoods of as many people as is practical, and especially those who are disadvantaged.

- The agricultural sector in Lao PDR is undergoing significant changes. Commercial agriculture is linking up to global markets with winners and losers where contracts are fair and sustainable and smallholders can benefit from increased opportunities. With improved technology, knowledge, land tenure security and sustainable practices, the agricultural sector can contribute to both food security and nutrition objectives as well as create income and employment. **The future of agriculture lies with future generations, young people with knowledge and skills to make agriculture a sound business, and an enabling environment for them to do so.**
- **Documenting and communicating on how to promote our comparative advantages through the development of agricultural value chains, contract farming and inter professional organizations (such as for the coffee sector)** constitutes a key area of work and important factor to inspire sustainable socio economic development. Lao PDR also urgently needs to develop better systems for post-harvest, food processing, certification of agricultural products and improve its environment for quality private investment, cross-border trade and regional cooperation. Improving agricultural statistics, rural advisor services and enhancing the capacity of our sector staff will be necessary to reach these objectives. Promoting land tenure security for small holder farmers is also crucial for sustainable land management and agricultural investment and was also well studied and documented by our members.
- The National Agro-Biodiversity Program has been formulated as a framework for conservation and sustainable use, and it will serve as a mechanism for compliance of international agreements (The Convention on Biological Diversity - CBD, the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture - ITPGRFA, Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture - CGRFA) to which Lao PDR is a party. **The promotion of agro ecological practice (at national and regional level) such as organic farming, conservation agriculture and agro-forestry** will contribute to the emergence and expansion of new livelihoods for small holders and lead to a more resilient and sustainable economic growth. Therefore, it is important to encourage all our partners, including the private sector, to promote and invest in Lao PDR's agro biodiversity.
- A topic that is becoming more and more important and is possibly the most significant factor that will shape the sector in the near future: Climate Change. The observable **changes to the climate, actually calls for new technical and institutional approaches within the agriculture and forestry sectors.** Soil and upstream forest resources in particular must be preserved as they provide indispensable nutrients and water for agriculture and people. Most recently, and for the first time in Lao PDR, we experienced a major outbreak of a native locust species in the North Eastern part of the Country that we can attribute partly to climate change. Establishing some tools in order to anticipate future outbreaks has been in the process but further research and cooperation is necessary at national and regional

level. In the same time, the implementation and expansion of all the possible responses to increasing the sectors' productivity and resilience need to happen.

### *Illicit drug control*

- During 2015, a new **National Drug Control Master Plan** was drafted, which will be implemented until 2020. The new plan is based on a review of the 2009 – 2015 Master Plan, and offers a set of evidence based and pragmatic measures to mitigate the harmful effects of illicit drugs in the Lao PDR.
- The Master Plan outlines nine priority areas on which to focus its efforts over the next five years. While the Lao Government recognises the need to step up its own investments, further support and funding is needed from development partners to tackle these important and difficult issues. **The first priority outlined in the master plan is to expand research and data about illicit drugs in the Lao PDR, to help policy-makers better understand how many people use illicit drugs in Laos, what drugs they use, and how those drugs are used.**
- Based on the success of projects under the previous Master Plan offering alternative development interventions to communities growing illicit crops, Lao PDR wishes to scale up **investments in alternative development projects to decrease the amount of opium being grown in remote areas of Lao PDR.**
- At the same time, **Lao PDR will look to continue its shift towards a public health approach to drug use. The community based care and treatment model** will become increasingly critical, as drug use in Laos is believed to be spreading from urban to rural areas. While the Lao Government is investing in treatment options, interventions will be more effective if supported by development partners.
- In addition, it is necessary to strengthen **the capacity of law enforcement agencies** by providing capacity building training and equipment to investigate and collect the evidence needed to prosecute and convict the heads of drug trafficking rings. **Better information sharing with foreign intelligence, law enforcement, and defence agencies** will allow both Lao and foreign counterparts to identify areas and ways in which organised crime can be effectively targeted to prevent drug syndicates using Laos as a transit route for drugs bound for markets in third countries.

**Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting delegated by His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR and Minister of Foreign Affairs**

His Excellency Somdy Douangdy  
Minister of Planning and Investment

**Co-Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting**

Mr. Haoliang Xu  
UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and  
Regional Director of UNDP Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

**Plenary Discussion Focused area III: Environment and sustainable management of natural resources Climate change, natural disaster preparedness and risk mitigation and agricultural production and stability**

- Joint statement delivered By Vice Minister of Natural Resources and Environment  
On behalf of the Natural Resources and Environment Sector Working Group
- Joint statement delivered By H.E. Mr. Bounheang Douangphanchanh, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, President of the National Leading Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication and Chairman of the NRA Board On behalf of the UXO Sector Working Group
- Participants' feedbacks and comments (United Nations, EU, Germany, France, Switzerland, INGO Network, World Bank and USA)

**Key discussion points**

Currently, Lao PDR's natural resource-based economy is driven by agriculture, forestry, hydropower and minerals extraction, and these sectors account for more than half of the country's total wealth. The Government has stated that there is a need to diversify the economy, to ensure robust natural resource management and increase environmental sustainability. These measures will contribute towards mitigating and adapting to climate change, and strengthening the country's resilience to natural disasters. the Government has improved many aspects of the policy and regulatory frameworks relating to natural resources and the environment over the past five years, but monitoring and enforcement are the challenges.

Some key discussion point on the third outcome of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP are summarised as follows:

*Natural Resource and Environment*

- The Natural Resources and Environment Sector is guided by the Vision of making **“Keeping Lao PDR Green, Clean and Beautiful, based on Green Economic Growth, to achieve sustainable development towards modern industrialization, and ensure the resilience to climate change impact and natural disaster”**. Leading to this vision is the green growth pathway that will strategically manage natural resources to support the national economic development.

- **Lao PDR is being represented at the historic global conference on climate change** by the high level delegation with strong signals to the world that Lao PDR is committed to supporting the global goal to limit temperature rise to 2 degrees Celsius. Government of Lao PDR, with the support of development partners, has methodically outlined such commitment in the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) submitted for the global synthesis to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The mitigation and adaptation commitments were deliberated through robust, inclusive, cross- sectoral stakeholder engagement during data collection, formulation and approval.
- **Forests are very interlinked to climate change for both mitigation and adaptation.** There has been continued government priority and effort with support from development partners towards reducing deforestation and forest degradation. National Forestry Strategy is now in implementation, Forest Law is now completed, and the National Committee on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation is being established.
- **The sector 5-year Action Plan, 10-year Strategy, and 15-year Vision** have now been adopted. In addition, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the development partners have collectively worked on establishing the Sector as one of the three pillars of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan. Furthermore, the Environmental Protection Law was approved and many decrees are being updated. As Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has limited human and financial resources, but with a huge mandate, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment has conducted a comprehensive review of the division of labor between central and local level on natural resource and environment management, carefully allocating human resources and budget.
- Whilst progress has been made, **sustainable management of the environment and natural resources needs a greater sense of urgency.** Laos' fragile environment is risked both by illegal and unregulated exploitation as well as climate change. The participants encourage the Lao government to include sustainable management of natural resources into national policies, strategies, laws and to put greater emphasis on biodiversity protection, while taking more effective action on illegal wildlife trafficking. In this sense, monitoring of the implementation of the already existing policies and strategies as well as law enforcement is equally important. Some key challenges and lessons learnt include:
  - First, **the limitations of available financial resources and human resources in both quantity and quality are impediments for the Natural Resources and Environment Sector to perform the truly cross-cutting functions.** Coordination is fundamental to collaborate with ministries and departments that oversee development in the energy, mining, infrastructure, agriculture, health sectors and more. However, the current situation consists of heavy reliance on external financing and low capacity to monitor and enforce compliance in development activities.
  - Second challenge is achieving **good governance surrounding natural resources and environmental protection.** Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and development partners have worked persistently on

introducing and revising laws and decrees. However, illegal logging, wildlife trafficking, and non-compliance are found to plague our environment and rapidly deplete natural resource endowment.

