



# **Lao People's Democratic Republic**

*Peace, Independence, Democracy, Unity, Prosperity*

## **Report**

### **Round Table Implementation Meeting**

24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016  
Vientiane Province, Lao PDR

Prepared by  
Department of International Co-operation  
Ministry of Planning and Investment

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## **I. A Summary of Key Discussion Points**

The Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) was successfully organized on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at the Provincial Governor's Office, Vientiane Province, Lao PDR. It has an overall aim of shifting the development dialogue onto implementation mechanisms, capacities and resources to assure local development impact.

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 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Stakeholders also commended the Government of Lao PDR for the excellent RTIM preparation, quality of documents, and presentations highlighting various aspects of the national development agenda. Key discussion points are summarised as follow:

### **Part I – Key themes of the 2016 RTIM**

#### **1. Integrating and Implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- 1.1 The national Steering Committee for Sustainable Development Goals has recently been established based on an instruction by the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister will lead this Steering Committee, with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Planning and Investment as the vice-chairs. Its membership consists of Ministers and Vice-ministers and heads and deputy heads of ministry's equivalent agencies.
- 1.2 The National SDGs Secretariat will be established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by the Director-General of the International Organizations Department. The Secretariat consists of the Department of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Planning at the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Lao Statistics Bureau.
- 1.3 Development partners, civil society and private sector will continue to actively participate in the consultations around the SDGs and play an integral role in supporting their achievement at the national and sub-national levels.
- 1.4 SDG focal points will be nominated by line ministries, Government agencies and provinces. In addition, each province will consider nominating SDG focal points at district- and village-level as appropriate.
- 1.5 To create an enabling environment for SDG monitoring and assessment, key actions will be taken to strengthen the national statistical system and improve the quality and disaggregation of data.
- 1.6 The Government and development partners with participation of civil society and private sector - will strengthen issue-based coalitions to focus their support on critical issues such as food and nutrition security, and on critical target groups such as adolescent girls, ensuring that no one is left behind. Focusing resources in this way will accelerate progress towards multiple SDGs at the same time and promote swift graduation from Least Developed Country status. The Sector Working Groups and other partnership fora are tasked to prioritize the relevant SDG targets in their 2017 work plans.

- 1.7 Priority focus will be put on enhancing domestic resource mobilization for SDG and NSEDP achievement. The development and adaptation of SDG financing strategies to the country context, will strengthen the linkage between financing and results, and accelerate progress. The SDG Steering Committee will consider the development of an Integrated National Financing Framework for Lao PDR. In addition, financing for SDGs and NSEDP will become a regular part of the Round Table dialogue.
- 1.8 The SDG Steering Committee will continue inclusive consultations on the implementation of the SDGs with participation of civil society, private sector and local citizens.

## **2. Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness**

- 2.1 The Green Growth Development Policy Operation has been recognized, with the support from the World Bank having MPI as a focal points coordinating with concerned ministries including MoNRE.
- 2.2 Green Growth can be taken achieved in different perspectives. Its definition can be varied according to each individual country's context. Lao PDR is encouraged to select an appropriate approach to suit its local circumstances.
- 2.3 The agriculture and forestry sector in Lao PDR has commenced the clean agriculture initiative, which can potentially support the implementation approach in the country.
- 2.4 Several sectors in Lao PDR have been affected by the Climate Change impacts. The affected sectors include public health, agriculture and forestry, public work and transport. In addition, the Lao people are also affected by slow onset disaster such as flood and drought.
- 2.5 Some key requirements include building resilience across all sectors and reducing the impact of disasters, facilitating multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral engagement and defined coordination mechanism, and finally maximizing efficiencies and access to financing.
- 2.6 The Government has paid a special attention on implementing the Intended National Determined Contribution and the Paris Agreement, as well as REDD+ as they are contributing to the implementation of UNFCCC.
- 2.7 Public Private Partnership is strongly encouraged by our development partners and government sectors in order to realize the Green Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in Lao PDR.

## **3. Food and Nutrition Security**

- 3.1 Malnutrition is a development and social challenge. Investing in nutrition will play a key role in achieving targets of the five year duration of 8th National Social Economic Development Plan. Convergent approach is required for effective multisectoral coordination, incorporating the strategy into the action plan, programming, funds allocation, joint implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

- 3.2 As malnutrition is a cross cutting matter, it is important to put greater efforts to strengthen capacity for sub-national level coordination for inter-sectoral implementation of the priority actions from the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action and integrate nutrition in provincial and district planning using all available resources (Government, Development Partners and Private Sector). There is a need for defining clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders from management down to task level. Provincial and district level authorities and stakeholders need support to build their capacity to undertake this planning and coordination themselves.
- 3.3 There is a need for sub-national level planning that is informed by data on key target groups and priority issues. Surveillance and routine data systems need to be strengthened in order to inform policy decisions, planning, programming and reporting on targets for nutrition. There is a need to use data that is already being collected and be better analysed in order to identify where to implement multisectoral nutrition actions, who to target and when. This could possibly be done through a National Information Platform for Nutrition using existing data.
- 3.4 The use of data however must not be limited to policy decision making, it must also be used to provide immediate feedback to individuals, families, communities to promote behaviour change and be followed up immediately by sector specific actions (health, agriculture, education).
- 3.5 It was agreed that we must prioritize the first 1000 days in order to prevent the long term consequences of stunting. It was also acknowledged that in order to break the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition, we must also focus on adolescent girls, reproductive health including family planning and maternal nutrition.
- 3.6 Strong partnerships between government, development partners and private sector are considered essential to achieving NSEDP goals. There must be continued support for these partnerships to improve effectiveness of ODA and technical assistance provided. Explore private sector partnerships that are aligned with nutrition goals.
- 3.7 Limited funding was identified by all levels of government as a constraint to scaling up actions for nutrition and, given the current fiscal constraints, there was consensus during the panel discussion to use budget resources more efficiently; focus on delivering what is available in a timely and appropriate manner.
- 3.8 Build evidence for how best to apply the convergent approach. Learn from existing experiences of civil society who have shown good results of convergent programming.
- 3.9 Efforts need to be continued to build our understanding of key behaviours and practices that influence stunting and other forms of malnutrition and develop social and behaviour change communication messages, campaigns and support interpersonal communication skills of front line workers.

#### **4. Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation - Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan**

- 4.1 The Round Table Process, including the Sector Working Groups - which bring together all partners, including private sector, south partners, civil society and others - is a key forum to put the Vientiane Declaration and its Action Plan into practice. Therefore, reporting on the implementation of the VDCAP continues to be the core task of SWG and RTP Secretariat including the VDCAP Secretariat.
- 4.2 In particular, the role of the national VDCAP Secretariat and its capacity need to be strengthened. This will also include a revision of Sector Working Groups TOR to take into consideration new principles for effective partnerships such as south-south cooperation, business as partner in development and domestic resource mobilization. Also, the immediate task is also to strengthen the technical secretariats of the Sector Working Groups, which are critical to their functioning.
- 4.3 To guide that we all work towards the same goals and priorities, the 8th NSEDP M&E framework and the SDG indicators will need to be finalised in order to guide the efforts of Provinces and Sector Working Groups contributing to the achievement of the national development agenda.
- 4.4 The revised decree 75 sets out a clear division of labour on ODA and other flows. It is currently being consulted within Government and it will be opened up to all partners once clear division of labour is confirmed. It is important to align ODA decree with the Vientiane Declaration and to link ODA decree with associated decrees. The existing decrees provide the framework for ongoing collaboration until they have been revised. A national workshop on ODA management will be convened before the finalization of the decree in the second half of 2017.
- 4.5 VD II requires us to match financing flow with appropriate needs and uses. Long-term sustainable development investments should be financed with long term funds. Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and a more predictable and accountable national budget will help ensure better management and consolidation of resources. And we need to put greater efforts to link planning and budgeting to Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks. Regular Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessments could be conducted to measure progress in this area.
- 4.6 South-South cooperation constitutes an important form of knowledge exchange, complementing remittances and other flows. It is important that the cooperation builds on national ownership and clearer needs and requirements. National sovereignty needs to be respected where partnerships build on trust and no interference. At the same time, there is a need to improve understanding on the nature and modalities of south-south cooperation partners and their significant participation in development cooperation management through a clear coordination and reporting mechanism. This includes reflecting ASEAN and regional dimension in national and sub-national policy dialogue.
- 4.7 Adopting Programme-Based Approaches (PBAs) and Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp) to support the implementation of the NSEDPs including SDGs requires greater efforts from the Government and providers of development cooperation. To help materialize this, there is a call to identify lessons learnt and share experience from relevant sectors who have been currently applying PBAs/SWAp in their activities.

- 4.8 It is important to ensure broader and deeper engagement of the private sector in development process. To do so, there is a need to improve ease of doing business and promote quality investments (domestic and foreign) in line with WTO and ASEAN commitments. Also, there is a request to enhance engagement of private sector in policy development, ensuring involvement at an early stage, for policies to be better adjusted to better reflect national priorities and contributing to the sustainable development over the long run.
- 4.9 Developing national capacity to assess the quality of Public Private Partnerships will also help deepen engagement of private sector. Revitalization of the Lao Business Forum can be also done in this process including promoting quarterly meetings between the different national and international chambers of commerce to exchange views on how to strengthen the business environment.
- 4.10 Partnerships with Civil Society - Alongside with all partners mentioned above to further strengthen inclusive partnerships for development results, it is important to continue efforts in enabling International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and National non-Profit Associations (NPAs) to carry out their implementation activities and to participate in development cooperation activities. These partners enrich our conversations on various development challenges. We encourage these partners to implement practices that strengthen their accountability, knowledge sharing and their contribution to development effectiveness, guided by international and national principles and frameworks.

## **Part II – Cross Cutting and Overall Comments**

### **5. Risks and Vulnerabilities**

The Government and development partners and other stakeholders shared common observation that Lao PDR is susceptible to domestic shocks and has a limited buffer in the economic, human and environmental areas. Making Lao PDR more resilient is a common agenda for us all, since addressing these vulnerabilities is central for LDC graduation.

### **6. Revenue Generation**

There was an acknowledgement across national and international stakeholders of the importance of the initiative of the Government of Lao PDR in strengthening domestic revenue generation as the core source of sustainable development financing. This is a clear priority area going forward, alongside that of the introduction of Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks, which would significantly assist development partners in the alignment of development cooperation.

### **7. Quality Growth**

Effort to achieve and maintain a higher quality of growth is of fundamental importance and interest to all stakeholders and to the success of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Making growth sufficiently inclusive, and of impact to poverty reduction, is one of the greatest challenges. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development - for which Lao PDR has been a champion – includes the overall objective of ‘leaving no one behind’. Development partners reiterated their support for the Government to achieve higher quality growth, to enable that aspiration become a reality.

### **8. Investment and trade**

The private sector makes the majority of investment needed for the achievement of the goals of the NSEDP. Improvements to the investment climate and human resource

development were agreed to be paramount in order to attract high quality investors contribute more to social and sustainable development. The ‘one-stop-shop’ concept to make investment processes more transparent and more efficient appeared as a good practical step in the right direction. Human Resource development and establishment of training mechanisms will also play a significant role to strengthen the competitiveness of Lao PDR within the region. Reinvigoration of the Lao Business Forum as a development partner could also have great value in securing a robust mechanism for dialogue, so that mutual development goals can be pursued.

## **9. Rule of Law State**

The Government of Lao PDR is making important administrative and legislative progress towards Lao PDR becoming a rule of law state by 2020, as a fundamental prerequisite for inclusive and sustainable development. This goal was appreciated by stakeholders to the RTIM. Government and development partners agreed on the importance of strong measures to tackle corruption in all its forms and for the rigorous enforcement of anti-corruption laws. This is essential for a number of reasons, not least for supporting an enabling environment for greater investments, as mentioned earlier. Partners touched briefly, but importantly, on the issue of illegal logging – in which steps taken recently by the Government, under Your leadership, Prime Minister, were commended. Development partners will continue to support the Government’s aim to raise forest cover, alongside further steps needed on wildlife trafficking and land tenure security.

