

2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting
“Accelerating the implementation of 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan
(8th NSEDP 2016-2020) for LDC graduation and achievement of SDGs”

25th November 2016 - Vientiane Province
RTIM ‘Policy Implementation Dialogue’

Remarks in the Closing Session by Ms. Kaarina Immonen,
UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative

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Dear chair, co-chair, Excellencies,

Distinguished participants,

NSEDP Overview

- We benefited from a comprehensive overview of the first year of implementation of the NSEDP for 2016 including the main challenges and priorities for 2017.
- The vulnerability challenges for attaining the [3 criteria] economic, human and environment for LDC graduation were well stated by H.E Dr. Kikeo Deputy Minister for Ministry of Planning & Investment.
- Particular mention was made of the issue of the quality of growth and investment, and the need for more revenue

generation to tackle poverty and hunger, to 'leave no one behind'.

RTIM – A Development Dialogue

- The format of the plenary consultations today was largely that of a policy dialogue – which is what we all desired. Based on the presentations, partners posed a series of observations and questions, on which the Co-chairs then invited a response from the respective Government Ministries. The dialogue has been helpful for promoting a better understanding and clarification for our mutual priorities going forward. This format also reflects an open and more confident process, which I believe has been appreciated on all sides.
- We have heard from Government, National Assembly members, ODA partners, regional partners, private sector and civil society – proof that we do indeed have a more robust development partnership in operation.
- Allow me to try to distil from the extensive range of discussion some of the key topics we discussed:

Revenue Generation

- All delegates recognise the importance of the initiatives of the Lao Government in strengthening revenue generation as the core source of sustainable development financing. We all agree that this is one of the central priorities that has emerged today.

Quality Growth

- Efforts to maintain and achieve high quality growth are also of fundamental interest to all of us and to the success of the NSEDP. Making growth sufficiently inclusive and of impact to poverty reduction is one of the greatest challenges.

Risks & Vulnerabilities

- In general, it was stated that Laos is susceptible to domestic shocks and has a limited buffer. More work in making Laos more resilient is a common agenda for us all.

Investment and trade

- We were reminded on a number of occasions today that the private sector makes the majority of investment needed for

the achievement of the goals of the NSEDP. Therefore, improvements to the investment climate were agreed to be paramount in order to attract high quality investors that contribute more to social and sustainable development. This sentiment has been echoed several times.

- The ‘one-stop-shop’ concept to make investment more efficient appears a good practical step in the right direction.
- Reinvigoration of the Lao Business Forum as a development partner would have great value.
- Furthermore, there was a clear aspiration on the part of all participants to support diversification of the economy to promote higher quality growth with increased productivity.

Anti-Corruption

- We heard from Government and development partners of the importance of enforcing anti-corruption laws. This is essential for a number of reasons, not least for supporting an enabling environment for the private sector mentioned above.

Rule of Law State

- We heard of important administrative and legislative reforms being pursued for the purposes of Lao PDR becoming a rule of law state by 2020. This noble goal was appreciated.

Universal Period Review

- There was a general commitment to the pursuit of the Universal Period Review recommendations. It was appreciated that the Gov't is working with line ministries to mainstream human rights into the 8th NSEDP. A strengthened partnership approach for further following up on the UPR recommendations was suggested. We heard that Lao PDR is party to some of the major international covenants, which are closely linked to social and economic progress.

Illegal Logging and Land Management

- We touched briefly, but importantly, on the issue of illegal logging – in which steps taken by the Government and Prime Minister were commended. We heard of the Government aim to raise of forest cover, alongside further steps needed on land titling.

Assessment of Development Effectiveness

- The suggestion was made for an assessment of effectiveness for both Government and ODA financed development projects. Government and partners agree on the need for improved efficiencies, alignment and transparencies in the process. This will be an important agenda item for us in the months immediately ahead, to be taken up by the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan Secretariat.

Partnership with Civil Society

- There was considerable interest in the role of civil society and their contribution to the NSEDP, LDC graduation and SDGs, which was widely recognised.
- It is also recognised that progress with civil society is being made. At the same time, greater clarity has been sought today and further work in this area is apparent. I understand from the discussions today that further consultations with the development partners will be held concerning the respective Decrees, and for there to be further consultations to clarify further the nature of relationships between INGOs and NPAs.

Service Delivery at the Local Level

- We heard that the delivery of basic services remains uneven and poverty remains a major challenge, especially in remote rural areas. Local delivery mechanism and decentralized budget allocations need to be considered further.

Pre-consultation Groups

- I do not intend to review all of the very comprehensive priority actions that have been generated through the dedicated work of the four panels. Truly excellent work in advancing some of the core areas of this year's Round Table Implementation Meeting, and in helping us all move from 'dialogue to action':
 - Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction
 - Vientiane Declaration - Country Action Plan
 - SDGs
 - Food & Nutrition Security

- Suffice to say, that these recommendations of concrete next steps have been presented to the plenary through the course of the day.
- I would like to acknowledge the dedication of all partners to those four groups, for energizing the process through these four cross-cutting areas, so central for achieving the primary goals of the Government in regard to its LDC targets.

In conclusion, Excellencies,

- I would like to thank you for your active and constructive participation, in particular those of you who came from Hanoi, Bangkok and other locations outside Lao PDR.
- I would like to thank Your Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment the MPI team.
- Thank you again Your Excellency Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province, for the wonderful hosting. The round table was not only productive, but also enjoyable.
- I wish you a safe travel back and a good weekend.
- Thank you.