- Third challenge is **the alignment to the national priorities**. The development cooperation has to be in line with the national development priorities and compatible to the local circumstances. In addition, some international practices and techniques that have been applied might not suit well to some certain areas or conditions in Lao PDR. Through frequent discussions, there have been aware of these issues and there is an attempt to continue to get these sorted out accordingly for the future.
- Reflecting on these achievements and challenges, the Government carefully considers the opportunities and collectively commit to a common way forward.
  - First, **inter-ministerial coordination on the laws, compliance, monitoring, and enforcement must be strengthened**. It is important to establish active communication channels with Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and all relevant stakeholders to safeguard the environmental quality and management. The existing economic and livelihood activities can improve their environmental impact and sustainability towards a green growth pathway through improved governance and greater respect to rule of law. An important opportunity lies in the Lao Government's Legal Sector Master Plan officially adopted in 2009, which includes commitment to become a Rule of Law country by 2020.
  - Second, **we must explore alternative ways to develop our natural resources and environmental services, aside from the primary, low value-added extractive use of natural resources**. Non-extractive uses of natural resources, such as nature-based tourism that conserve – rather than extract – the natural capital while creating much more quantity and higher quality of jobs hold great potential for economic and social development. And small-medium enterprises in energy-efficient and or low-emissions appliances and in the services of conservation or reducing pollution can be fostered. These are concrete ways towards green growth that deviate from unsustainable depletion of finite resources.
  - As grand and vast is the environment surrounding us, the potential embedded in the Natural Resources and Environment is great for improving our livelihood and providing new economic driver. We need close coordination among ministries and development partners towards turning our weakness into strength. Lao PDR is a least-developed landlocked country with high vulnerabilities to the changing climate, disasters, and the risk of resource-curse. There is a timely opportunity to access funds related to the environment and climate change. But in order to not only gain access to these funds but also to utilize the resources effectively and efficiently – the country's overall aid effectiveness and donor coordination cannot be emphasized enough. At the heart of the second Vientiane Declaration, we need to reinforce **the importance of this harmonization and collaboration – which will enable Lao PDR**

**to capitalize on bigger opportunities to truly shift our development path towards a greener growth.**

### *Land and security of land ownership*

- Efforts to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems within Lao PDR will need to **incorporate security of land ownership** as it will bring various benefits to the country as a whole. For instance, efforts to ensure land tenure security will provide land owners with confidence in the surety of their land ownership that will encourage them to conserve their natural resources and adopt sustainable management practices. It will also provide social stability and enable efforts to guarantee year-round food security and create the conditions for poverty reduction. Finally, ensuring land tenure security will engender investor confidence in Laos enabling economic development
- The 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM participants welcome recent signals from the Government that expropriation for private purpose will not be included in the National Land Policy. Participants encourage the government to allow **expropriation for public purpose only**. A major part in this will be to establish **a commonly understood and fixed definition of ‘public purpose’** and to ensure that this is uniformly applied in all cases.
- This would contribute to improved tenure security in line with ASEAN regulations and bilateral investment protection agreements. There is **a request for the Government to acknowledge and protect customary rights in order to secure the livelihoods especially of rural and vulnerable groups**. Customary land tenure rights will need to be fully recognized as a means to formal land tenure security.
- In case of expropriation of titled or customary lands, affected parties should receive full, fair and prior compensation – both in cases of individually and communally held land. Lao PDR should also work to ensure **full transparency around the land concession process**, empowering the National Assembly in its scrutiny role in this regard.
- Communal land titling should also be promoted and be accepted as a means to formal land ownership. This would serve to protect the most vulnerable poor who have the least access to privately owned land and instead rely on **rights of use of communal land**.

### *Unexposed Ordnance and Mine Action*

- **The UXO sector in Lao PDR is experiencing a very positive period**. For instance, the implementation by all humanitarian clearance operators of the evidence-based survey methodology has more than doubled the number of cluster munitions found per hectare; and the efforts to identify cluster munitions contaminated areas in line with the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) are continuing apace. Efforts in Mine Risk Education continue, and continue to improve, and the number of accidents and casualties continues to fall. A Victim Assistance Strategy now outlines the way forward for supporting survivors. The

sector is committed to strengthen increasing of national capacity building on the management of the UXO issue.

- In the next year, Lao PDR will, with the Chairmanship of the Association of South East Asian Nations, have more opportunity than ever to **communicate this progress to the world, and to show what remains to be done to rid the country of the terrible legacy of cluster munitions and UXO**. This is an opportunity that we must grab with both hands, with pride in our achievements, and openness about the remaining challenges for the sector. Partners are committed to support the Government in this endeavor.
- With the progress and achievements made, **lessons learnt for the implementation of the sector** for the years to come include:
  - **Data and survey** - for the maximum developmental impact to be achieved, we need greater collaboration across the sector to both plan and report on the real impact of our work; from the Government and Line Ministries setting the priorities, to National Regulatory Authority for UXO and Mine Action (NRA) coordination of the sector, to the operators on the ground.
  - **Clearance** - with a growing number of confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and an ambitious list of Focal Development Areas, the sector is in need of clearer guidance on how to prioritise among the thousands of clearance tasks ahead.
  - **Victim Assistance** - the support of all partners will be needed to turn from strategy to implementation, and the further development of a broader disability sector, encompassing UXO victims, is a priority.
  - Further **integrating the UXO Sector activities into the broader national planning and budgeting framework** to ensure that all UXO related activities effectively advances national development priorities.

### 3.4 Session II – Global Partnership for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals “SDGs” – SDGs in the context of the Development of Lao PDR

#### Presentation

By H.E Saleumxay Kommasith, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs (Please refer to Annex 6 for the presentation slides)

#### Plenary Discussion

- Participants’ feedbacks and comments (United Nations, INGO Network, EU and Thailand).

#### Key discussion points

- The 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM participants congratulate the Government on **championing the Millennium Development Goals** through their incorporation into the national priorities and goals. This has resulted in significant improvements to people’s lives.
  - Between 1992 and 2013, around one and a half million people have been lifted out of poverty. Those who remain under the poverty line are on average less poor today.
  - Lao PDR has achieved universal coverage of primary enrolment rates with parity between boys and girls in primary education.
  - For each 1,000 children born, 100 more will live to celebrate their fifth birthday than 20 years ago. Lao PDR has also achieved the MDG targets on maternal mortality, and safe water and sanitation. These are significant and tangible successes.
- At the same time we cannot be complacent. **Many important targets will not be achieved, such as those on Nutrition, School Retention, Child Mortality, Universal Access to Reproductive Health, Forest Coverage, and Unexploded Ordnance Clearance – Lao PDR’s unique 9<sup>th</sup> MDG.**
- **The unfinished business of the MDGs will be carried forward, and linked with new and emerging challenges through the global Sustainable Development Goals** - the 17 Goals and 169 targets for 2030, which have been adopted this September by the 193 UN member states.
- **The SDGs represent the inter-connectedness of the economic, social and environmental pillars of development.** This will require Lao PDR to think in **an integrated manner in designing their policy choices.** It is an ambitious, bold and universal development agenda.
- The Sustainable Development Goals will guide global development and serve as the yardstick against which success is measured between now and 2030. **While they are**

**global, by design, they require national Governments to take ownership and make them their own.** In this regard, there is a request for the Government of Lao PDR to:

- **Incorporate the agenda into national and local strategies, plans, and budgets, including the strengthening of data and statistics.** The 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan is aligned to over two thirds of the relevant SDG targets. Mainstreaming will ensure that funding and actions are focused where they can make the biggest difference.
- **Identify the bottlenecks and obstacles** to making progress on goals and targets, and to identify actions which can accelerate progress on multiple targets at the same time.
- On policy support, the Partners can provide **coordinated advice and technical assistance, drawing on our experience, expertise and global networks.**
- **SDG 17 emphasizes the importance of inclusive partnerships, with the participation of all stakeholders - including civil society, the private sector and all people - to implement the SDG agenda.** Development Partners stated their support for the realization of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP including SDGs and look forward to further enhanced partnership as reinforced by the Vientiane Partnership Declaration.
- **Inclusive dialogue and consultations** such as the round table process will help the Government and its partners move closer to a common understanding of what sustainable development means for Lao PDR, and how the goals could be achieved together. A number of partners are supporting the principles embedded in the Vientiane Partnership Declaration, for a more effective collaboration to help Lao PDR reach its development aspirations.
- **Awareness raising and social mobilization** are critical to building a broad based consensus for change and for granting inclusiveness. Participation at the local and national levels will ensure that development is equitable and inclusive of children, young people and the most vulnerable groups. Ensuring a Social Inclusiveness perspective in all aspects of policy and legislation, effective implementation and enforcement of existing legal frame works and policies provide for equal opportunities and contribute to the reduction of poverty in Lao PDR.
- Importantly, the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM participants stated that one of the strong commitments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is that **“no one will be left behind”**. This commitment is introduced in the preamble of the declaration and reaffirmed strongly across most goals and targets. The article 23 calls for people who are vulnerable to be empowered. They are further described as **“all children, youth, persons with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, older persons, indigenous people, refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants.”** Sustainable Development Goal 10 looks specifically at reducing inequality within and among countries and engage states to **“promote social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”**.

- The 8th NSEDP reflects this commitment in announcing inclusive economic growth and in considering **gender and youth inclusion among its cross cutting elements**. The progresses made in recent years in reaching the most vulnerable groups exist and must be further encouraged. It is well known that **women, children, youth, ethnic groups and persons with disabilities experience poverty differently**. These groups are more vulnerable and therefore special conditions must be facilitated to both safeguard and promote their right to self-determination, participation, protection and development. **Promoting their participation in decision making and equipping them with the skills, knowledge and resources to actively partake in socio-economic development** is essential to realizing the goals of a people-centered development model as intended under Lao Constitution and prescribed by the NSEDP Growth with Equity framework.

### 3.5 Official Closing

His Excellency Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment as a Delegated Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM on behalf of His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR and Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted key discussion points as documented under section I of this report (An Executive Summary). Prior to the summary made by His Excellency Somdy Douangdy, Mr. Haoliang Xu also provided remarks to capture the importance of all key discussion points during the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM.

His Excellency Somdy Douangdy stated that all discussion points will be reported back to the Government who will then ask relevant agencies to translate them into implementation actions.

### 3.6 Press Conference

After the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM, His Excellency Somdy Douangdy and Mr. Haoliang Xu provided an opportunity for both national and international press members to ask questions about the outcomes of the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM.