## **10. Universal Periodic Review**

The Government continues to the pursuit of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. It was appreciated that the Government is working with line ministries to mainstream human rights into the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, thereby reinforcing the natural link between human rights and development. A human rights-based approach underpins the principle of access for all to essential health, education, water and sanitation services, as well as access to information and participation in development activities. A strengthened partnership approach for following up on the UPR recommendations was suggested. Development partners also acknowledge the Government’s intention to progress its agenda on human rights covenants and other international commitments.

## **11. Service Delivery at the Local Level**

Delivery of basic services remains uneven and poverty remains a challenge, especially in remote rural areas. A number of approaches were raised at the RTIM, for example, ‘local delivery mechanisms’, ‘decentralized budget allocations’ and ‘improved targeting’ as possible measures to help sharpen implementation for impact where needs are greatest. All partners look forward to learning further lessons in 2017, as to which modalities in Lao PDR, prove to be best suited to local conditions. Development partners benefitted from the Government’s perspectives on the Sam Sang (three builds) model.

## **12. Public Private Partnership**

Greater public private partnership is strongly encouraged in order to realize the goals and objectives of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP including SDGs and LDC graduation

## **13. Partnership with Civil Society**

The 2016 RTIM participants recognized the role of civil society and their vital contribution to the NSEDP, LDC graduation and SDGs, and benefitted from an open exchange of perspectives. Greater clarity was sought and agreement was reached that further work in this area is needed to ensure coherence between the principles contained in the Vientiane Declaration and the two relevant Decrees under consideration by the Government. Equally, further consultations will help create a better enabling environment for the work



of INGOs and NPAs under a programme based approach. The Development Partners welcomed the Government's consideration to encourage NPAs to attract resources and technical assistance from local and foreign organizations.

**14.** A problem of unexploded ordnance has been posing a unique and overwhelming challenge to rural development which have great impact on sustainable development, in particular, a significant impediment to development and poverty reduction. Reducing the impact of UXO is Lao PDR's own national Sustainable Development Goal 18. An integrated and coordinated approach is crucial for progress in this area contributing to many other SDGs. In particular, it is import to strengthen the overall multi-stakeholder partnership for accelerating efforts to address UXO problems through a sector-wide approach with periodic oversight meetings of key Government ministries, DPs, implementing partners and other related stakeholders.

**15.** Achieving gender equality and women's empowerment is critical to many NSEDP targets. The Government has likewise aimed to promote the contribution of women to the economy, society, and political system. Targets for women's empowerment and gender equality in the public and private sectors, and in particular for poverty reduction, will need to be integrated into local accountability and transparency mechanisms, grounded in existing international and regional commitments.

## **II. Background of the 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting**

The Round Table Implementation Meeting was held in Vientiane Province, on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 (2016 RTIM). The format of this year RTIM was different from previous RTIMs organised in Lao PDR as it was coherent arrangement of pre-consultations, panel discussions, site visits and policy implementation forum on issues that are among the top priorities of the National Development Agenda – all with a strong orientation towards implementation learning from provincial experience of what works and why, as well as what requires more attention which are extremely helpful for the acceleration of implementation.

### **Overarching issues**

1. Overall progress update of key achievements and challenges arising from the first year implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (Summary reports prepared as part of the 2016 RTIM Background Document by relevant Line Ministries and each of the Sector Working Groups (SWGs) to demonstrate progress made during the year based on outcomes and outputs of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP including key discussion points arising from the 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting 2015).
2. Effective Partnerships as the Cross Cutting Theme: Since the core component of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (VD II) is that of diversifying the development partnership, partnerships will feature as our core cross-cutting issue of this years' RTIM.

### **Special attention**

1. Implementation progress made in integrating the SDGs into the national development agenda, monitoring and statistical frameworks, including into Provincial Development Plans.

2. Implementation progress concerning the Food & Nutrition Security (FNS) programme, given the centrality of FNS to LDC graduation. Learning from national and local partnership convergence approaches and mechanisms will be important to enable nationwide roll-out, outreach to remote communities and local engagement strategies.
3. Implementing 'green growth', climate change and disaster preparedness strategies at the national and provincial level.
4. Presentation, consultation and approval of the Vientiane Declaration II Country Action Plan (including update on the revision of the Prime Minister Decree. No 75 on ODA management).

*(Please refer to Annex 1 for the agenda of the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2016).*

2016 RTIM was opened by H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. It was then chaired by His Excellency Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province, Dr. Souphanh Keomixay (PhD), Minister of Planning and Investment and Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative.

More than 300 participants attended the 2016 RTIM 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 6 for the list of participants)*.

### **III. Proceedings of the Meetings**

#### **3.1 Official Opening and remarks**

To officially open the 2016 RTIM, His Excellency Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR delivered his opening statement and highlighted key achievements made by the Government of Lao PDR in various areas during the first year of the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan.

The Deputy Prime Minister extended his warm welcome to all delegates and expressed a special thank you to the Governor of Vientiane Province, His Excellency Mr. Vidong Sayasone, for hosting the 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting. The Deputy Prime Minister stated that the organisation of the RTIM is a joint effort and shared responsibility by the Lao Government both at the national and provincial levels and Development Partners including other stakeholders. It reflects mutual accountability to further enhance partners for development outcomes. In particular, 2016 RTIM is not only an important forum to discuss progress made since the last 12<sup>th</sup> High Level Round Table Meeting organized in 2015 but also it marks a first year to substantively focus on the integration and implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals in Lao PDR. While the RTIM provides a platform for consultation and exchange of views on implementation progress made, it is also a platform for highlighting key development priorities in the Lao PDR for the years to come. The focus of 2016 RTIM on 1) the SDG integration, 2) food and nutrition security, 3) green growth, climate change and disaster preparedness and 4)

partnership for effective development cooperation, is important for achieving the national development goals and supports the Vientiane provincial development.

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 builds" directive 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. His Excellency hopes that all Development Partners and other stakeholders will continue to pledge commitments in supporting the Lao PDR to implement the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, particularly in addressing the issues of poverty and working towards graduating from the Least Developed Country status by 2020.

His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister also highlighted that 2015/2016 has made significant progress in various key areas. 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 economy is estimated to grow by around 6.9 percent in 2016 (10 months) and it is expected to reach 7 percent as planned. In term of income per capita, it was increased from \$1,970 (2014/2015) to \$2,027 (2015/2016). Lao economic prospects remain favourable, to safeguard macroeconomic stability and increased investment of private sector. For human development, the Government has increasingly puts its efforts towards improving the level of human assets and poverty reduction which are important for sustainable development. More broadly, Lao society continues to be characterized by peace, security and order, and people's livelihoods have gradually been enhanced. Not least, during the course of commencement of implementation of 8<sup>th</sup> plan, the Government has also been paying increased attention to the structural vulnerability of country to economic shocks, in particular trade taking into consideration regional and global developments, as well as building further resilience to environmental shocks. To address challenges, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister call for line ministries together with development partners and other stakeholder to deploy great efforts in supporting the Government for 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, Enhancing capacities in the implementation and fulfilling of the given tasks and mandates at all levels, Promoting advocacy initiatives and programs on environmental protection and green growth. All of these will help ensuring readiness and putting in place all necessary preparations in all aspects for SDG integration and implementation and the graduation from the LDC status by 2020.

In conclusion, His Excellency 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 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (2016-2020) and in attaining SDGs in the Lao PDR, which have led to some significant outcomes. On behalf of the Lao Government, the Deputy 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 Deputy Prime Minister is confident that this Roundtable Implementation Meeting will be convened in a constructive atmosphere and achieve successful outcome.

After the official key note by the Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR, Governor of Vientiane Province, HE Mr. Vidong Sayasone and Minister of Planning and Investment HE Dr. Souphanh Keomixay delivered their welcome remarks and introduction of the key objectives and expected outcomes of the 2016 RTIM. They also took an opportunity to highlight key development progress and national challenges including those of the Vientiane Province.

Contributing to what highlighted by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Governor of Vientiane Province and Minister of Planning and Investment, Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative also delivered her remarks highlighting that 2016 RTIM is about matters of implementation following the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM that witnessed the successful launch of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (2016-2020), the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and the commencement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Lao PDR.

Ms. Immonen stressed that over the past years steps have been taken by the Government of Lao PDR to strengthen the Round Table Process as a mechanism for national development policy dialogue. In particular, better linkage between the Sector Working Groups (SWGs) and the Round Table Meetings/Round Table Implementation Meetings is currently occurring in most sectors. In the run up to 2016 RTIM, Ms. Immonen stated on behalf of donor community that Government consultations with partners have been more extensive than even before which is testimony to the commitment of the Government to have a genuinely engaging process.

Ms. Immonen stated that there have been clear benefits from the close collaboration between all Government ministries and development partners, for example through the formulation of the Vientiane Country Action. The partnership approach has managed to reduce the number of indicators from around 50 to 14, making it more strategic and manageable.

2016 RTIM deliberately focused on four areas critical for Lao PDR to achieve its long term goals of graduation from Least Developed Country status. Pre-consultations organised before the RTIM provided great opportunities to the Government and its development partners to discuss various actions. For all partners engaged in the Round Table pre-consultations on 'Food & Nutrition Security', the inter-sectoral 'convergence approach' represents a real opportunity to accelerate poverty reduction, deliver multiple SDGs and contribute most to the 2030 agenda to 'leave no one behind'. For partners engaged in 'pre-consultations' covering 'Green Growth, Climate Change & Disaster Preparedness', Ms. Immonen took an opportunity to congratulate the Government, as the first ASEAN country to have submitted its ratification instruments in respect of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Work needs to continue to strengthen disaster preparedness and response to reduce vulnerabilities and build resilience across all sectors and at all levels. On the SDG, the Government has been taking great leadership at integrating the SDGs into its development planning and statistical frameworks. On behalf of donor community, Ms. Immonen applauded the Government as the champion of SDG 18 which, with strong partner support, makes systematic progress in the UXO sector. The forward looking focus is to further localize the SDGs for real impact on the lives of all Lao people and communities.

In term of partnership as highlighted by SDG 17 and the Vientiane Declaration, the landscape and nature of partnership is evolving and diversifying. Ms. Immonen made a reference to the recent conclusion of the National Assembly 2<sup>nd</sup> ordinary session and its

keen and growing engagement in policy issues of national development. The 360 newly elected members of the Peoples Provincial Assemblies are regarded as important new advocates for implementation of the NSEDP and SDGs at the local level. Going forward, the permanent engagement of neighbouring and regional partners to these development policy discussions, including within the Sector Working Groups, will become increasingly important. So too will be greater partnership with the private sector and civil society - both national and international. These stakeholders enrich the quality of the dialogue and bring new perspectives, opportunities and resources to address the many development challenges that still need to be overcome. In the same way that the Government is striving to create a business and investment environment conducive to inclusive growth, Ms. Immonen, on behalf of donor community, recommended a more efficient environment be created for civil society as a partner in support of the NSEDP and SDG targets. The inclusive manner in which the private sector and civil society have been involved in the Round Table pre-consultation meetings this year has proven to be a valuable development.

Ms. Immonen also highlight a few areas where there is a sense there would be value in consulting further during the course of the RTIM itself. Her highlights which are in line with the well prepared, and concise, 'Background Document' accompanying the 2016 RTIM include: the importance of Macro-economic stability to the NSEDP, in particular, revenue collection and public debt management which require particular attention, the production of an integrated, transparent and accountable national budget, and alignment of ODA - all of which are essential tools for evidence-based decision making which can greatly enhance Government & development partner collaboration on planning, coordination and results reporting, anti-corruption measures, the environment sector, whilst the Government has been making strides forward in areas such as illegal logging, other illicit activities are taking place, for example in wildlife, which also necessitates bold steps and measures, governance for instance the inextricable link between human rights and development; access to justice, services and information, which deserves further attention, and the completion of the comprehensive action plan following up on the accepted 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle Universal Periodic Review recommendations through a multi stakeholder forum.