## **IV. Summary of post-HL RTM debriefing with the President of Lao PDR**

With the success of the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM, its outcomes (summary of the discussion points as stated in section I of this report) were then reported back to the President of Lao PDR, His Excellency Choummaly Sayasone on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2015 at the Office of the President of Lao PDR.

Heading the Delegation to report the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM outcome are His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (on behalf of the Government) and Mr. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of UNDP Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (on behalf of Development Partners). Accompanying His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith and Mr. Haoliang Xu are ambassadors and heads of international organisations including UNDP, Japan, France, Delegation of the European Union, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, USA, Vietnam, Thailand, Australia, Malaysia and the Republic of Korea.

**Annex 1:**

**Agenda of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting 2015**

**The 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting 2015**  
**“Enhanced Partnership for Effective Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup>**  
**National Socio-Economic Development Plan – Achieving the**  
**LDC Graduation by 2020”**

**27<sup>th</sup> November 2015**  
**International Cooperation and Training Center**  
**Vientiane, Lao PDR**

**Provisional Agenda**

**Morning**

08:00 – 8:30 Registration

**Official opening**

08:30 – 09:00 **Official Opening Keynote Address**  
By His Excellency Thongsing Thammavong  
The Prime Minister of the Lao PDR

09:00 – 09:30 **Keynote Address**  
By Ms. Helen Clark  
UNDP Administrator and Chair of the UN Development Group

**Formal Signing and Launching Ceremony of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**

09:30 – 09:35 **Brief introduction to the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**  
By His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury  
Vice Minister of Planning and Investment

09:35 – 09:40 **Signing Ceremony of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**

**For the Government of Lao PDR**  
His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith  
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

**For Development Partners**  
Ms. Kaarina Immonen  
UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative

09:40 – 09:50 **Remarks on Enhanced Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation**

By Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

### Associated Events

- 09:50 – 09:55 Photo Session with the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, UNDP Administrator, the Executive Secretary of ESCAP and UNDP Director of Asia and Pacific
3. Ministers/Vice Ministers and Governors/Vice Governors
  4. Head Delegations of Development Partners/Ambassadors and Heads/Deputy Heads of International Organisations
- 09:55 – 10:10 - Official Tour of the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM Development Cooperation Exhibition
- Coffee Break

### Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting

His Excellency Thongloun SISOULITH  
Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

### Co-Chair of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting

Mr. Haoliang Xu  
UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of UNDP Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

### Session I – From the 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's to the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's – Achieving to the LDC Graduation by 2020

- 10:10 – 10:30 **Presentation on the 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's key achievements/challenges/lessons learnt and the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's goals, priorities and implementation measures**  
By His Excellency Somdy Douangdy  
Minister of Planning and Investment

### 10:30 – 11:30 **Plenary Discussion - Focused Area I**

#### **1.1 Macro-economic management and growth**

- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chairs of Macro-Economic Working Group (5 minutes intervention)
- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chairs of Trade and Private Sector Working Group (5 minutes intervention)

#### **1.2 Balanced regional and local development and greater regional/global integration**

- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chairs of Infrastructure Sector Working Group (5 minutes intervention)
- Key speaker: A representative of Chairs and Co-Chair of Governance Sector Working Group (5 minutes intervention)

**1.3 Followed by Open Discussion (40 minutes)**

11:30 – 12:30 **Plenary Discussion - Focused Area II**

**2.1 The multisectoral (convergence) approach to address food and nutrition security**

- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chairs of Agriculture and Rural Development SWG (5 minutes intervention)
- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chairs of Health (5 minutes intervention) (Note – Chair of Health SW – Ministry of Health will also speak on behalf of Food and Nutrition Security Secretariat)

**2.2 Human Development, Service delivery and social sector development**

- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chair of Education SWG (5 minutes intervention)
- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chairs of Illicit Drug Control SWG (5 minutes intervention)

**2.3 Followed by Open Discussion (40 minutes)**

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch

**Afternoon**

Session I - continued

13:30 – 14:30 **Plenary Discussion - Focused area III**

**3.1 Environment and sustainable management of natural resources**

**3.2 Climate change, natural disaster preparedness and risk mitigation and agricultural production and stability**

- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chair of Environment and Natural Resource Management SWG (5 minutes intervention)
- Key speaker: A representative of Chair and Co-Chair of UXO SWG (5 minutes intervention)

**3.3 Followed by Open Discussion (50 minutes)**

<b>Session II – Global Partnership for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals “SDGs”</b>
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14:30 – 14:45 **Presentation on Global Partnership for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals – SDGs in the context of the Development of Lao PDR**

By His Excellency Saleumxay Kommasith  
Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs

14:45 – 15:45 **Plenary discussion**

15:45 – 16:10 Coffee break and refreshment

<b>Official Closing</b>
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16:10 – 16:20 **Remarks**

Mr. Haoliang Xu

UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and  
Regional Director of UNDP Bureau for Asia and the Pacific

16:20 – 16:30 **Official Wrap-up and Closing**

His Excellency Thongloun SISOULITH

Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR

Minister of Foreign Affairs

<b>The High Level Round Table Meeting's Press Conference</b>
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17:00 – 17:30 **Press Conference**

- By His Excellency Thongloun SISOULITH, Deputy Prime Minister of  
Lao PDR, Minister of Foreign Affairs

- By Mr. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary-General, UNDP Assistant  
Administrator and Regional Director of UNDP Bureau for Asia and the  
Pacific

**Annex 2:**

**Official Opening Keynote Address by the Prime Minister of  
Lao PDR**

**Opening Remarks by  
His Excellency Mr. Thongsing Thammavong,  
Prime Minister of the Lao People's Democratic Republic  
at the Opening Ceremony of the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Roundtable Meeting  
Vientiane, 27 November 2015**

- Madam Helen Clark, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and Chair of the United Nations Development Group;
- Distinguished Delegates;
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to extend my warm welcome to all delegates and especially to Madam Helen Clark, the United Nations Development Program's Administrator and Chair of the United Nations Development Group as well as to Ms. Shamshad Akhtar, UN Under Secretary General and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for attaching great importance to and honoring us with your presence here at this 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Roundtable Meeting being held today in Vientiane.

I would also like to commend and express my gratitude to UNDP as well as to all UN agencies and Development Partners for extending your continued support and close cooperation to our concerned government authorities in the preparation for organizing this High Level Roundtable Meeting.

This High Level Roundtable Meeting reflects the joint efforts and shared responsibility by the Lao Government and Development Partners which provides a platform for consultation and exchange of views on development in the Lao PDR. At the same time, I do hope that all Development Partners working within the country and those who have travelled here from abroad will continue to pledge your commitments in supporting the Lao PDR to implement our National Socio-Economic Development Plan, particularly in addressing the issues of poverty and towards graduating from the Least Developed Country status by 2020.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

2015 is of great significance as a number of important events have taken place in the Lao PDR, especially the finalization of implementation of our 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the preparation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year NSEDP (2016-2020). In addition, at a global level it is also the final stage of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals and the transition into attaining Sustainable Development Goals which include some of the off-track MDGs.

Moreover, 2015 also marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and throughout the last 4 decades of development starting from healing wounds of war to safeguarding and advancing national development cause through the implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Plans with remarkable achievements recorded. The Lao PDR has maintained firm political stability and place social order, which have laid a solid foundation for a steady economic growth and gradually improve the living conditions of our people.

The Lao PDR has deployed all its utmost efforts and attached great importance to poverty reduction and created all favorable conditions in order to graduate from the LDC status and move towards sustainable development path. Among the most outstanding efforts is the introduction of “three level development” initiative known as “*Sam-Sang*” that is making a province as the strategic body, a district as a comprehensively strong body, and a village as development body with a view to increasing a sense of ownership and delegating more authority to local administrations. In addition, we have continued to implement existing policies namely in maintaining stable economic growth, giving priority to human resources development, modernizing industrial sector, ensuring sustainable environment, among others.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since its inception in 1983, the Roundtable Process has provided a forum for Development Partners to pledge their supports to the Lao Government which has made important contribution to socio-economic development of the Lao PDR reflected in a number of areas namely:

- A steady economic growth particularly Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has increased and the Lao PDR is included in the list of low middle income countries.
- On social-cultural sector particularly basic infrastructure has been improved providing greater access to education, public health, vocational training, clearance of unexploded ordnances, among others.
- Our regional and international cooperation has been significantly enhanced and the Lao PDR has become member of the World Trade Organization since 2013 and the country is now joining the ASEAN Economic Community end of this year 2015.

On behalf of the Lao Government and people, taking this opportunity I would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to all Development Partners and all friendly countries for the valuable support and assistance rendered to us in our national development process.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the above-mentioned achievements, we continue to encounter and overcome some daunting challenges in particular to maintain a sustained and stable economic growth, natural disaster and climate change, remnants of wars and UXO which require huge amount of financial resources as well as in addressing poverty among the people living in the areas contaminated by UXO that continue to pose major threats to people’s livelihoods.