To conclude her remarks, Ms. Immonen took an opportunity on behalf of the United Nations to reinforce the UN commitment to working with Government and all development partners on what UN regards to be a range of mutual development priorities. The United Nations Partnership Framework, signed earlier this year, in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR, and the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, very much represents our firm statement of intent over the next 5 years. 2016 RTIM is a 'Policy Implementation Dialogue'. Therefore, Ms. Immonen ended her remarks by stating that we need an environment within which there is a constructive exchange of views and upon which we can continue to generate consensus, enthusiasm and resources for investment in key action areas in the year ahead.

## **3.2 Session I**

### **3.2.1 Main Presentation “Progress Overview” – Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP 2015-2016**

By H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment

### 3.2.2 Key discussion points

#### Morning session

#### **Development Partners' feedbacks and comments (European Union, Japan, and Switzerland)**

- Lao PDR remains one of the fastest growing economies in the region with poverty having steadily decreased over the past 15 years and is projected to fall further. However, the challenges to ensure equitable and inclusive growth remain. Therefore, the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP is directed towards promoting balanced, broad-based, inclusive and sustainable growth and development. This will require inclusive partnership for monitoring and reporting on the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP implementation by involving government ministries, provincial authorities, development partners and other stakeholders such private sector, civil society and south-south partners.
- The Government of Lao PDR has made significant progress in the localisation and mainstreaming of the 2030 sustainable development agenda (SDGs) into the NSEDP. The RTIM participants encourage continuous integration of the SDGs into Lao PDRs own planning and budgeting frameworks. In particular, greater alignment is crucial in order to avoid parallel structures, budgets, monitoring frameworks to promote integration with respect to implementation tools, resources and arrangements.
- Effective engagement in support of the SDGs requires looking beyond the traditional bilateral and multilateral development partnerships towards more comprehensive, inclusive and complementary partnerships. This in turn requires bringing together the Government, its development partners, civil society and private sector.
- In term of resource needed for the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP in particular resource mobilization for SDGs, it should be viewed as an integrated use of various sources of financing with the country's own resources playing a primary role. This is even more relevant in the light of the current high fiscal deficit and macro-economic vulnerability to external shock. Efforts to maintain macro-economic stability and an enabling environment to attract investment are crucial.
- Human rights and development policies and strategies are mutually reinforcing and complementary. A human rights based approach to development bases on the empowerment of citizens, the need for delivery of the rights and service which they are entitled to, while at the same time developing the capacity of states to fulfill the obligations to protect, respect and promote the rights of their citizens.
- Delivery of basic services remains uneven and poverty remains a challenge, especially in remote rural areas. A number of approaches were raised at the RTIM, for example, 'local delivery mechanisms', 'decentralized budget allocations' and 'improved targeting' as possible measures to help sharpen implementation for impact where needs are greatest. All partners look forward to learning further lessons in 2017, as to which modalities in Lao PDR, prove to be best suited to local conditions. Development partners benefitted from the Government's perspectives on the Sam Sang (three builds) model.
- Investment promotion policies for domestic and foreign investment is 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.

- Effective budget transparency is a precondition for stronger reliance on country systems. The Government of Lao PDR has committed to increase budget transparency and development partners have pledged a support the strengthening of public financial management systems, as established in the Vientiane Declaration II.
- The Government of Lao PDR has made great effort to enhance revenue collection: 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. These efforts are commendable and development partners look forward to continued cooperation in various element of this important matter.
- Corruption and illicit financial flows represent significant challenges. Lao PDR ratified the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) in 2009 and participated successfully in the first UNCAC cycle review process. Nevertheless, the low ranking of Laos in Transparency International Corruption Perception Index 2015 confirms the importance of redoubling efforts to fight against corruption. Corruption undermines joint efforts to strengthen sustainable development. Therefore, it is important to make significant progress in capacity development and work of the State Inspection and Anti-Corruption Authority.
- Civil society organisations are recognised in the Vientiane Declaration II Action Plan (VDCAP) contributing in the development debate and for ensuring sustainable and inclusive social and economic development. To that end, European partners welcome the formulation of the VDCAP with related indicators. We note our joint – Government’s and its development partners’ - commitment to improving an enabling environment for civil society to contribute to and monitor and to mutually reviewing our progress. This is relevant both in the context of reporting on VDCAP and globally for Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation.
- There was a recognition of the willingness of the Government to revise the Prime Minister’s Decree no 75 on ODA management and utilisation. Development partners stated their intention to participate in the consultations for its revision. They also raised the concerns of the international community regarding recent changes to Government policy on INGO / NPA partnerships. This type of partnership is for the benefits of development projects and local communities. Partners encouraged the Government to facilitate the process, in the spirit of the VDCAP and SDG 17.
- The RTIM participants note that the Government is seeking to become a “Rule of Law State” by 2020. Partners also acknowledge Lao PDR’s acceptance of 116 recommendations from its 2015 Universal Periodic Review and encourage the Government to publish plans to implement all of the recommendations it has accepted.
- 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. Prioritized investment in infrastructure will accelerate the ongoing process of regional integration, and enable Lao PDR to enjoy greater benefits from such integration.

- There was also a request to improve data consistency and reliability and access to updated information. In particular, it is indispensable to enhance statistical capacity to improve the timeliness, reliability, and access to updated data. It is also important to look beyond data collection and focus on the analysis of findings which is significant for ensuring effective cooperation. Also, encouraging the collection of gender disaggregated data can help better target initiatives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

## **Government responses**

### **Ministry Of Finance (MoF)**

With moderate growth, though still high, the Government is fully aware that significant vulnerabilities remain. In particular, although Lao economic prospects remain favourable, to safeguard macroeconomic stability, it remains vital to strengthen the country economy's resilience to external shocks and put in place condition for sustainable growth. In term of fiscal policy, consolidation is a priority of the Government. The fiscal deficit has been reduced over the last three years. On current policies, however, it is set to rise again going forward. The Government has placed greater effort on stronger revenue administration and expenditure rationalization to ensure continued consolidation. To further strengthen its revenue generation efforts, the Government has been considering a number of key measures such as: i) broadening the tax base ii) tax administration reform and; iii) strengthening tax administration. In term of expenditures, these in future will be based on more conservative revenue projections.

With sustained economic growth of 6.9% in 2015/2016 (10 months) and an expectation of reaching 7% by the end of 2016, the Government is committed to addressing some of the most critical inclusive and sustainable growth constraints. Some of key efforts include:

- Exploring potential drivers of growth other than the resource-based industries. Additional emphasis has also been placed on strengthening tourism and hospitality, which is a driver of growth with many subsectors that have high degree of employment response to outputs.
- Focusing on agribusiness/agricultural productivity which has strong inter-industry linkages with huge potential for employment generation. In particular, the Government has been working more intensely with local authorities to help create a range of more attractive off-farm employment opportunities including
- A number of initiatives which have been carried out to enhance and upgrade the investment climate and promote private investment in non-resource industries. For instance i) streamlining and simplifying the business compliance and transaction costs associated in dealing with government to create a more business friendly environment, ii) improving transparency in the provision of public sector services to businesses and; iii) establishing a more predictable basis for the private sector, consistent with the implementation of publicly available registration, rules, and regulations in order to improve efficiency and reduce bureaucracy.
- For the enforcement of the Budget Law, the Government of Lao PDR has been carrying out a number of measures which include: i) ensuring clarity of policy direction and institutional frameworks; ii) ensuring that budget allocations reflect priorities; iii)



ensuring that spending is consistent with approved budget allocation and allotments, and iv) greater scrutiny over the measuring of results and ensuring implementation feedback into the policy process.

### **Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)**

The government has always been committed to service delivery, poverty reduction and inclusive and participatory partnerships particularly ensuring greater involvement of all partners within the national regulatory framework in the national development process.

A plan for a Revision of the Decree 115 has recently been approved and some adjustments will be added in consultations with stakeholders concerned. Once done, the revision will be submitted to the Prime Minister Office for final approval. The focus of the revision will be on knowledge exchange, monitoring and reporting, implementation and contribution to country development.

Line ministries and provinces will ensure that contribution of civil society is in accordance to thematic/sectoral focuses of the national development plan. Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) is working closely with all stakeholders concerned to further effectiveness of public governance and administration. Concerning people's participation and representation, the Government took further steps to strengthen the foundation for people's participation with the implementation of a number of initiatives highlighted in the RTIM Background Document. Prior to the Ordinary Session, the National Assembly organized an intersession programme to discuss a wide range of issues and responses to hotline queries were also made. In addition, MOHA has put an effort to improve the registration process for NPAs.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA)**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is in charge of coordinating and working with INGOs on all related development matters. In recent time, there has been an improvement of legal and regulatory frameworks for INGOs and their engagement in the formulation, consultation and implementation of national development policies and programmes. In particular, a guideline for the INGO implementation has been used to guide regular consultations between the Government and INGOs including other related stakeholders.

The Lao Government has always attached great importance to protecting and promoting human rights and basic rights of its population. The political, economic, social, cultural and family rights of all citizens have been assured and enshrined in the national constitution, laws and regulations, which are in line with Lao regional and international obligations and commitments on human rights.

In terms of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Universal Periodical Review (UPR), following its completion, the Government has adopted 116 recommendations from a total of 196 recommendations that it received. Building on experience to date, MoFA has currently initiated the requisite process to draft an action plan which is expected to be completed in the near future.

### **National Assembly (NA)**

The Premier Ordinary Session of the Lao National Assembly's Eighth Legislature held in 2016 debated issues of national importance. These include the National Socio-economic Development Plan (NSEDPP), state budget, monetary policy, audit results, the work of prosecutors and judges, and legislation approval. Assembly members also debated the

progress of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and state budget for 2015-16, and plans for 2017. The session approved a report on the resolution on audit results for 2013-14, the audit of the budget for the 2014-15 financial year, a report on the audit plan for the budget in 2015-16, and the audit plan for next year.

The session praised the State Audit Organisation (SAO) and the State Inspection Authority (SIA) for ensuring that the audit for 2013-14 was presented to the National Assembly in good time. The session entrusted the SIA to continue to encourage inspections of budgetary units over violations of financial discipline. The session also asked the government to pursue the path to building a state governed by the rule of law, to ensure better economic management. This will help ensure that society as a whole will have confidence in law enforcement which is effective to fight against corruption.

### **Afternoon session**

#### **Development Partners' feedbacks and comments**

**(Germany, Norway, Australia and Canada, Australian Chamber of Commerce, France, United Kingdom, Japan, United State of America, United Nations and Non-Profit Associations)**

- Partners commend the Lao PDR's Chairmanship of the ASEAN in 2016 which contributed to promoting dialogue and cooperation in the region and beyond. Lao PDR has successfully hosted a range of important high-level meetings and presided over ASEAN's new Community Vision 2025 coming into life and to further contribute to regional integration. In recognising the strategic imperative of regional integration, especially as a key driver of prosperity for a landlocked country like Lao PDR, support for regional integration/connectivity is important. To support this, European experience in facilitating free movement of people, goods, services and capital continues to feature prominently in Lao-EU cooperation.
- To support the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, effective development cooperation is necessary. One of the practices among development partners contributing to this is joint programming/strategies/actions. EU highlighted its work on EU joint programming in Lao PDR for the period 2016– 2020 and UN highlighted its UN Partnership Framework (UNPF 2017-2021) which combine European development cooperation and UN cooperation, respectively in support to the government's 8th NSEDP.
- Customary land tenure rights will need to be fully recognized as a means to formal land tenure security.
- Partners welcome the steps taken by the Government to reduce illegal logging and associated trade, including the issuing of the Prime Minister Order no. 15. There was a reference made to the progress in preparing the negotiations with the EU on a voluntary partnership agreement and the consultation process in developing a timber legality definition in line with the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade Action Plan.
- There was also an acknowledgment on the engagement of the Government in combating Wildlife illegal activities. Partners encourage and support Lao authorities in translating/implementing commitments on this matter into actions.