In the coming years, we will deploy all our efforts in the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020) by ensuring successful and tangible result with particular attention given to the following areas:

- 1) Redoubling greater efforts in the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Five- Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan by adopting more concrete measures in order to achieve 3 main objectives namely economic, socio-cultural and environment. Continue to sustain economic growth and ensure macroeconomic stability with GDP growth rate of not less than 7% per annum.
- 2) Enhance ownership in the implementation and fulfilling of the given tasks and mandates at all levels namely within the line-ministries, departments and local administrations in a harmonized manner in streamlining the Sustainable Development Goals and the off-track MDG targets in to the National Social-Economic Development Plans.
- 3) Ensure readiness and putting in place all necessary preparations in all aspects within the framework of ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by improving and enhancing some of the key areas and responsibilities namely institutional capacity building in order to ensure quality of growth and sustainable development, promote greater participation of the private sector in development, strengthen effective development cooperation including the South-South and Triangular cooperation.
- 4) Promote advocacy initiatives and programs on environmental protection among the local population especially the youth on environmental friendly measures in development so as to ensure green growth as well as the implementation of sustainable socio-economic development and environmental protection. At the same time, various measures must be put in place in order to mitigate the impact caused by unpredictable natural disasters.
- 5) Promote good governance and sound management through the implementation of the Sam Sang initiative in a tangible manner.

Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, let me express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all Development Partners, friendly countries and international organizations for your unwavering financial and technical support and assistance extended to us in the implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> Five Year NSEDP (2011-2015) and in attaining the Millennium Development Goals in the Lao PDR, which have led to some significant outcomes. On this note, I do hope that Development Partners will continue to render your support and assistance to the Lao PDR for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the 8<sup>th</sup> Five-Year NSEDP.

On behalf of the Lao Government, I wish to reaffirm our firm commitment and determination in ensuring strong partnership and management of Official Development Assistance in a transparent, effective, sustainable manner, and to reach-out to the people who are in need.

With existing friendly relations and traditional cooperation between Lao PDR and all the friendly countries, international organizations and Development Partners, I am confident that this 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Roundtable Meeting will be convened in a constructive atmosphere and achieve successful outcome.

I wish Madam Helen Clark and all delegates attending this Roundtable Meeting a very good health and happiness.

May I now, I declare that the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Roundtable meeting is officially open.

Thank you.

**Annex 3:**

**Keynote Address by Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator  
and Chair of the UN Development Group**

**Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator: Keynote Address at the 12th High Level Round Table Meeting Vientiane, Lao PDR**

Your Excellency Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong  
Your Excellency Deputy Prime Minister Thongloun Sisoulith  
Excellencies and Ambassadors,  
Development Partners,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be back in Lao PDR to open this 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting with the Prime Minister.

It has been five years since my last visit to this beautiful country, and this is my fourth visit since 1998. I know Lao PDR as a country of great cultural and environmental richness, and I know how hard it is working to meet its national development aspirations and the internationally agreed development goals.

This High Level Round Table Meeting is a very important forum for the Government of Laos and a growing range of stakeholders, including development partners, to engage directly in policy discussion and consensus building around Lao PDR's development strategies. Here we can:

- discuss how to link global and regional agendas to the national agenda;
- take stock of the work being done in each major development sector;
- examine together the tangible development results being achieved; and
- align the combined resources and energies of partners around the priorities of the Government's 8<sup>th</sup> National Social and Economic Development Plan (NSEDP).

I am especially encouraged to see the broad spectrum of stakeholders gathered, including senior government policy and decision makers, senior representatives from development partners and international organizations, colleagues from across the UN family, and - important for enriching our discussions – representatives from the business community and civil society.

*Lao PDR's Leadership and Progress on the MDGs*

Over the past fifteen years Lao PDR has been a champion of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Through successive National Social and Economic Development Plans, Lao PDR's commitment to the MDGs has been strong. His Excellency President Choummaly Sayasone has contributed to meetings of the United Nations General Assembly on global development, most recently in September this year.

The country achieved many MDG targets ahead of schedule. Significant development gains have been demonstrated in education, child health, maternal health, gender equality, and access to safe drinking water and sanitation.

Looking at Lao PDR's progress from 1992, beginning from a position of being one of the poorest nations in Asia, Lao PDR had reduced its national poverty rate by half, from 46 per cent to 23 per cent by 2012, thereby achieving the MDG poverty target.

Over the same period Lao PDR sustained strong economic growth averaging above 7 per cent per annum. Gross National Income (GNI) per capita reached US\$ 1,600 in 2014, and is expected to exceed US\$ 2,400 by the end of the decade.

The Government gave strong leadership on the MDG agenda, fully integrating the goals and targets in its national plans and programmes. The United Nation's MDG acceleration framework is being used on the food and nutrition target under MDG 1. Development partners have been consistently supportive of MDG progress.

The designation of an "MDG 9" on the clearance of cluster munitions by Lao PDR was an important national innovation. It highlighted an additional formidable challenge which the country faces - that of an estimated 8.7 million hectares of land contaminated by unexploded ordinance (UXO). I understand that the Government has recently adopted a new methodology for locating and clearing bombs which is expected to make UXO clearance operations more effective. I encourage all development partners to accelerate efforts to support Lao PDR on this life and death matter, and commend the country on its global leadership in support of the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

A key driver of prosperity for a landlocked country is regional integration. I am pleased to see this continue to feature prominently in the Lao PDR's agenda. This country is a keen member of ASEAN and can benefit from the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) and ASEAN's new Community Vision 2025. Lao PDR assumes the Chair of ASEAN for 2016. UNDP stands ready to support the Government any way it can during its year as Chair of this vibrant regional community.

While Lao PDR can report many positive development results, it is also refreshing to observe that the Government is the first to acknowledge that there is unfinished business associated with the MDGs. Not all targets were able to be met. Rising inequalities are a key challenge for Laos, as they are for a great many other countries. Child nutrition and environmental sustainability are also areas needing continued focus.

Lao PDR is intent on tackling its economic, social, and environmental vulnerabilities, which will be necessary for achieving its aim of graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. The 8<sup>th</sup> five-year national plan (2016-2020) is rightly directed towards more balanced, broad-based, inclusive and sustainable growth and development. As UN partners, we stand ready to support Government in the implementation of this plan, to help meet the unfinished business of the MDGs, and to assist in securing a smooth transition from LDC status upon graduation.

*Agenda 2030: what it means for Lao PDR.*

This brings me to the new global development framework, Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and what they mean for countries like Lao PDR.

The process of formulating Agenda 2030 and the seventeen SDGs was highly inclusive. Three years of consultations and public outreach preceded its launch in September. Input was received from 8.5 million people around the world through the MyWorld survey, and many thousands of people participated directly in the 88 national consultations.

I am most grateful to Lao PDR for playing a full part in the design of the new agenda. The national consultation in Lao PDR helped not only to obtain the views of government, but also those of civil society, the private sector, and citizens from across the country.

This new agenda is universal, applying to all countries, and it is premised on the principle of leaving no one behind. Eradicating poverty within the context of sustainable development is its core purpose.

Building on the MDGs, the new agenda is bold and ambitious. It is sub-titled ‘Transforming Our World’, and recognizes the need for whole of government approaches across the three strands of sustainable development – the economic, social, and environmental. This requires “whole-of-government” co-ordination, and requires well co-ordinated UN Country Teams and development partners too.

In this regard, the 8<sup>th</sup> National Social and Economic Development Plan is a very important document which comes at a pivotal time. If implemented successfully, it will drive graduation from LDC status, complete Lao PDR’s unfinished MDG business, and deliver early progress on the SDGs.

I commend the Government for formulating the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP through a consultative process, and for adopting a results and outcome based approach to its national plan for the first time. This has helped to reduce the number of targets and indicators needed to monitor progress. The efforts made to integrate the new Sustainable Development Goals into the fabric of the plan, its major programmes and monitoring framework, is very encouraging.

Given the scope and scale of the new global agenda, we need partnerships for development which are more diverse and inclusive than ever before. The role of the private sector and of civil society will be vital alongside those of governments and development partners.

The “*Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation*” helps to break the mold of the traditional donor-recipient approach. It seeks to build a more diverse partnership, which can also expand the envelope of resources available for development. The core provisions of the Vientiane Declaration are aligned with elements of the new SDG 16 on building peaceful and inclusive societies and with SDG 17 on partnerships. It includes references to ensuring:

stronger linkages between planning and budgeting;

- a transparent national budget;
- ensuring that traditional ODA is invested well to achieve maximum impact;
- alignment and harmonization of assistance to national priorities;
- deepening of inclusive partnerships;
- greater transparency, accountability and anti-corruption in general;
- capitalizing on increased South-South Co-operation, knowledge, and technology transfer; and
- energizing reforms which will enable more effective mobilization of domestic resources for reinvestment in the social sectors.

This last point, the generation of adequate domestic revenues, provides a pathway to long term financial self-sufficiency. Domestic revenues are the primary source of

investment in development, including in education, skills training, and health services. Investment in these drives the human development on which inclusive and sustainable growth depends. Lao PDR has clearly indicated that it wishes to go in this direction in its new national plan.

*UNDP's experience and UN offer on SDG implementation*

As we move to implement the new global development agenda, allow me to share a few insights from UNDP's experience over fifteen years working with the MDGs.

Progress on one MDG target always had implications for progress on others, but work on the MDGs was often done in silos. That was a problem which the MDG Acceleration Framework, applied in over fifty countries from 2010 on, sought to overcome.

Now, as countries prepare to tackle the SDGs, the explicit interconnectedness of the new goals and targets needs to be reflected in the design and implementation of policies and initiatives, and also in the institutional relationships which drive and oversee them. As this development round table proceeds through its respective economic, social and environmental segments, it will be important to realize the policy linkages between these.

For example, in the last two decades, the key drivers of economic growth in Lao PDR have been hydropower, minerals, and forestry – essentially deriving from the environment and natural resources sector. Being predominantly capital intensive, these sectors have not always delivered sufficient or timely gains for human development as might have been originally hoped for. Nor have the benefits which have accrued been shared widely enough.

As well, as Agenda 2030 states, we need to better recognize the interdependence of human wellbeing and healthy ecosystems, and strike the right balance between people and planet. In this respect there are grounds for concern about the rate of deforestation and the threat to biodiversity in Lao PDR.

The report of accomplishments and lessons learned from implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> National Social and Economic Development Plan itself takes stock of the need to strike a balance across the dimensions of sustainable development. The principle of rebalancing 'people, profits and planet' fits well with the integrated economic, social, and environmental objectives of the 8<sup>th</sup> national plan.

Nowhere in the world is economic growth alone a guarantee of substantial poverty reduction. The quality of growth and of public policy settings matter in delivering human and sustainable development. Development partners present here today are well placed to step up their policy and technical advice to assist the Government to achieve increasingly higher quality and more inclusive growth in future.

On economic transformation the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP calls for:

- creating conditions which will enable the private sector to flourish;
- transformation of the agricultural sector (which currently employs the majority of the national workforce);
- effecting a gradual shift to an industrialized, knowledge-based economy;
- pursuit of greater economic diversification;

- moving from seeing the country as land-locked to seeing it as land-linked with the opportunities that brings;
- engaging in higher value-added productive activity;
- all of these need to be underpinned by an increasingly skilled labour force.

The evolution and strengthening of the partnership for development with the private sector will be critical for achieving the aims of the 8<sup>th</sup> national plan.

In the social section of the Round Table Meeting agenda today, there will be particular interest in the progress being made on food security and nutrition. This was fundamental in progressing MDG 1, and is now critical for reaching the new SDGs 1, 2 and 3.

In this case, initiatives across the agriculture sector, rural development (in particular in remote communities), energy and infrastructure, health, education, water, irrigation and sanitation are all interlinked. This challenges institutions and partnerships to identify the barriers to progress and find effective and lasting solutions. Services need to be versatile, linked and local, in order to reach the last mile to the communities they serve.

In this respect we admire the '*convergence approach*' being pursued by the Government, in which relevant ministries are co-ordinating closely to tackle this priority in integrated ways at the national and provincial levels, and are supported by development partners. This is the kind of institutional innovation and partnership which will be required to progress the SDGs. The learning generated from the convergence approach can help inform approaches in other critical areas.

Another challenge which cuts across the economic, social, and environmental spectrum is climate change. SDG 13 calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Lao PDR already has a well-developed climate change strategy, and has completed both its first and second national communications to the UNFCCC ahead of time. The country is also strengthening its institutional arrangements to ensure a 'whole of government' response to climate change.

There is tremendous optimism and hope that COP 21 in Paris will deliver a new global climate agreement. As United Nations Secretary General Ban-Ki-Moon has said, "Ours is the last generation that can take steps to avoid the worst impacts of climate change." Climate change is intensifying the impacts of weather-related natural disasters. Laos is located in the most disaster prone region in the world – the Asia Pacific. I encourage the efforts Lao PDR is making to implement the outcome of the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan in March this year. The bottom line here is that 'if development is not risk informed, it is not sustainable development'.

Prime Minister,

Let me confirm that the UN system stands ready to support the Government and its development partners with the full implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> national plan and the Vientiane Partnership Declaration, and to support the full integration of the SDGs into the national development agenda.

The UN Development Group has already developed elements of a common approach to SDG implementation called 'MAPS', which stands for Mainstreaming, Acceleration, and Policy Support.

'Mainstreaming', refers to the support we can give governments as they incorporate the agenda in their national and local strategies, plans, and budgets, and strengthen their data systems. This will require intensive outreach to national stakeholders about the new agenda, and, where appropriate, strengthening the capacities of stakeholders to contribute.

'Acceleration' will entail supporting countries to identify obstacles and bottlenecks standing in the way of making progress on the SDGs, and identifying actions which can remove them.

'Policy support' will make co-ordinated policy and technical support available from the UN system to countries on request, drawing on our extensive expertise and programming experience.

MAPS is an approach which can be readily adjusted to the development context, challenges, and opportunities here in Lao PDR. Supporting partnerships, the availability of quality data and analysis, and accountability, are themes which cut across all three components of our approach to implementation.

In closing, let me underline that sustainable development is not something which happens to somebody else, somewhere else. We all have a stake in it, and Lao PDR, like every country, has work to do to progress towards it. There are challenges in the new Sustainable Development Goals for every country on earth.

The good news is that our world has more wealth, more knowledge, more technologies and stronger partnerships at its disposal than ever before. The challenges we face are mostly human induced. We can tackle them, but not if we keep doing business as usual and expecting different results.

Ours is the last generation which can head off the worst effects of climate change as the UN Secretary-General has said, and the first generation with the wealth and knowledge to eradicate poverty. For this, leadership from us all is needed.

If the international community is prepared to step up collectively to the challenge of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, then there's a chance of achieving sustainable development – and with it of transforming prospects for people and planet.

It is for this reason that I am so pleased to attend this forum in Lao PDR, to see the global vision which has been crafted for the future of humanity and our planet being turned into action at the national level.

I sincerely wish you all every success in your discussions.

**Annex 4:**

**Remarks by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, Under-Secretary-General  
of the United Nations and the Executive Secretary of the  
Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific  
(ESCAP)**

**Statement by Dr. Shamshad Akhtar,  
Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations & Executive Secretary of  
The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific**

**12th High Level Round Table Meeting 2015  
“Enhanced Partnership for Effective Implementation of the 8th National Socio-  
Economic Development Plan – Achieving the LDC Graduation by 2020”**

**Vientiane, Lao Peoples Democratic Republic  
27 November 2015**

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*Enhanced Partnership for  
Effective Development Cooperation*

Your Excellency, Mr. Tongsing Thammavong, Prime Minister Lao PDR,  
Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Panellists,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Managing its coexistence with a range of competitors, in particular its large and dynamic ASEAN neighbours, Lao PDR - despite being the smallest landlocked country in Southeast Asia – has enjoyed a stable growth trajectory, averaging 6.9 per cent over the past two decades. This supportive environment has helped the country, among others, to halve the poverty rate, achieve gender parity in primary education, lower maternal and child mortality and improve access to basic services.

The Government of Lao PDR needs to be complimented on the comprehensive process it has adopted for the formulation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan. It is encouraging that the new plan takes on board the lessons learned from the 7<sup>th</sup> and earlier plans, and will focus on the unfinished Millennium Development Goal (MDG) agenda. Being formulated against the backdrop of the emerging global and regional development architecture, this development plan has been reinforced both in its ambition and content by a host of new global agreements, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, the anticipated forthcoming global climate agreement as well as the declaration of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025.

Influenced by these different progressive agendas, the country should be able to embark on a new course of development to fulfil its aspirations to graduate from least developed country (LDC) status. Our assessment is that Lao PDR will indeed move up the development scale at the next review in 2018, given its current GNI per capita, which is already \$1,232 – falling only \$10 per capita short of the income criterion for graduation of \$1,242, and with its Human Asset Index nearing the graduation threshold of 66.

More complex will however be laying a course for equitable, inclusive and sustainable growth, with adequate balancing of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainability. Effective implementation of a plan specifically supportive of sustainable development calls for:

- Launching the right conceptual framework and managing policy integration, coherence and consistency;
- Managing proper tradeoffs and policy options to remain within binding constraints, be they emissions controls or resources;
- Mainstreaming or putting in place well-designed inclusive programs and promoting the green growth that is critical for sustainability, which requires application of the right tools and incentives; and
- Effective institutional coordination between policymaking and implementation agencies.

Ultimately, success of the development plan will depend on strong leadership in its execution, the consistency of the plan with macroeconomic and fiscal frameworks, as well as close monitoring and accountability, supported by the ability and willingness of policy managers to make midcourse corrections.

Moving from these generic messages, it is understandable that in the formulation of the 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, the focus on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has been managed while keeping in perspective the national circumstances and priorities. When examining the significance of SDG indicators across all of our Asia-Pacific Countries with Special Needs, a few considerations stand out:

- First, poverty (SDG 1) and health (SDG 3) ought to be treated as core SDGs or central goals, because they are linked with the largest number of other goals and targets.
- Second, is to focus on infrastructure (SDG 9) – in context of Laos PDR, is it of utmost importance to work with regional neighbors to enhance transport connectivity as this will provide an impetus to economic and trade diversification – two major constraints to the job generation and future sustainable growth that is critical for continued progress on the principal SDG of poverty eradication.
- Third, is to focus on education (SDG 4), inequality (SDG 10) and gender equality (SDG 5), which will together enhance empowerment, quality of life and empowerment.

Implementation of the SDGs calls for national and governance transformation, and addressing the vulnerabilities to which the Laotian economy is exposed. In the interests of time, I will only focus on a few areas here.