- The private sector makes the majority of investment needed for the achievement of the goals of the NSEDP. Improvements to the investment climate and human resource development were agreed to be paramount in order to attract high quality investors contribute more to social and sustainable development. The 'one-stop-shop' concept to make investment processes more transparent and more efficient appeared as a good practical step in the right direction. Human Resource development and establishment of training mechanisms will also play a significant role to strengthen the competitiveness of Lao PDR within the region. Reinvigoration of the Lao Business Forum as a development partner could also have great value in securing a robust mechanism for dialogue, so that mutual development goals can be pursued.
- Lao PDR holds itself accountable to advancing the reduction of UXO impact and contributing to many other goals at the same time. With support from international community, the Government has continued its significant efforts on clearing UXOs. It is important that good work on UXO activities are accelerated greater coordination across national and international stakeholders.
- The RTIM participants noted the Government's efforts to set out a clear division of labour on ODA and other flows. While the Decree 75 is currently being consulted within Government. There is a request for consultations will be opened up to all partners. Partners are willing to support the revision process. It is also important to align ODA decree with the Vientiane Declaration and link the ODA decree with decree 115 on associations. The existing decrees provide the framework for ongoing collaboration until they have been revised. In particular, partnership between INGOs and NPAs needs to be looked at.
- To improve key education indicators including an increase the young people's access to education and survival rate at all level of education across the country, there is a need to increase more public and external investment particularly non-wage investment categories.
- Addressing Food and Nutrition Security issues in Lao PDR has been moving towards better multi-sectoral coordination and stronger linkage among different forums for some time now. The Government acknowledges that implementing programmatic convergence is complex. In this regard, capacity building for local authorities and communities and strengthening multi-sectoral coordination are needed to ensure all interventions are implemented with appropriate coordination. Significant ownership of stakeholders and local authorities in incorporating the priority sensitive and specific nutrition interventions with focus risk geographical areas in to annual operational plan and implementation are essential.
- Green Growth can be taken achieved in different perspectives. Its definition can be varied according to each individual country's context. Lao PDR is encouraged to select an appropriate approach to suit its local circumstances. Public Private Partnership is strongly encouraged by our development partners and government sectors in order to realize the Green Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in Lao PDR.
- Violence against women and girls, a gross human rights violation, devastates lives, causes untold pain, suffering and illness. It also incurs high economic costs. From 25 November through 10 December, Human Rights Day, the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence aim to raise public awareness and mobilizing people everywhere to bring about change. Partners and the Government are committed to work with all stakeholders on this important campaign.

- Transparency is a fundamental element of abolishing corruption. Controlling corruption is possible only when government, citizens, and the private sector cooperate to ensure transparency.

### **Government responses**

#### **Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF)**

The Government of Lao PDR has always putting great efforts to ensure land tenure security which will provide land owners with confidence in the surety of their land ownership and will encourage them to conserve their natural resources and adopt sustainable management practices.

In Lao PDR, the main drivers of changes in tenure and land use rights of communities and individual households are: the Land Titling Program (in mainly urban and pre-urban areas; the Land Use Planning and Land Allocation Program or Land and Forest Allocation (LFA) in rural areas across the country, and the allocation of land area for large- and medium-scale investment and development projects, including Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

While the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (MAF) plans to continue zoning land under the new Land and Forest Allocation scheme, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) will subsequently continue what the Ministry of Finance (MOF) has done in the past with respect to the Land Titling Program.

The Government of Lao PDR is committed to create an overarching program of land reforms, including the introduction of a new land law. Within this framework, the Government plans to create a system for establishing and registering communal land rights, as well as procedures that can be applied to balance stakeholder interests in different scale acquisitions of land. The government also will develop the legal and implementation framework for completing land titling, with a focus on replacing temporary use rights to agricultural and forest lands with more permanent, secure rights. Therefore, action plan is being development to support overarching strategies for meaningful public participation and benefit-sharing in development of land and natural resources.

In terms of protecting against natural disasters and climate change, the National Strategy on Climate Change and the National Adaption Plan of Action have been structured and operationalized. Several other specific projects have also been implemented.

#### **Lao Women Union**

Lao Women Unit is working closely with the Government to raise awareness and ensure achieving gender equality and women's empowerment which is critical to many NSED targets. To join the internal movement for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence, the Government is working closely with Lao Women Union to have clearer message and effective measures to promote the contribution of women to the economy, society, and political system.

Women's representation at the 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly has increased from 25% to 27.5%. In addition, president and one of the vice presidents of the National Assembly are female. Policies and instruments have recently been developed to enhance gender equality and women's empowerment. To name a few, the Law on Lao Women's Union, Law on Women's Development and Protection, the Law on Prevention and Suppression of

Violence Against Women and Child, the Law on Non-Violence Against Women and Children, Vision 2030 on Women's Development, the 10 year Women's Development Strategy (2016-2025), the five year Lao PDR Women's Development Plan (2016-2020), and the National Plan of Action on Protection and Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children of the Lao PDR (2014-2020).

### **Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA)**

Both INGOs and the Non-Profit Associations (NPAs) operating in Lao PDR have currently been engaging in the national planning and consultation process. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) is in charge of coordinating and working with INGOs on all related development matters. For NPAs, Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) is a responsible agency. There have regulatory framework, policies and guideline to support and facilitate the contributions made by of civil society to national socio-economic development. The Government will work with all partners concerned to update and revise those frameworks, polices and guide as appropriate in order to further enhance working environment for all partners working in Lao PDR. Currently, a plan for a revision of the Decree 115 has been approved. Both INGOs and NPAs have been regularly reporting their operation and activities to MOFA and MOHA, respectively. This is to ensure common understanding among various stakeholders on their contribution to the development of Lao PDR. Annual meetings with INGOs and NPAs are organised by MOFA and MOHA, respectively. The meeting is carried out to facilitate coordination among themselves and raise awareness about their work with other development actors. In addition, INGOs and NPAs also organise their quarterly meetings to brief each other their work on the ground with an aim to avoid duplication and promote harmonisation.

### **Ministry of Planning and Investment**

Further consultations and feedbacks from both national and international partners will be needed for the revision of the Decree 75. Internally, the Government will need to reach an agreement on division of labour for ODA management and other related matters on development cooperation. Also, regional experiences on ODA decree and related matters will be looked at.

In term of the contribution of the INGOs and NPAs, the Vientiane Declaration signed at the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM in 2015 between the Government and development partners highlights the important contributions of both INGOs and NPAs. The Country Action Plan for the implementation of the Vientiane Declaration adopted at this year RTIM calls for greater involvement through proper accountability framework and clearer work plan and procedures among INGOs and NPAs themselves.

### **Ministry of Energy and Mining**

In recent years, the Government has begun to take steps to increase the level of transparency in the mining sector. Transparency (information disclosure) is legislated in the Decree on Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) (2010), EIA Guidelines (2011) and the Public Involvement Guidelines (2009). Currently, the Budget preparation instruction requested revenue departments to separate mining, hydro and non-resource revenues in their budget plans in order to help monitor developments in each revenue sources. Currently, the Government publishes the summary of the budget in the print media and details in the national gazettes.

### **Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment (MoNRE)**

The Government will ensure transparent and fair process of matters relating to land management. Decree 84 and other related rules and regulations will be further improved to further ensure the land use for development proposes. In addition, efforts to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems within Lao PDR will incorporate security of land ownership as it will bring various benefits to the country as a whole. It will also provide social stability and enable efforts to guarantee year-round food security and create the conditions for poverty reduction. The Government is also committed to ensure land tenure security which will engender investor confidence in Laos enabling economic development.

### **3.3 Session II**

On 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 - a day before the actual RTIM, more than 300 participants attended the RTIM panel discussions and then followed by field visits as per the 2016 RTIM agenda.

His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment and Her Excellency Singkham Khongsavanh, Deputy Governor of Vientiane Province delivered welcome remarks and opened the 2016 RTIM panel discussion session.

To guide the RTIM panel discussion session, two presentations were delivered.

1. Progress of the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2015-2016) and Plan for 2017.
2. Progress of the implementation of the Provincial Socio-Economic Development Plan (2015-2016) focusing on sustainable development, food and nutrition security, green growth/climate change and disaster preparedness and partnership for effective development cooperation

There were four RTIM panel discussions on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 and outcomes of each panel discussion were delivered during the actual RTIM on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 as summarised in the following sessions.

#### **3.3.1 Outcome of the Panel Discussion 1 – Programme made in integrating the SDGs**

Outcome statement of the Panel Discussion organised on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was delivered by H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanhphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

*(Please refer to Annex 2 for actual outcome statement including a summary of the 2016 RTIM pre-consultation on the SDG integration)*

Key points are:

1. On 16 November, the Prime Minister's Office issued a decision to establish the national Steering Committee for Sustainable Development Goals. The Prime Minister will lead this Steering Committee, with Minister of Foreign Affairs as first vice-chair and Minister of Planning and Investment as the second vice-chair. Its membership consists of Ministers and Vice-ministers and heads and deputy heads of ministry's equivalent agencies.
2. The National SDGs Secretariat will be established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by the Director-General of the International Organizations Department. The

Secretariat consists of the Department of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Planning at the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Lao Statistics Bureau.

3. Development partners, civil society and private sector will continue to actively participate in the consultations around the SDGs and play an integral role in supporting their achievement at the national and sub-national levels.

A number of additional actions need to be taken immediately within 2017 are as follows.

4. SDG focal points will be nominated by line ministries, Government agencies and provinces. In addition, each province will consider nominating SDG focal points at district- and village-level as appropriate.
5. To create an enabling environment for SDG monitoring and assessment, key actions will be taken to strengthen the national statistical system and improve the quality and disaggregation of data.
  - These actions will be framed by a review of the statistics law, a mid-term assessment of the Strategy for the Development of the National Statistics System, and update of this Strategy for 2016-2025, integrating the SDGs.
  - Capacities will be strengthened at all levels of the statistical organization-horizontally and vertically.
  - The Lao Statistics Bureau in coordination with line-ministries will set up a working group on SDG indicators. This working group will develop an action plan on tracking progress towards the SDG indicators. It will integrate the SDGs into the budgeting and institutional setup of the LSB.
6. The Government and development partners in consultation with civil society and private sector - will strengthen issue-based coalitions to focus their support on critical issues such as food and nutrition security, and on critical target groups such as adolescent girls, ensuring that no one is left behind. Focusing resources in this way will accelerate progress towards multiple SDGs at the same time and promote swift graduation from Least Developed Country status. The Sector Working Groups and other partnership fora are tasked to prioritize the relevant SDG targets in their 2017 work plans.

A number of additional measures to accelerate the SDGs will be taken through the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP.

7. Priority focus will be put on enhancing domestic resource mobilization, including tax revenue, for SDG and NSEDP achievement.
  - The development and adaptation of SDG financing strategies to the country context, will strengthen the linkage between financing and results, and accelerate progress. The SDG Steering Committee will consider the development of an Integrated National Financing Framework for Lao PDR.
  - The Ministry of Finance will work closely with line-ministries on their respective budget allocations towards the identified NSEDP and SDG priorities. Ministries will justify their budgets and be held accountable vis-à-vis the National Assembly; provincial governments will justify their budgets and be held accountable vis-à-vis the Provincial People's Assemblies.
  - Financing for SDGs and NSEDP will become a regular part of the Round Table dialogue.

8. The SDG Steering Committee will continue inclusive consultations on the implementation of the SDGs with participation of civil society, private sector and local citizens.