While expansionary and pro-cyclical fiscal policies will generate macroeconomic vulnerability, fiscal consolidation through development expenditure cuts will not augur well for sustainable and inclusive development. In this context, *tapping the remaining tax potential of the country* is one way to proceed. ESCAP's analysis confirms that most Asia-Pacific LDCs have a tax/GDP ratio potential of about five per cent. Without raising tax rates, the broadening of the tax base, elimination of exemptions and strengthening of tax administration will generate higher revenue levels. Earlier this year, our member States mandated the ESCAP secretariat to establish an Asia-Pacific Tax Forum, which will be discussed next month at our intergovernmental Committee on Macroeconomic Policy, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development. This Forum will be well-placed to assist countries like Lao PDR to mobilise greater levels of domestic resources through better tax policies and best practice.

Focusing on *agribusiness-led growth* is critical, given that the Laotian population is projected to grow from about 7 million people today to about 8.8 million by 2030 and this will generate additional pressures and concerns about food and job security. This will require, among others, the promotion of greater productivity through the strengthening of farmer organizations, land concessions and developing contract farming to commercialize agriculture. Farming communities would also benefit from greater access to low-cost finance and appropriate technologies to help promote small-scale agribusinesses, including greater access to regional markets. ESCAP's regional institutions, the Centre for Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization (CSAM) and the Centre for Alleviation of Poverty through Sustainable Agriculture (CAPSA), are specifically focused on supporting member State implementation of SDG2 on hunger, food security, improved nutrition and sustainable agriculture. From capacity building activities to enhanced policy advisory services, the Centres stand ready to assist Laos in these important areas of work.

*Trade diversification and investment policy reform* will also be critical, given Lao PDR's high dependence on commodities, the export of hydro-electric power, as well as its exceptionally high regional trade – Thailand and China alone account for a combined 83.1 per cent of Laotian exports and 86.5 per cent of imports. There is also considerable scope for the country to expand its involvement in global value chains (GVCs), as it is presently less engaged in the intermediate and processing stages of production. ESCAP's *2015 Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Report* focuses on specific policies and measures that developing countries can adopt to support direct entry – or indirect linkages – into GVCs and ensure that participation contributes to sustainable development. Laos has also been successful in attracting regional investors – mainly from China, Thailand and Malaysia – by promoting its hydro-electric industry, but significant barriers remain to FDI in terms of lengthy approval procedures, poor infrastructure, and a generally weak business environment. ESCAP stands ready to assist the Government of Laos PDR in improving its attractiveness to foreign investment – especially in terms of improving the investment climate and increasing the abilities of businesses in Laos to acquire and diffuse cutting-edge technologies.

*Climate Change and Natural Disaster Risk Reduction.* The total estimated losses due to natural disasters in Asia-Pacific LDCs from 2004-2014 amounted to more than \$11.5 billion. Lao PDR incurred disaster losses of more than \$221 million during this period. ESCAP can support the identification, planning and implementation of policies, practices and technologies on mitigation and adaptation, which are aligned with national priorities of Lao PDR, consistent with the targets set out in Lao PDR's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution submitted to the UNFCCC. Using South-South cooperation, ESCAP can facilitate the integration of Lao PDR's climate response into the sustainable development agenda and maximise the wider co-benefits. Supported by ESCAP's regional dialogue, greater regional integration through energy connectivity in the Greater Mekong subregion can benefit both Lao PDR and efforts to decarbonise electricity in the subregions through sharing renewable energy generated by hydropower in Lao PDR.

## **Conclusion**

Lao PDR has an excellent opportunity to graduate from LDC status and its new National Socio-Economic Development Plan does much to advance this goal and to align national development initiatives with the new 2030 Agenda. Your membership of

ESCAP should help you to cross-fertilize your experience and gain from that of other member States. The Commission has some very specific niche strengths – in particular our normative and analytical work, as well as the mandate to deal with transboundary challenges and opportunities. In this context, ESCAP stands ready to assist you in promoting SDG implementation through mainstreaming in your national development planning and policy integration, as well as to support greater coherence and consistency. Some of the areas of our core mandate which will assist in these efforts are:

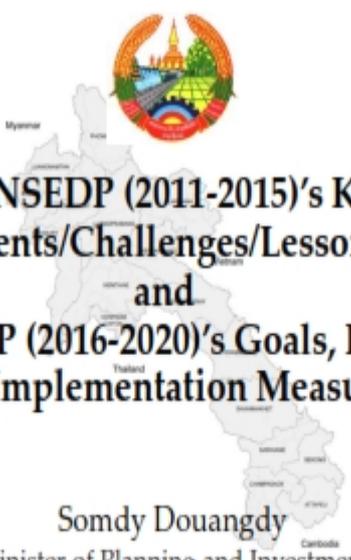
- (i) Leading regional coordination of national statistical development and SDG indicators;
- (ii) Supporting implementation of transboundary SDGs – on climate change, natural resources and disasters, as well as water and energy, which are all critical components of our regional cooperation and integration work;
- (iii) Sector policy work, connectivity and means of implementation; and
- (iv) Reporting on regional SDG performance to feed into global follow-up and review.

I thank you.

**Annex 5:**

**Presentation on the 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's key achievements/challenges/ lessons learnt and the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's goals, priorities and implementation measures**

1/22/2016



**7th NSEDP (2011-2015)'s Key Achievements/Challenges/Lessons Learnt  
and  
8th NSEDP (2016-2020)'s Goals, Priorities  
and Implementation Measures**

Somdy Douangdy  
Minister of Planning and Investment

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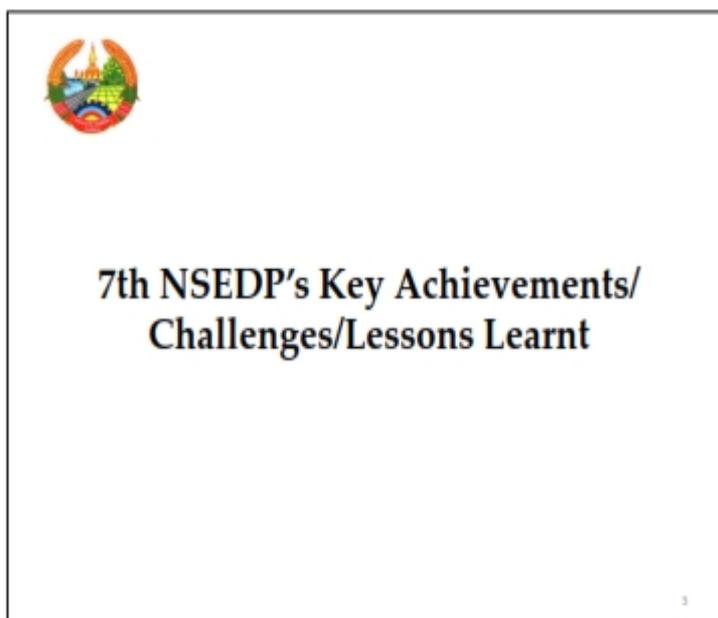


**Presentation Outline**

- 1. 7th NSEDP's key achievements/  
challenges/lessons learnt**
- 2. 8th NSEDP's goals, priorities and  
implementation measures**

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1/22/2016



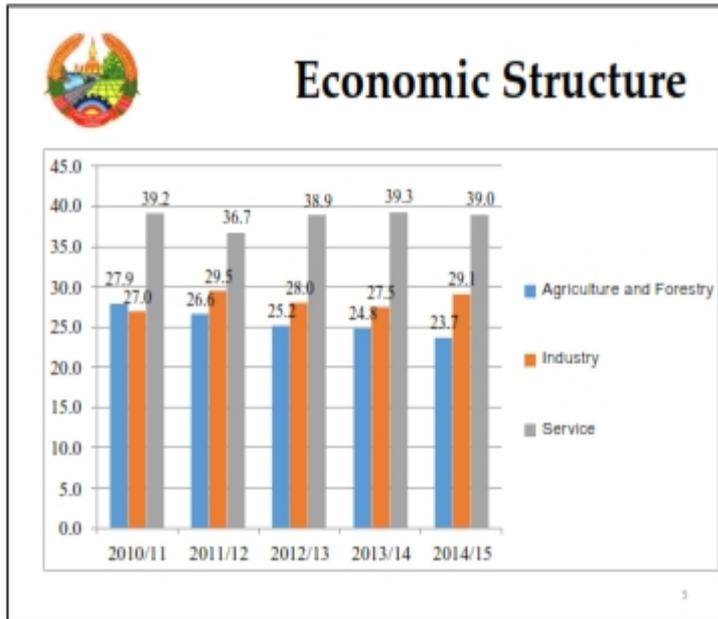
### Economic Achievements

GDP Growth						
Target 2011-15	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 (est)	Average
>8%	8,1	8,3	8,0	7,8	7,5	7,9

GDP per Capita					
Fiscal Year	Population (Million)	Value of GDP (Bil Kip)	Target (USD/person)	Actual (USD/person)	Compare Plan (%)
2010-11	6,30	62.458	1.155	1.217	5,37
2011-12	6,51	70.343	1.332	1.349	1,28
2012-13	6,64	80.199	1.520	1.534	0,92
2013-14	6,77	90.823	1.674	1.671	1,08
2014-15	6,80	102.320	1.860	1.857	-

1/22/2016



**Economic Achievements**

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
<b>Revenue Collection</b> (% of GDP)	22.91%	24.54%	27.20%	22.86%	24%
<b>Budget Expenditure</b> (% of GDP)	25.61%	27.10%	32.7%	27.76%	28.4%
<b>Budget Deficit</b> (% of GDP)	2.70%	2.56%	5.5%	4.9%	4.4%

1/22/2016



## Economic Achievements

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Avg
<b>Inflation Rate</b>	7.42%	5.12%	5.64%	5.16%	1.68%	5%

	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
<b>Exchange Rate</b> kip/USD	8,372	8,037.49 4.17% (Appreciation)	8,010.73 0.33% (Appreciation)	7,867.92 1.82% (Appreciation)	8,024.63 1.95% (Depreciation)	8,065.63 0.51% (Depreciation)

- Total households with electricity; 89.6% (Target 80%)
- Road networks have risen from 39,584 km in 2010 to 51,597.03 km in 2014
- International and Regional Integration: Member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in early 2013, hosted a number of significant international conferences and events

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## Social Sector Achievements

- Primary net enrolment rate: 98.6% (Target 98%)
- Literacy Rate of population 5 years: 93.6% (Target 87%)
- Access to clean water: 84% (Target 80%)
- Latrines Usage: 65% (Target 60%)

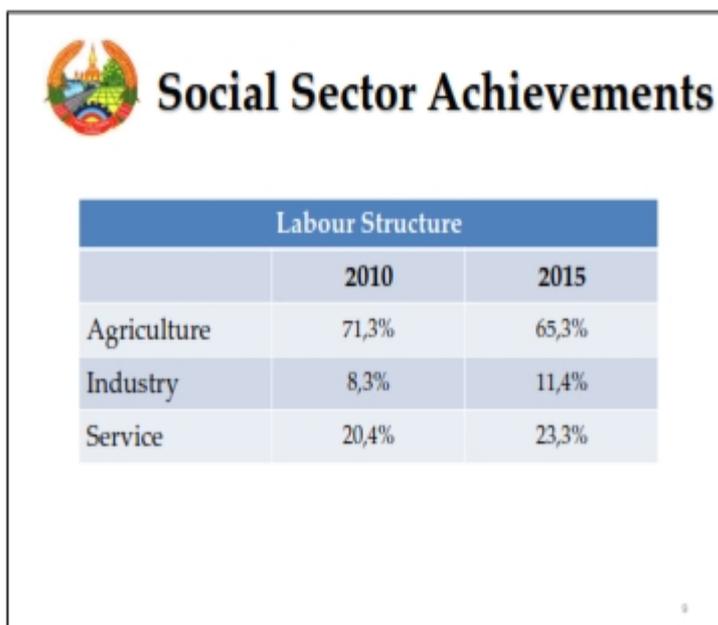


Year	Poverty Rate (%)	MDGs Target (%)
1992	46	-
1997	39.1	-
2003	33.5	-
2008	27.6	-
2013	23.2	24
2015	23.2	24

**Some Off-Track MDGs (evaluated in 2013):**

- Goal 1 (proportion of undernourished and underweight of children under 5 are still high),
- Goal 2 (Survival rate of primary school children is still under target),
- Goal 4 (infant mortality rate is still high),
- Goal 9 (UXO clearance area is still under the targets)

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## Challenges

- Macroeconomic situation is still vulnerable, with limited domestic savings, low and limited exports
- Disciplinary measures, especially planning-budgeting discipline, are not clearly changing for the better. Local enterprise competitiveness is still low
- Income distribution is not wide spread; MDGs: Although there has been progress on many fronts, some targets need special focus in order to be achieved as planned

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## Challenges

- Enforcement of laws and regulations are not strict enough.
- Limited progress on readiness for regional and international economic integration; local entrepreneurs have limited understanding and less experienced about integration mechanisms; not yet fully enjoy benefits from the opportunity in the GMS.

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## Lessons learnt

- Ensure political stability, social peace and order; promote stronger unity of the people of all ethnic groups are fundamental to the socio-economic development
- Create value chains and networks for the production, coordination between the various parties in society is essential and correlation on economy
- Maintaining macro stability is crucial

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### Lessons learnt (cont.)

- There is a need on labor supply and ensure market needs are met with conformity to the policy and development of the country;
- Expanding cooperation either bilateral or multilateral is the main factor of economic growth and openness
- Build the foundation for the politics and comprehensive rural development; systematically and continuously support the development with priorities

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### Lessons learnt (cont.)

- Human resources development is a key for developing countries
- Improvement on legislation to protect the rights and interests of the country is necessary; coordination, consistency, harmonization and systematic implementation among the sectors at the central and provincial levels as well as vertical coordination is necessary to achieve the country's overall objective.
- Improving monitoring, evaluation and reporting of socio-economic development plan implementation with the practical tools is required

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## 8th Nsedp's Goals, Priorities and Implementation Measures



### OVERALL OBJECTIVE

*Continued political stability, peace and order in the society; the poverty of the people is reduced significantly in all areas; the country is developed out of the status of LDC by 2020 through continuous, inclusive along with sustainable growth and green growth development; maximum effective management and utilization of natural resources; the development enhanced through the national potentials and advantages; participated in regional and international integration with ownership*

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**Targets of 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (2016-2020)**

1/22/2016



### LDC Criteria Targets

Targets	Evaluation in 2015	Target by 2020
GNI	USD1,232	USD2,450 by 2020
Human Assets Index (HAI) (4 index)	60.8	>66 by 2020
Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) (8 Index)	36.2	<32 by 2020

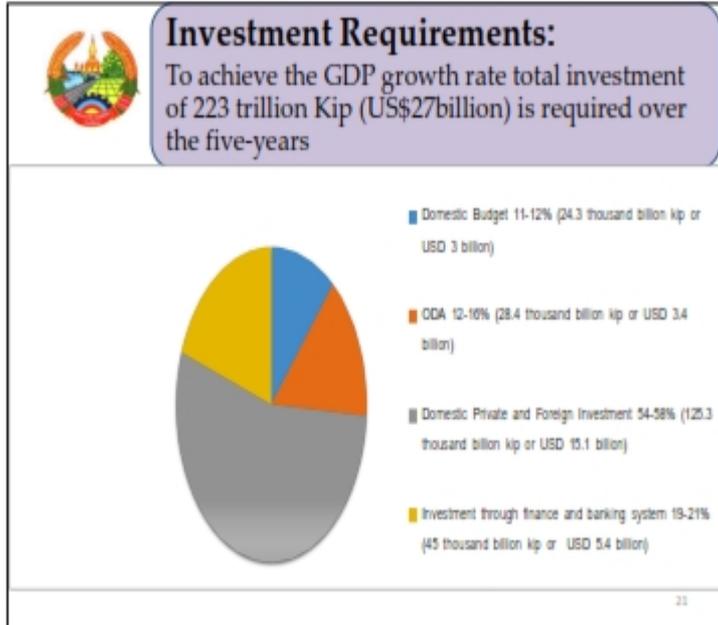
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### Key Indicators and Targets

GDP Growth	>7.5% in average	
Agriculture	3.2% growth rate	19% of GDP
Industry	9.3% growth rate	32% of GDP
Services	8.9% growth rate	41% of GDP
Population	7,3 million people	
GDP per capita	USD 3,100 (GNI USD2,450)	
Inflation rate	< 6% per year	
Revenues	23-25% of GDP (domestic 19-21%)	
Expenditures	28% of GDP	
Budget deficit	< 5% of GDP	
Exports	≥ 15%	
Stable and manageable exchange rate		
Forest cover	70%	
Poverty Rate	< 15% by 2020	

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**OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS**

1/22/2016



## 3 Outcomes

- 1. Economic:** strong economic foundation and reducing economic vulnerability
- 2. Social:** Human resource development, poverty reduction, access to quality education and health services, protect and develop the unique culture of the nation
- 3. Environment:** effectively protected and utilized according to green and sustainable direction; Readiness for coping with natural disasters and climate change effectively

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## Outcome 1

- Output 1 – Sustained and Inclusive Economic Growth
- Output 2 – Macro-economic Stability
- Output 3 – Integrated Development Planning and Budgeting
- Output 4 – Balanced Regional and Local Development
- Output 5 – Improved Public/Private Labour Force Capacity
- Output 6 – Local Entrepreneurs are competitive in Domestic and Global Markets
- Output 7 – Regional/International Cooperation and Integration

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## Outcome 2

- Output 1 – Improved Living Standards through Poverty Reduction
- Output 2 – Food Security Ensured and Incidence of Malnutrition Reduced
- Output 3 – Access to High Quality Education
- Output 4 – Access to Health Quality Health Care and Preventative Medicine
- Output 5 – Enhanced Social Protection/Welfare
- Output 6 – Protection of Traditions and Culture
- Output 7 – Political Stability, Order, Justice, Gender Equality



## Outcome 3

- Output 1 – Environmental Protection and Sustainable Natural Resources Management
- Output 2 – Preparedness for Natural Disasters and Risks Mitigation
- Output 3 – Reduce Instability of Agricultural Production

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## Cross Cutting Issues

- Promote local innovation and utilisation of science, technology and
- telecommunication and management and application of ICT
- Promote and Develop Gender Equality, Juveniles and Youth
- Enhance effectiveness for the public governance and administration



## Implementing policies, mechanism and measures

### 1. Policies:

- Achieve quality growth by moving the focus from quantitative to qualitative development;
- Pay attention to balance the economy
- Implement all necessary policies;
- Expand regional and international cooperation and integration;
- Create enabling factors in terms of finance, science and technology, information, human resources, entrepreneurs and work force
- Accelerate the implementation of mega projects

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## Implementing policies, mechanism and measures

### 2. Macroeconomic Framework and financing the plan:

- Create macroeconomic framework and financial reporting system to be accurate and fast, through national macroeconomic working group.
- Each province shall focus on research and identify the key potentials of their own to use them in improving basic economic foundation; pay attention on improving and establishing economic relations among the provinces to be stronger related and harmonized while reinforcing each other.
- Continue to improve and promote the private sector by providing policies and apply mechanism to improve business environment with fast and transparent public services
- Continue improving revenue collection mechanism to be more adequate and accurate.