### **3.3.2 Outcome of the Panel Discussion 2 – Implementation Progress of the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) Programme**

Outcome statement of the Panel Discussion organised on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was delivered by H.E. Dr. Phouthone Muangpark, Deputy Minister of Health

*(Please refer to Annex 3 for actual outcome statement including a summary of the 2016 RTIM pre-consultation on the Food and Nutrition Security)*

Key points are:

#### **Immediate actions**

1. Strengthen capacity for sub-national level coordination for intersectoral implementation of the priority actions from the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action and integrate nutrition in provincial and district planning using all available resources (Government, Development Partners and Private Sector). There is a need for defining clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders from management down to task level. Provincial and district level authorities and stakeholders need support to build their capacity to undertake this planning and coordination themselves.
2. There is a need for sub-national level planning that is informed by data on key target groups and priority issues. Surveillance and routine data systems need to be strengthened in order to inform policy decisions, planning, programming and reporting on targets for nutrition. There is a need to use data that is already being collected and be better analysed in order to identify where to implement multisectoral nutrition actions, who to target and when. This could possibly be done through a National Information Platform for Nutrition using existing data.
3. The use of data however must not be limited to policy decision making, it must also be used to provide immediate feedback to individuals, families, communities to promote behaviour change and be followed up immediately by sector specific actions (health, agriculture, education).
4. It was unanimously agreed that we must prioritize the first 1000 days in order to prevent the long term consequences of stunting. It was also acknowledged that in order to break the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition, we must also focus on adolescent girls, reproductive health including family planning and maternal nutrition.
5. Strong partnerships between government, development partners and private sector are considered essential to achieving NSEDP goals. There must be continued support for these partnerships to improve effectiveness of ODA and technical assistance provided. Explore ethical private sector partnerships that are aligned with nutrition goals.
6. Limited funding was identified by all levels of government as a constraint to scaling up actions for nutrition and, given the current fiscal constraints, there was consensus during the panel discussion to use budget resources more efficiently; focus on delivering what is available in a timely and appropriate manner.



### **Longer term actions**

7. Build evidence for how best to apply the convergent approach. Learn from existing experiences of civil society who have shown good results of convergent programming.
8. Continue to build our understanding of key behaviours and practices that influence stunting and other forms of malnutrition and develop social and behaviour change communication messages, campaigns and support interpersonal communication skills of front line workers.

### **3.3.3 Outcome of the Panel Discussion 3 – Implementing “Green Growth”, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness Strategies**

Outcome statement of the Panel Discussion organised on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was delivered by H.E. Mr. Bounmy Phouthavong, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment.

*(Please refer to Annex 4 for actual outcome statement including a summary of the 2016 RTIM pre-consultation on “Green Growth”, Climate Change, and Disaster Preparedness)*

Key points are:

1. The Green Growth Development Policy Operation has been recognized, with the support from the World Bank having MPI as a focal points coordinating with concerned ministries including MoNRE.
2. Green Growth can be taken achieved in different perspectives. Its definition can be varied according to each individual country’s context. Some best practices have been learnt from South Korea which technological advance and large-scale financial inputs have been employed. Sustainable natural resource management in Costa Rica focused on forest resources and ecosystem-based tourism by developing a mechanism on Payment for Ecosystem Services. Mongolia applied Green Growth through single potential sector that is mining. Macedonia focused on multi sectorial approach including energy, agriculture, city development, watershed management and land administration. Lao PDR is encouraged to select an appropriate approach to suit its local circumstances.
3. The agriculture and forestry sector in Lao PDR has commenced the clean agriculture initiative, which can potentially support the implementation approach in the country.
4. Several sectors in Lao PDR have been affected by the Climate Change impacts. The affected sectors include public health, agriculture and forestry, public work and transport. In addition, the Lao people are also affected by slow onset disaster such as flood and drought.
5. The Government of Lao PDR has paid a special attention on implementing the Intended National Determined Contribution and the Paris Agreement, as well as REDD+ as they are contributing to the implementation of UNFCCC.
6. Some key requirements include building resilience across all sectors and reducing the impact of disasters, facilitating multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral engagement

and defined coordination mechanism, and finally maximizing efficiencies and access to financing.

7. Public Private Partnership is strongly encouraged by our development partners and government sectors in order to realize the Green Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in Lao PDR.

#### **3.3.4 Outcome of the Panel Discussion 4 – Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation – Adoption of the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan and Update on the Revision of the Prime Minister Decree No.75 on ODA management**

Outcome statement of the Panel Discussion organised on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016 was delivered by H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment.

*(Please refer to Annex 5 for actual outcome statement including a summary of the 2016 RTIM pre-consultation on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation)*

Key points are:

Actions to be addressed immediately in 2017 where results will happen overtime.

1. The Round Table Process, including the Sector Working Groups - which bring together all partners, including private sector, south partners, civil society and others - is a key forum to put the Vientiane Declaration and its Action Plan into practice. Therefore, reporting on the implementation of the VDCAP continues to be the core task of SWG and RTP Secretariat including the VDCAP Secretariat.
2. In particular, the role of the national VDCAP Secretariat and its capacity need to be strengthened. This will also include a revision of Sector Working Groups TOR to take into consideration new principles for effective partnerships such as south-south cooperation, business as partner in development and domestic resource mobilization. Also, the immediate task is also to strengthen the technical secretariats of the Sector Working Groups, which are critical to their functioning.
3. To guide that we all work towards the same goals and priorities, the 8th NSEDP M&E framework and the SDG indicators will need to be finalised in order to guide the efforts of Provinces and Sector Working Groups contributing to the achievement of the national development agenda.
4. An ultimate purpose of coordination is to ensure greater results achieved through greater partnership, it is necessary to systematically integrate financing for SDGs and NSEDP into the round table dialogue, taking into consideration different forms of partnership and finance.
5. Last but not least, the revised decree 75 sets out a clear division of labour on ODA and other flows. It is currently being consulted within Government and it will be opened up to all partners once clear division of labour is confirmed. It is important to align ODA decree with the Vientiane Declaration and to link ODA decree with associated decrees. The existing decrees provide the framework for ongoing collaboration until they have been revised. A national workshop on ODA management will be convened before the finalization of the decree in the second half of 2017.

Actions to be addressed over the course 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (after 2018) and beyond.

6. Moving from Vientiane Declaration I (aid effectiveness) to Vientiane Declaration II (partnership for effective development cooperation), we need to make use of all financing flows in a holistic way. Meeting financing needs for sustainable development requires optimizing the contribution from all flows, including public, private, domestic and international. Therefore, it is necessary that Lao PDR develops an integrated financing framework including a financing strategy linked to results that illustrates how different forms of finance can be used more effectively.
7. At the same time, VD II requires us to match financing flow with appropriate needs and uses. Long-term sustainable development investments should be financed with long term funds. Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and a more predictable and accountable national budget will help ensure better management and consolidation of resources. And we need to put greater efforts to link planning and budgeting to Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks. Regular Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessments could be conducted to measure progress in this area.
8. South-South cooperation constitutes an important form of knowledge exchange, complementing remittances and other flows.
  - It is important that the cooperation builds on national ownership and clearer needs and requirements.
  - National sovereignty needs to be respected where partnerships build on trust and no interference.
  - At the same time, there is a need to improve understanding on the nature and modalities of south-south cooperation partners and their significant participation in development cooperation management through a clear coordination and reporting mechanism.
  - This includes reflecting ASEAN and regional dimension in national and sub-national policy dialogue.
9. Adopting Programme-Based Approaches (PBAs) and Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp) to support the implementation of the NSEDPs including SDGs requires greater efforts from the Government and providers of development cooperation. To help materialize this, there is a call to identify lessons learnt and share experience from relevant sectors who have been currently applying PBAs/SWApS in their activities.
10. Ensure broader and deeper engagement of the private sector in development process. To do so, there is a need to improve ease of doing business and promote quality investments (domestic and foreign) in line with WTO and ASEAN commitments. Also, there is a request to enhance engagement of private sector in policy development, ensuring involvement at an early stage, for policies to be better adjusted to better reflect national priorities and contributing to the sustainable development over the long run.
11. Developing national capacity to assess the quality of Public Private Partnerships will also help deepen engagement of private sector. Revitalization of the Lao Business Forum can be also done in this process including promoting quarterly meetings between the different national and international chambers of commerce

to exchange views on how to strengthen the business environment.

12. Partnerships with Civil Society - Alongside with all partners mentioned above to further strengthen inclusive partnerships for development results, it is important to continue efforts in enabling International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and National non-Profit Associations (NPAs) to carry out their implementation activities and to participate in development cooperation activities. These partners enrich our conversations on various development challenges. We encourage these partners to implement practices that strengthen their accountability, knowledge sharing and their contribution to development effectiveness, guided by international and national principles and frameworks.

### **3.4 Official Closing**

His Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment highlighted key discussion points as documented under section I of this report. Prior to the summary made by His Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Ms. Kaarina Immonen also provided final remarks to capture the importance of all key discussion points during the 2016 RTIM.

His Excellency Minister of Planning and Investment stated that all discussion points will be reported back to the Government who will then ask relevant agencies to translate them into implementation actions.

### **3.5 Press Conference**

Right after the 2016 RTIM, His Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment, His Excellency Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province and Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative provided an opportunity for both national and international press members to ask questions about the outcomes of the meeting.

## **IV. Debriefing with the Prime Minister of Lao PDR**

With the success of the 2016 RTIM, its outcome (summary of the discussion points as stated below) were then reported back to the Prime Minister of Lao PDR, His Excellency Thongloun Sisoulith on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at the Prime Minister's Office.

Heading the Delegation to report the 2016 RTIM outcome are His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment (on behalf of the Government) and Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative (on behalf of Development Partners).

Accompanying His Excellency Dr. Chanthaboury and Ms. Immonen are:

1. Australia
2. European Union
3. France
4. Germany
5. Indonesia
6. Japan
7. Luxembourg
8. Republic of Korea
9. The Philippines
10. Thailand
11. United Nations of America
12. United Kingdom
13. World Bank

### **I. Overall context and progress (points 1-4)**

#### **1. ASEAN Summits**

Development partners used the opportunity of the Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) to congratulate the Lao Government on its successful hosting of the ASEAN Summits, including the visit of a great number of Heads of State and Government.

#### **2. RTIM – A Development Dialogue**

Development partners expressed satisfaction with the format of the plenary consultations this year - largely that of a policy dialogue - which is what delegations had desired. The substantive areas of dialogue were helpful for better understanding and clarifying our mutual development priorities going forward. It reflected an open and engaging process, which was greatly appreciated. The range of stakeholders, contributing to the Government-led discussions, included National Assembly members, provincial authorities, ODA partners, regional partners, private sector, civil society and the United Nations. This served to demonstrate the evolving and diversifying development partnership, which is essential for the purposes of achieving the goals of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and the Sustainable Development Goals.

#### **3. NSEDP Overview**

All delegates benefited from a comprehensive overview, presented by the Ministry of Planning and Investment, of the first year of implementation of the NSEDP for 2016, including the main challenges and priorities for 2017.

#### **4. Strong Provincial Dimension & Implementation Focus**

Since the focus of the RTIM was on implementation, the event was held for the first time in Vientiane Province, where all participants could gain better insight into local development challenges. For these purposes, H.E. Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province, organized a useful range of field visits to agricultural, vocational training and health sector projects. Field visits were well attended, highly valued by development partners and an impressive reflection of development in practice. The two-day RTIM meeting was very well organized by the Government and provincial authorities and conducted in a friendly atmosphere.

## **II. The substantive content (points 5-9)**

#### **5. RTIM Main Themes**

Preparation for this year's RTIM had commenced early. A number of key cross-cutting themes central to the NSEDP goal of graduation from LDC status, were prioritized for discussion and four pre-RTIM consultation groups established. This helped advance the RTIM agenda 'from dialogue to action'. It also served to link this year's meeting to priority areas agreed at last year's High Level Round Table Meeting, the four priority areas covered being (included):

1. Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness
2. Food and Nutrition Security
3. Integrating and Implementing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
4. Vientiane Declaration - Country Action Plan

In each of these areas, two months of intensive preparatory work resulted in four parallel panel discussions on day one of the RTIM and generated concrete action points for immediate attention. These were presented to the plenary of the meeting on day two.

#### **6. Risks and Vulnerabilities**

The Government and development partners agree that Lao PDR is susceptible to domestic shocks and has a limited buffer in the economic, human and environmental areas. Making Lao PDR more resilient is a common agenda for us all, since addressing these vulnerabilities is central for LDC graduation. Within the economic and governance sectors, the following issues featured prominently within the RTIM discussions.