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## Implementing policies, mechanism and measures

### 3. Capacity building and skill development

- Develop labor skills and create jobs to meet market demand to support the development in each period
- Build capacity for entrepreneurs to enable competitiveness domestically and internationally, improve production and services, productivity and quality of products
- Create coordination mechanism between the government, private sector, international organizations and development partners to jointly contribute in meeting all the NSED's targets

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### **Implementing policies, mechanism and measures**

#### **4. Implementing Measures:**

- The Ministers, the Provincial Governors – the Capital Governor shall raise responsibility clearly by following 3 build oriented management mechanisms from the central level to the grassroots levels
- Ministries, authorities at the central and local level shall translate 5-Year Plan VIII (2016-2020) into the actual action plans that in line with their roles
- Ministries, authorities at the central level shall disseminate and provide guideline to the local level authorities for them to be well aware about the content of these documents to effectively implement them with concrete results.
- The government will issue a decree on implementation of NSED and PIPs as reference for coordination and translate the plans into detailed actions

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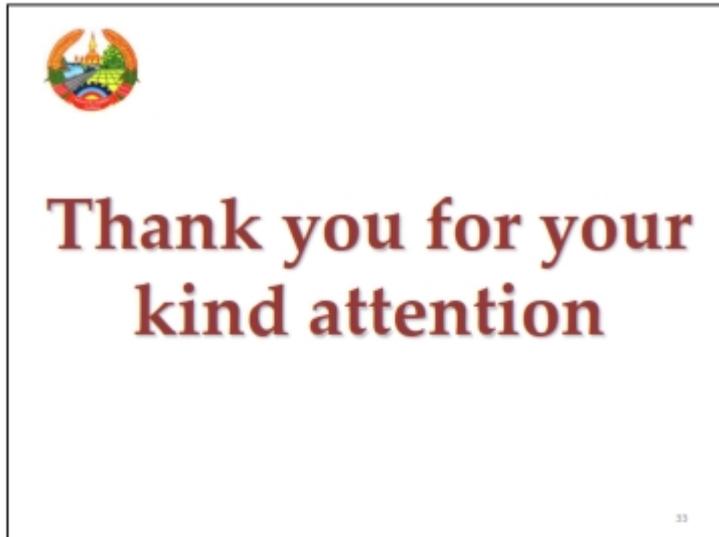
### **Implementing policies, mechanism and measures**

#### **5. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the plan implementation**

- Monitoring and evaluation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSED will focus on the results at the national level
- DoP / MPI focuses on the achievement of 8th NSED impacts and outcomes
- Sectors and provinces focus on the Outputs of the sector level plans and cross-sector Outputs.
- Applying the results of NSED Outcome monitoring and evaluation to develop a report on the outstanding achievements, pending issues, challenges and lessons learnt in each period

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**Annex 6:**

**Presentation on Global Partnership for the implementation of  
Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs in the context of the  
Development of Lao PDR**

22/01/59



22/01/59



### **I. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

- 25/09/2015, Leaders of 193 Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," including 17 SDGs.
- new agenda: people-centred, universal, transformative and integrated.
- action by all countries over the next 15 years from 1 Jan.2016
- focusing on five areas of critical importance: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.
- ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with building economic growth, addressing social needs and climate change and leaving no one behind.

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### **I. 2030 Agenda for SD (cont.)**

- taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.
- 17 SDGs and 169 targets for both developed and developing countries.
- upholding all the principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, including the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities".
- SDGs building on the MDGs. They are integrated and indivisible, covering the three dimensions: the economic, social and environmental.
- In light of the importance and commitment attached by the world leaders to SDGs effective implementation, global partnership on SDGs needs to be enhanced.

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## II. Global Partnership for the implementation of SDGs in the context of the devt. of Lao PDR

- SDGs are universally applicable, but their actual implementation is dependent on each country (national realities, capacities, levels of development, policies and priorities)
- each government incorporating global targets into its own national targets taking into account national circumstances.
- SDGs resulted from a lengthy intergovernmental process, encompassing and accommodating interests of all stake holders.
- some goals would be more applicable to the Lao PDR's national circumstances than others, thus, requiring more focus and priority.
- Lao Govt. will continue its effort to achieve the unmet MDG goals and targets, including MDG 9 on UXO.

22/01/59



**II. Global Partnership for the implementation of SDGs in the context of the devt. of Lao PDR (cont.)**

- SDGs and the 8th Five Year Plan formulated relatively in the same period of time, so most of SDG targets incorporated into the 8th plan.
- to ensure effective implementation of SDGs, we need to attain the objectives of our 8th plan.
- VD on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation can play an important role in advancing the course of our 8th NSEDP.
- In addition, the continued commitment by our DPs on development assistance in the next decades would be crucial.
- recognize the important role played by the private sector in pursuing SDGsD
- AEC that will commence at the end of this year will provide our private sector opportunities and challenges. So, need to take into account strengthening their capacity when addressing global partnership, esp. in the area of the Lao national comparative advantage.

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**II. Global Partnership for the implementation of SDGs in the context of the devt. of Lao PDR (cont.)**

- view that SDG 17 “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for SD” holds the key to the successful and effective implementation of SDGs.,
- At the same time, national development efforts need to be supported by an enabling international economic environment, the availability of appropriate knowledge, technologies and resources as well as capacity-building.
- the international community has to pursue policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels, and to reinvigorate the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

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## II. Global Partnership for the implementation of SDGs in the context of the devt. of Lao PDR (cont.)

- Lao Government and DPs gather here today to reinforce our partnership that is broader, more inclusive and more relevant to the national circumstances, based on shared principles as stated in the new Vientiane Declaration.
- Working closely together and utilizing our respective comparative advantages will help us address both persistent and new challenges and achieve greater and better development results.
- All of this will contribute to achieving our sustainable development, including graduating from LDC status, within the framework of the 8th plan, the 10 year Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2016-2025) and the National Vision 2030.

\*



**Thank you  
for your attention**

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**Annex 7:**

**2015 High Level Round Table Meeting Field Visit  
Programme**

The field visit will take place on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November as per the tentative program as follow:

<b>25 November 2015</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Description</b>
12:45 – 13:00	The 2015 HL RTM delegates gather at Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel
13:00 – 14:15	The 2015 HL RTM delegates travel from Vientiane to Thaphabard District, Bolikhamxay province.
14:15 – 15:15	Visiting the UXO clearance site <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brief presentation by relevant officials (10 minutes)</li> <li>• Observing the clearance activities (50 minutes)</li> </ul>
15:15 – 16:15	The 2015 HL RTM delegates continue traveling from Thaphabard District to Parksun District
16:15 – 17:00	The HL RTM delegates pay a courtesy visit to the Governor of Bolikhamxay province
17:00 – 17:30	All delegates - Hotel Check-In at Sokbounma Hotel, Senghounghuang Hotel and Vongvilay Hotel
18:20 – 18:30	All delegates travel to the Provincial Governor's Office for joining the Baci and Dinner Reception
18:30 – 21:00	Welcome Baci and Diner Reception hosted by the Governor of Bolikhamxay at the Provincial Governor's Office
21:00 – 21:10	All delegates travel back to the hotels

<b>26 November 2013</b>	
<b>Time</b>	<b>Description</b>
08:00 – 08:30	Pick up all delegates at hotels and check out. It is highly recommended that delegates check out their hotels now.
08:30 – 09:00	Travel from Parksun District to Bolikhun District
09:00 – 10:00	Visiting district water supply system for local communities (implications for food and nutrition security activities) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation by relevant officials (10 minutes)</li> <li>• Observing relevant activities (50 minutes)</li> </ul>
10:00 – 10:30	Travel back from Bolikhun District to Parksun District
10:30 – 11:30	Visiting the Bolikhamxay Provincial Hospital <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation by relevant officials (10 minutes)</li> <li>• Observing and participating in maternal and child health related activities, and related activities of the Multisectoral (Convergence) approaches to address Food and Nutrition Security (50 minutes)</li> </ul>

11:45 – 13:00	Lunch in Parksun District hosted by Bolikhamxay Department of Planning and Investment at Sok Dee Restaurant
13:00 – 15:30	Travel back to Vientiane (Landmark Mekong Riverside Hotel)

**Annex 8:**

**List of Government and Development Partner Participants**