#### **7. Revenue Generation**

All delegates acknowledged the importance of the initiatives of the Lao Government in strengthening domestic revenue generation as the core source of sustainable development financing. This is a clear priority area going forward, alongside that of the introduction of Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks, which would significantly assist development partners in the alignment of development cooperation.

#### **8. Quality Growth**

Efforts to achieve and maintain a higher quality of growth is of fundamental importance and interest to all stakeholders and to the success of the NSEDP. Making growth sufficiently inclusive, and of impact to poverty reduction, is one of the greatest challenges. The 2030 agenda for sustainable development - for which Lao PDR has been a champion – includes the overall objective of 'leaving no one behind'. Development partners reiterated their support for the Government to achieve higher quality growth, to enable that aspiration become a reality.

#### **9. Investment and trade**

Delegates were reminded on a number of occasions that the private sector will make the

majority of investment needed for the achievement of the goals of the NSEDP. Improvements to the investment climate and human resource development were agreed to be paramount in order to attract high quality investors contribute more to social and sustainable development. The ‘one-stop-shop’ concept to make investment processes more transparent and more efficient appeared as a good practical step in the right direction. Human Resource development and establishment of training mechanisms will also play a significant role to strengthen the competitiveness of Lao PDR within the region. Reinvigoration of the Lao Business Forum as a development partner could also have great value in securing a robust mechanism for dialogue, so that mutual development goals can be pursued.

### **III. Substantive content on Governance and service delivery (points 10-12)**

#### **10. Rule of Law State**

The Government is making important administrative and legislative progress towards Lao PDR becoming a rule of law state by 2020, as a fundamental prerequisite for inclusive and sustainable development. This noble goal was appreciated by stakeholders to the RTIM. Government and development partners agreed on the importance of strong measures to tackle corruption in all its forms and for the rigorous enforcement of anti-corruption laws. This is essential for a number of reasons, not least for supporting an enabling environment for greater investments, as mentioned earlier. Partners touched briefly, but importantly, on the issue of illegal logging – in which steps taken recently by the Government, under Your leadership, Prime Minister, were commended. Development partners will continue to support the Government’s aim to raise forest cover, alongside further steps needed on wildlife trafficking and land tenure security.

#### **11. Universal Periodic Review**

General commitment was expressed to the pursuit of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations. It was appreciated that the Government is working with line ministries to mainstream human rights into the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, thereby reinforcing the natural link between human rights and development. A human rights-based approach underpins the principle of access for all to essential health, education, water and sanitation services, as well as access to information and participation in development activities. A strengthened partnership approach for following up on the UPR recommendations was suggested. Development partners also acknowledge the Government’s intention to progress its agenda on human rights covenants and other international commitments.

#### **12. Service Delivery at the Local Level**

Linked to the above, delivery of basic services remains uneven and poverty remains a challenge, especially in remote rural areas. A number of approaches were raised at the RTIM, for example, ‘local delivery mechanisms’, ‘decentralized budget allocations’ and ‘improved targeting’ as possible measures to help sharpen implementation for impact where needs are greatest. All partners look forward to learning further lessons in 2017, as to which modalities in Lao PDR, prove to be best suited to local conditions. Development partners benefitted from the Government’s perspectives on the Sam Sang (three builds) model.

### **IV. The evolving nature of the partnership (points 13-15)**

#### **13. Development Effectiveness**

All participants to the RTIM commended the work that had been conducted in the preparation of the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan. The 14-point agenda is focused and relevant to the work of all Sector Working Groups. The suggestion for an

assessment of effectiveness for both Government and ODA financed development projects was welcomed and cooperation for its implementation was assured.

#### **14. Partnership with Civil Society**

Participants recognized the role of civil society and their vital contribution to the NSEDP, LDC graduation and SDGs, and benefitted from an open exchange of perspectives. Greater clarity was sought and agreement was reached that further work in this area is needed to ensure coherence between the principles contained in the Vientiane Declaration and the two relevant Decrees under consideration by the Government. Equally, further consultations will help create a better enabling environment for the work of INGOs and NPAs. The Development Partners welcomed the Government's consideration to encourage NPAs to attract resources and technical assistance from local and foreign organizations.

#### **15. Forward Progress for 2017**

The tone of this year's RTIM was highly constructive. At the same time, it sought to address some of the more significant development priorities critical to the nation. Development partners look forward to the outcomes of the RTIM, feeding into the respective Sector Working Groups early in 2017, to ensure that the good pace of implementation is maintained.



## **Annex 1 – 2016 RTIM Agenda**

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

**24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016 - Vientiane Province**

#### **Agenda**

### **Day 1 – 24<sup>th</sup> November – Panel Discussions and Field Visits**

#### **Morning session – Panel Discussions**

08:30 – 09:00 Registration

09:00 – 09:10 **Welcome remarks**

By Ms. Singkham Khongsavanh, Deputy Governor of Vientiane Province

09:10 – 09:20 **Opening Remarks**

By H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment

09:20 – 09:40 **Presentation on progress of the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2015-2016) and Plan for 2017.**

By Ms. Phonevanh Outhavong, Director General, Department of Planning, Ministry of Planning and Investment

09:40 – 10:00 **Presentation on progress of the implementation of the Provincial Socio-Economic Development Plan (2015-2016) focusing on sustainable development, food and nutrition security, green growth/climate change and disaster preparedness and partnership for effective development cooperation**

By Mr. Soukan Vilayruth, Director of the Provincial Planning and Investment Department, Vientiane Province

10:00 – 10:10 Coffee Break

10:10 – 12:00 **Parallel Panel discussions**

1. **Progress made in integrating the SDGs** into the national development agenda, monitoring and statistical frameworks, including into Provincial Development Plans. The SDG segment also provides an opportunity to see what progress the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP has had on the ground within a selection of the SDGs.

- **Panelists:**

1. **Ms. Phetsamone Sone**, Director General, Administration Department, Lao Statistic Bureau, MPI (Statistical perspective)
  2. **Dr. Bounleua Sinxayvoravong**, Director General, Fiscal Policy Department, MOF (Financing for development perspective)
  3. **Madam Phonevanh Outhavong**, Director General, Department of Planning, MPI (National perspective)
  4. **Dr. Bounpanh Xaymountry**, Director General, Department of Planning, MOES (Sectoral perspective)
  5. **Mr. Chris Herink**, National Director, World Vision (Perspective from INGOs and NPAs)
  6. **Ms. Frederika Meijer**, UNFPA Representative (Global perspective)
- **Moderated by Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo**, Deputy Director General, DIO/MOFA

**2. Implementation progress concerning the Food & Nutrition Security (FNS) programme**, given the centrality of FNS to LDC graduation. Learning from national and local partnership convergence pilots, approaches and mechanisms will be important to enable nationwide roll-out, outreach to remote communities and local engagement strategies.

- **Panelists:**

1. **Dr. Somlith Senvantan**, Deputy Director of Provincial Health Department, as a Head of the Provincial Nutrition Secretariat, Luangnamtha province (Provincial perspective)
  2. **Mr. Sysomphorn Phetdaoheueng**, Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, MPI (National coordination perspective)
  3. **Mr. Savan Hanphom**, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation, MAF (Agricultural perspective)
  4. **Ms. Mona Girgis** from Plan International as a SUN CSA Management Committee member (SUN perspective)
  5. **Mr. Bryan Fornari**, Head of Cooperation, the EU Delegation to Lao PDR (Global perspectives)
- **Moderated by Dr. Chandavone Phoxay**, Deputy Director General, Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion, Ministry of Health

**3. Implementing ‘green growth’, climate change and disaster preparedness strategies** at the national and provincial level. This will entail the identification of private sector partners at the forefront of implementing green growth in Lao PDR, and an update on the line of actions that are being pursued by the Government and partners on climate change and disaster preparedness.

- **Panelists:**

1. **Mr. SyAmphone Saengchandala**, Deputy Director of Disaster Management and Climate Change Department, MoNRE (National perspective)

2. **Mr. Saly Singsavanh**, Director of Planning Division, Department of Forest Management, MAF (Agricultural perspective)
3. **Mr. Kindavong Luanglath**, Director of Disaster Management Division, National Disaster Management Office, MLSW (Disaster perspective)
4. **Ms. Sisavanh Didaravong**, Director of Division, Department of Planning/Ministry of Planning and Investment (National perspective)
5. **Mr. Jean-Michel Pavy**, Senior Environment Specialist, the World Bank (Global perspective)
6. **Dr. Margaret Jones Williams**, Chief of Environment Unit, UNDP CO (Sub-sectoral perspective)

• **Moderated by Dr. Saynakhone Inthavong**, Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation Department, MoNRE

4. **Presentation and consultation on partnership for effective development cooperation - approval of the Vientiane Declaration II Country Action Plan and update on the revision of the Prime Minister Decree. No 75 on ODA management.** VDCAP II will serve as a strategic monitoring tool to oversee and gauge progress of concerning implementation of the Vientiane Declaration adopted during the 12<sup>th</sup> HL RTM in 2015.

• **Panelists:**

1. **Dr. Arounyadeth Rasphone**, Deputy Director General, DIC/MPI (National perspective)
2. **Ms. Sengdavone Bangonesengdet**, Secretary General of the Lao Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Private sector perspective)
3. **Mr. Angkhansada Mouangkham**, Deputy Director General, Department of External Finance, MOF (Financing for development perspective)
4. **Mr. Andreas Zurbrugg**, Head of Development Cooperation, Australia Embassy in Lao PDR (Global perspective)
5. **Mr. Simon Rea** – Country Director, MAG (INGOs and NPA perspective)
6. **Mr. B.Wishnu Krisnamurthi**, First Secretary, Indonesian Embassy (Regional perspective)

• **Moderated by Dr. Phanthanousone (Pepe) Khennavong**, National Technical Advisor (Aid and Effective Development Cooperation), UNDP support programme to Department of International Cooperation/Ministry of Planning and Investment.

12:00 – 13:00 Lunch Break

## **Afternoon Session – Field Visits**

13:00 – 16:30 **Three project sites – based on the three priority areas the RTIM outlined above with Effective Partnerships as the Cross Cutting Theme:**

1. Model Village, Thoulakhom District, Vientiane Province

2. Technical Vocational College, Viengkham District, Vientiane Province
3. Provincial Hospital, Viengkham District, Vientiane Province

(Further information will be provided at later stage).

- 17:00 – 17:30 **Courtesy visit to the Governor of Vientiane province**  
By all delegations, at the Provincial Governor's Office, Vientiane Province
- 18:00 – 21:00 **Baci and Reception**  
Hosted by the Governor of Vientiane Province  
Venue: Nam Ngum Power Electricity's Club (Samosone Fai Fa Nam Ngum)

## **Day 2 – 25<sup>th</sup> November - RTIM 'Policy Implementation Dialogue'**

### **Morning Session**

- 08.30 – 09:00 **Registration**
- 09:00 – 09:10 **Official Opening Remarks**  
By H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR
- 09:10 – 09:20 **Welcome Remarks**  
By H.E. Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province
- 09:20 – 09:30 **Remarks**  
By H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment
- 09:30 – 09:40 **Remarks**  
By Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative
- 09:40 – 09:50 **Photo Session with Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR and Chairs of the meeting**
  1. Ministers/Deputy Ministers and Governors/Deputy Governors
  2. Head Delegations of Development Partners/Ambassadors and Heads/Deputy Heads of International Organisations, INGOs, NPAs and Private Sector
- 09:50 – 10:30 - Official Tour of the 2016 RTIM Development Cooperation Exhibition  
- Coffee Break

### **Chairs of the 2016 RTIM**

- H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment
- H.E. Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province
- Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN RC/UNDP RR

- 10:30 – 10:45 **Main Presentation “Progress Overview - Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP 2015/2016” and Plan for 2017.**  
By H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment
- 10:45 – 11:45 **Discussions**
- 11:45 – 12:00 **Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 1 - Progress made in Integrating the SDGs**  
By H.E. Mr. Thongphane Savanhphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Representative of Group I)
- 12:00 – 12:15 **Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 2 - Implementation progress of the Food & Nutrition Security (FNS) Programme**  
By H.E. Dr. Phouthone Muangpark, Deputy Minister of Health (Representative of Group II)

## **Afternoon Session**

- 12:15 – 13:30 **Lunch Break**
- 13:30 – 13:45 **Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 3 - Implementing ‘green growth’, climate change and disaster preparedness strategies**  
By H.E. Mr. Bounmy Phouthavong, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment (Representative of Group III)
- 13:45 – 14:00 **Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 4 – Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation – Adoption of the Vientiane Declaration II Country Action Plan and Update on the revision of the Prime Minister Decree No. 75**  
By H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment (Representative of Group IV)
- 14:00 – 15:00 **Open questions and panel responses**
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Coffee Break**
- 15:30 – 15:40 **Remarks**  
By Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative
- 15:40 – 15:50 **Remarks**  
By H.E. Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province
- 15:50 – 16:00 **Official Summing Up and Closing Remarks**  
By H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment
- 16:30 – 17:00 **Press conference**  
To brief media on the outcomes of the 2016 RTIM by  
1. H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment

2. H.E. Mr. Vidong Sayasone, Governor of Vientiane Province
3. Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative

**17:00 – 19:30 Travel back from Vientiane Province to Vientiane Capital**

The registered 2016 RTIM participants are recommended to travel back to Vientiane Capital as a group led by the 2016 RTIM Committee. The shuttle buses will depart at 5pm at the Provincial Governor's Office.

**2016 RTIM Development Partners debriefing with the Prime Minister was organised after the RTIM on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at the Prime Minister's Office.**

## **Annex 2 - Outcome Statement – 2016 RTIM Panel Discussion – Progress made on the SDG integration**

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**Outcome of the Panel Discussion on Sustainable Development Goals  
For 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting  
(2016 RTIM Panel Discussion)  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

**Delivered at the Round Table Implementation Meeting  
By His Excellency Mr. Thongphane Savanhphet, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

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- Excellency Governor of Vientiane Province,
- Excellencies Ministers, Deputy Ministers,
- Development Partners,
- Distinguished guests and colleagues,
- Ladies and gentlemen

It is my great honor, on behalf of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the line-ministries, provincial representatives, and development partners, to present key recommendations regarding the implementation of the SDGs to this Round Table Implementation Meeting.

1. We acknowledge the result of pre-consultations held on 10 November on the integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into our national development agenda, which fed into a panel discussion on the first day of this year's Round Table Implementation meeting. With the participation of Government representatives, development partners, civil society and private sector, these consultations have identified a number of important issues and provided recommendations on the way forward in implementing the global sustainable development agenda in Lao PDR.
2. To put these discussions into practice, the Round Table Implementation Meeting identifies a number of priority actions to be taken.

The following actions have already been taken since the pre-consultations:

3. On 16 November, the Prime Minister's Office issued a decision to establish the national Steering Committee for Sustainable Development Goals. The Prime Minister will lead this Steering Committee, with Minister of Foreign Affairs as first vice-chair and Minister of Planning and Investment as the second vice-chair. Its membership consists of Ministers and Vice-ministers and heads and deputy heads of ministry's equivalent agencies.
4. The National SDGs Secretariat will be established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, headed by the Director-General of the International Organizations Department. The Secretariat consists of the Department of International Organizations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Planning at the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Lao Statistics Bureau.

5. Development partners, civil society and private sector will continue to actively participate in the consultations around the SDGs and play an integral role in supporting their achievement at the national and sub-national levels.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

A number of additional actions need to be taken immediately within 2017 are as follows.

6. SDG focal points will be nominated by line ministries, Government agencies and provinces. In addition, each province will consider nominating SDG focal points at district- and village-level as appropriate.
7. To create an enabling environment for SDG monitoring and assessment, key actions will be taken to strengthen the national statistical system and improve the quality and disaggregation of data.
  - These actions will be framed by a review of the statistics law, a mid-term assessment of the Strategy for the Development of the National Statistics System, and update of this Strategy for 2016-2025, integrating the SDGs.
  - Capacities will be strengthened at all levels of the statistical organization- horizontally and vertically.
  - The Lao Statistics Bureau in coordination with line-ministries will set up a working group on SDG indicators. This working group will develop an action plan on tracking progress towards the SDG indicators. It will integrate the SDGs into the budgeting and institutional setup of the LSB.
8. The Government and development partners in consultation with civil society and private sector - will strengthen issue-based coalitions to focus their support on critical issues such as food and nutrition security, and on critical target groups such as adolescent girls, ensuring that no one is left behind. Focusing resources in this way will accelerate progress towards multiple SDGs at the same time and promote swift graduation from Least Developed Country status. The Sector Working Groups and other partnership fora are tasked to prioritize the relevant SDG targets in their 2017 work plans.

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

A number of additional measures to accelerate the SDGs will be taken through the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP.

9. Priority focus will be put on enhancing domestic resource mobilization, including tax revenue, for SDG and NSEDP achievement.
  - a. The development and adaptation of SDG financing strategies to the country context, will strengthen the linkage between financing and results, and accelerate progress. The SDG Steering Committee will consider the development of an Integrated National Financing Framework for Lao PDR.
  - b. The Ministry of Finance will work closely with line-ministries on their respective budget allocations towards the identified NSEDP and SDG priorities. Ministries will justify their budgets and be held accountable vis-à-vis the National Assembly; provincial governments will justify their budgets and be held accountable vis-à-vis the Provincial People's Assemblies.
  - c. Financing for SDGs and NSEDP will become a regular part of the Round Table dialogue.



10. The SDG Steering Committee will continue inclusive consultations on the implementation of the SDGs with participation of civil society, private sector and local citizens.
11. In conclusion, I would like to thank all participants to this Round Table Implementation Meeting for your important contributions in the implementation of the SDGs for the benefits of the people in Lao PDR. We do hope that such valuable support and assistance will be continued.

Thank You.

## Summary – 2016 RTIM Pre-consultation on Progress Made on SDG Integration

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### SDG Pre-consultations to the Round Table Implementation Meeting

10 November 2016

9:00 – 12:00, Don Chan Palace Hotel, Vientiane Capital

#### Chair and Co-Chair

- His Excellency Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative

#### Objectives

- Provide a forum for dialogue on SDG acceleration and achievement.
- Offer insight into needs assessment, financing and costing, institutional arrangements, partnerships and other elements of an SDG Road Map.
- Develop key messages to guide the discussion on SDGs at the RTIM 2016.

#### Panel discussion

**Moderator** – Dr. Yin-Yin Nwe

#### **Panellists**

1. Madam Phonesaly Souksavath, Deputy Head of Lao Statistic Bureau, Ministr of Planning and Investment (Statistical perspectives)
2. Madam Endah Murniningtyas, Former Vice Minister of Natural Resources, and an expert in SDG localisation in Indonesia (Regional and South-South perspectives)
3. Ms. Sengdavone Bangonesengdet, Secretary General of the Lao Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Private sector perspectives)
4. Mr. Chris Herink, World Vision (Perspective from INGOs and NPAs)
5. Mr. Bryan Fornari, Head of Cooperation, the EU Delegation to Lao PDR (Global perspectives)

#### **I. Mainstreaming, Planning, Implementing and Monitoring**

Current status: Some 60 percent of the indicators in the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework of the Eighth NSEDP are linked to the SDGs, including those linked to LDC graduation. Lao PDR's sectoral plans and strategies incorporate additional SDG indicators. Overall, Lao PDR has successfully mainstreamed and localized a significant proportion of the SDG indicators into its national planning. The remaining SDG indicators are in the process of being considered.

- Establish sound institutional arrangements for SDG implementation. The Government plans to set up a National Steering Committee, a National Secretariat and focal points in relevant ministries and institutions, based on the arrangement for MDGs.

- Develop a Strategic Road Map for achieving SDGs. This should include the following elements:
  - Clear definition of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for each SDG target and indicators
  - Institutional strengthening and capacity building for measuring progress
  - Needs assessment and costing to determine the volume of public investment required for SDG achievement, together with a financing plan
  - Partnerships
  - Timing
- Strengthen statistical systems for monitoring progress towards NSEDP goals and SDGs.
  - Legal and policy frameworks for statistics should form an enabling environment for SDG monitoring and assessment. These include the Statistics Law, Five Year Statistical Development Plans, National Statistical Development Strategy 2010-2020.
  - Lao Statistics Bureau's priorities for strengthening national statistical systems are (i) an Action Plan for tracking the SDGs, (ii) capacity building, and (iii) assessment and improvement of data quality. The Lao Statistics Bureau will develop a focused and costed plan for monitoring the SDGs. While surveys and censuses provide important indicators, administrative data should be strengthened.
  - SDGs need to be integrated comprehensively into the work of the Lao Statistics Bureau including its budgeting and institutional setup. A dedicated technical working group on SDG indicators will be established under the SDG steering committee
- Integrate SDGs into both medium- and long-term national planning instruments and frameworks. The Eighth NSEDP (2016-2020) has already integrated SDGs into about 60% of its indicators. In addition, the SDGs are integrated into longer-term frameworks, such as the Ten-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy (2016-2025) and Vision 2030 to provide continuity. The frameworks should be broken down in annual plans.
  - Sequence and prioritize SDG indicators appropriately.
  - Prioritize the SDG indicators that are linked to LDC graduation. These have already been integrated into the NSEDP process.
  - Mainstream SDGs into all relevant sectoral strategies.
- While the SDGs form an integrated package, including Lao PDR's SDG 18 on UXOs, indicators need to be selected as relevant and adapted to the national context. A limited number of indicators and targets will be selected (with focus on Tier 1 indicators and to some extent Tier 2), prioritized and sequenced further to those already embedded in the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Currently, around half of SDG indicators in Laos can be monitored. For many of those indicators the quality of data is low.
- Form or strengthen issue-based coalitions to address critical issues affecting a number of SDGs. Examples are:
  - Food and nutrition security (SDG 2), which will accelerate the SDGs on poverty, health and education, and help to achieve LDC graduation.
  - Adolescent girls: addressing early marriages, adolescent girls' education, health and nutrition will contribute towards many SDGs.

## **II. Partnerships, Citizens and Civil Society**

- Strengthen and expand partnerships for SDG implementation and resource mobilization.
- Translate SDGs into province, district, and local context, and ensure convergence on the same districts and villages through effective horizontal and vertical coordination. Build capacity at province, district and village level to understand and implement SDGs. Engagement of Lao citizens and civil society will ensure no one is left behind.
- Promote participation at the village level and actively involve people in the SDG mobilization process. People need to be engaged as partners. Rather than being done to people, or for people, development needs to take place with people, involving people at every stage. The Lao citizens have the best sense of what their needs are, have resources to help achieve the SDGs, and can help monitor progress.
- Revitalize and empower Village Development Committees by providing them with financial and technical resources to translate the SDGs to the village level.
- Include civil society representatives in institutional arrangements for SDG implementation and monitoring. Given civil society's important role as convenor, facilitator and communicator, it is recommended for civil society to be included in SDG structures.

### **III. Financing**

- Prioritize domestic resource mobilization, including tax revenue, which will be essential to mobilize the USD 27 billion required to achieve the NSEDP, as well as make significant progress towards the SDGs. A stable macro-economic environment and strengthening of Public Financial Management, with credible budgets that can be executed, are important prerequisites.
- Develop and adapt SDG financing strategies to the country context, following recommendations in Lao PDR's Development Finance and Aid Assessment (DFAA). The DFAA provides useful evidence and analysis about types and sources of finance in, and to, Lao PDR. It should be used to develop strategies and make decisions about which types of finance are best suited for which type of investments in the context of the SDGs. The Government and its partners will need to tap into new forms of finance, and use existing financial flows as effectively as possible. Transparency on financing and revenues should be increased.
- Anchor financing strategies to the results and develop an Integrated National Financing Framework for Lao PDR. It is not just about what kind of finance, and how much finance may be available, but about how it can be used most effectively to achieve development results. External public financing (e.g., ODA, South-South Cooperation, Climate Change Financing) should be used in a complementary way. The use of expenditure and financial frameworks needs to be enhanced to ensure best planning of resources against results.
- Make financing for SDGs/ NSEDP a regular part of the Round Table dialogue. It is important to have strong links between discussion on different types of partnerships, and discussions on different types of finance. Having an overview of the overall resource envelope and the characteristics of different flows is crucial for formulating long-term strategies on the best and most catalytic use of ODA and other types of international public finance.

#### IV. Private Sector

- Related to the above, the private sector plays a crucial role in achieving the SDGs, for instance by ensuring decent work and reducing poverty; by increasing domestic revenues; by enhancing environmental sustainability; and by promoting education and skills development.
- Prioritize measures that ensure macroeconomic stability. The NSEDP has a financing gap that is expected to be filled by investments and loans. This will only happen if Lao PDR has macroeconomic stability and offers a safe place for investment.
- Improve the business environment in line with WTO and ASEAN. The draft investment promotion law, currently under discussion at the National Assembly, will be important to strengthen private sector participation. Improving the business environment needs to be based on rule of law and international commitments, including the ILO conventions. Stability of Lao PDR is major asset to attract investments.
- Accelerate measures to market Lao PDR as a place for investment and actively search for investors from abroad. These could use Lao PDR and its Special Economic Zones as hubs to access ASEAN markets. The Lao Chambers of Commerce, the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce should cooperate in marketing Lao PDR to potential investors.
- Link the Round Table Process and the Trade Sector Working Group to the Lao Business Forum.

#### Indonesia's Experience

A national coordinating committee provides oversight at the national level. The SDGs are integrated into Indonesia's Medium-Term Development Plan 2015-2019, based on a mapping of national targets and SDGs. This plan includes an indicative budget over the five years - the financing aspect is thus embedded. Since Indonesia is decentralized to district level, with each district having its own budget and parliament, SDGs also are incorporated to district level. Thus, District Governments formulate District Action Plans, and SDG implementation takes place at the national, provincial and district level. Provinces play a supporting role to the districts as well as a coordination role for issues that extend beyond individual districts.

Indonesia's SDG Roadmap covers 15 years of implementing the SDGs, i.e. three five-year cycles of the Medium-Term Development Plan. This ensures SDG integration into successive Medium Term Development Plans. Moreover, the SDG Roadmap serves as an important bridge between Indonesia's long-term development plans, the current one covering the period 2005-2025.

Indonesia clusters actors for SDGs implementation by platforms. Parliament, civil society and universities for instance are actively involved in SDG localisation, and advise local governments. The national plan has a priority area on reinforcing the role of civil society, which is considered an active partner in achievement of SDGs. Mapping is ongoing to see which partners cover which SDGs. Loans and investments from private sector and philanthropists are important sources of funding.

## **V. Recommendations for the RTIM**

### **5.1 Mainstreaming, Planning, Implementing and Monitoring**

- Establish sound institutional arrangements for SDG implementation with mechanisms for decentralization down to district level.
- Develop a Strategic Road Map for Lao PDR to measure and achieve the SDGs
- Develop and implement a costed action plan to strengthen statistical systems and improve data quality for NSEDP and SDGs.
- Integrate SDGs into medium- and long-term national planning instruments and frameworks.
- Select indicators as relevant and adapt them to the national context.
- Form or strengthen issue-based coalitions to address critical issues affecting a number of SDGs.

### **5.2 Partnerships, Citizens and Civil Society**

- Strengthen and expand partnerships for SDG implementation and resource mobilization.
- Translate SDGs into province, district, and local context, and ensure convergence on the same districts and villages through effective horizontal and vertical coordination.
- Promote participation at the village level and actively involve people in the SDG mobilization process.
- Revitalize and empower Village Development Committees by providing them with financial and technical resources to translate SDGs to the village level.
- Include civil society representatives in institutional arrangements for SDG implementation and monitoring.

### **5.3 Financing**

- Prioritize domestic resource mobilization, including tax revenue, for SDG and NSEDP achievement.
- Develop and adapt SDG financing strategies to the country context.
- Anchor financing strategies to the results and develop an Integrated National Financing Framework for Lao PDR.
- Make financing for SDGs/ NSEDP a regular part of the Round Table dialogue.

### **5.4 Private sector participation**

- Prioritize measures that ensure macroeconomic stability.
- Improve the business environment in line with WTO and ASEAN.
- Accelerate measures to market Lao PDR as a place for investment and actively search for investors from abroad.
- Link the Round Table Process and the Trade Sector Working Group to the Lao Business Forum.

## **Annex 3 - Outcome Statement – 2016 RTIM Panel Discussion – Implementation Progress Concerning the Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) programme**

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**Outcome of Panel Discussion on Implementation Progress Concerning the Food  
and Nutrition Security (FNS) programme  
For 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting  
(2016 RTIM Panel Discussion)  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

**Delivered at the 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting  
By His Excellency Dr. Phouthone Muangpark, Vice Minister of Health  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

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- Governor of Vientiane Province
- Ministers, Deputy Ministers
- Development Partners
- Distinguished guests and colleagues; Ladies and gentlemen

It is an honor for me on behalf of Ministry Health as well as line ministries, provincial representatives, and various development partners to delivery key outcomes from panel discussion taken place on 24<sup>th</sup> November prior to today Round Table Implementation.

- There have been year round consultations preceding the RTIM. These include bi-annual National Nutrition Committee (NCC) Meetings, Quarterly NNC Secretariat meetings, the Agriculture and Rural Development, Education, and Health Sector Working group meetings, Quarterly Development Partner Meetings and the second National Nutrition Forum which was held on 17 November .
- These Year-round and Pre-consultation meetings identified discussion points/issues which needs to be addressed, which are highlighted in the National Nutrition Forum Outcome Statement which all stakeholders; government and development partners endorsed at the Second National Nutrition Forum.
- To materialize the issues identified during the pre-consultation discussions, the RTIM panel discussion held on the 24<sup>th</sup> November proposes to follow up and implement the following immediate and longer term actions

### **Immediate actions**

9. Strengthen capacity for sub-national level coordination for intersectoral implementation of the priority actions from the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action and integrate nutrition in provincial and district planning using all available resources (Government, Development Partners and Private Sector). There is a need for defining clear roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders from management down to task level. Provincial and district level authorities and stakeholders need support to build their capacity to undertake this planning and coordination themselves.

10. There is a need for sub-national level planning that is informed by data on key target groups and priority issues. Surveillance and routine data systems need to be strengthened in order to inform policy decisions, planning, programming and reporting on targets for nutrition. There is a need to use data that is already being collected and be better analysed in order to identify where to implement multisectoral nutrition actions, who to target and when. This could possibly be done through a National Information Platform for Nutrition using existing data.
11. The use of data however must not be limited to policy decision making, it must also be used to provide immediate feedback to individuals, families, communities to promote behaviour change and be followed up immediately by sector specific actions (health, agriculture, education).
12. It was unanimously agreed that we must prioritize the first 1000 days in order to prevent the long term consequences of stunting. It was also acknowledged that in order to break the intergenerational cycle of undernutrition, we must also focus on adolescent girls, reproductive health including family planning and maternal nutrition.
13. Strong partnerships between government, development partners and private sector are considered essential to achieving NSEDP goals. There must be continued support for these partnerships to improve effectiveness of ODA and technical assistance provided. Explore ethical private sector partnerships that are aligned with nutrition goals.
14. Limited funding was identified by all levels of government as a constraint to scaling up actions for nutrition and, given the current fiscal constraints, there was consensus during the panel discussion to use budget resources more efficiently; focus on delivering what is available in a timely and appropriate manner.

#### **Longer term actions**

15. Build evidence for how best to apply the convergent approach. Learn from existing experiences of civil society who have shown good results of convergent programming.
16. Continue to build our understanding of key behaviours and practices that influence stunting and other forms of malnutrition and develop social and behaviour change communication messages, campaigns and support interpersonal communication skills of front line workers.



## **Summary – 2016 RTIM Pre-consultation on implementation progress concerning the Food & Nutrition Security (FNS) programme**

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### **2016 RTIM Pre-consultation on Implementation Progress concerning the Food & Nutrition Security (FNS) Programme**

**17 November 2016**

**08:30 – 12:00, National Conference Center, Vientiane Capital**

### **Outcome Statement for improving nutrition programme implementation in Lao PDR - 2017**

We, the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Partners in Development including Donors, UN agencies, Civil Society, Businesses and Academia will enhance efforts in implementing the National Nutrition Strategy 2025 and Plan of Action 2016-2020 and as specified in the 8<sup>th</sup> Five-Year National Socio Economic Development Plan (NSED) for Lao PDR to become *"A prosperous country, with a healthy population, free from food insecurity, malnutrition and poverty"*.

**At this National Nutrition Forum, we all acknowledge:**

1. Malnutrition is a development and social challenge. Investing in nutrition will play a key role in achieving targets of the five year duration, 8th National Social Economic Development Plan.
2. Convergent approach is required for effective multisectoral coordination, incorporating the strategy into the action plan, programming, funds allocation, joint implementation, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

### **Conclusions of the meeting for improving nutrition programme implementation in Lao PDR – 2017:**

1. National and Sub-national including all relevant sectors, is leading the implementation of the National Nutrition Strategy through a convergent approach. It shall continue to strengthen the capacity of national and sub-national levels for mainstreaming the NNSPA into planning, budgeting, management, coordination, targeting/prioritization, monitoring, evaluation and reporting of the programmes.
2. The Development Partners will continue financial and technical support to strengthen the capacity of the Government to exercise its leadership in implementation, coordination, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.
3. The National, Sub-national and the Development Partners will:
  - Jointly support and finance the NNSPA to prevent all forms of malnutrition in Laos, in particular stunting in children under five years of age, anaemia in adolescents and other micronutrient deficiencies;
  - Strengthen sector wise implementation to scale-up front-line quality services and delivery capacities across the whole spectrum of the sub-national public sector, including key sectors of health, education and agriculture;
  - Promote sector wise coordination from national to sub-national level; collaborations nationally and internationally, including ASEAN, South-South and triangular cooperation;

- Engage private sector for scaling up implementation to improve nutrition situation.
- Scale up community-based initiatives for household food security through improving healthy foods availability; by increasing plant and animal based food production and improving food processing; along with promoting awareness of food safety and nutritious food through social behaviour change communication focussed on all stages of life, including before and during pregnancy, in particular during the first 1,000 days of life, and at school during childhood and adulthood;
- Continue promoting, protecting and supporting exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months and continued breastfeeding until two years of age and beyond with appropriate complementary feeding;
- Strengthen public sector at national and sub-national levels for effective monitoring and evaluation; improved surveillance and data analysis capacity, for better evaluation of the programme outcomes.

## **Annex 4 - Outcome Statement – 2016 RTIM Panel Discussion – Implementing ‘green growth’, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness Strategies**

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**Outcome of Panel Discussion on Implementing ‘Green Growth’, Climate Change  
and Disaster Preparedness Strategies  
For 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting  
(2016 RTIM Panel Discussion)  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

**Delivered at the 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting  
By H.E. Bounmy Phouthavong  
Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

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- Governor of Vientiane Province
- Ministers, Deputy Ministers
- Development Partners
- Distinguished guests and colleagues; Ladies and gentlemen:

It is my great honour to be on behalf of Natural Resources and Environment Sector Working Group to report to you on the results of the panel discussion on Implementing Green Growth and Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness at the National and Provincial Level.

Prior to the Panel Discussion, the Pre-Consultation Meeting on Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness was conducted within the Natural Resources and Environment Sector on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016. A number of issues have been raised and the follow-up actions were proposed which provided the basics for our panel discussion.

The mentioned pre-consultation meeting touched upon the cross-sector coordination, institutional arrangement, effective public investment and management, and the Government’s Sam Sang policy.

In the panel discussion yesterday, several insightful comments from participants have been raised which can be summarized as follows:

8. The Green Growth Development Policy Operation has been recognized, with the support from the World Bank having MPI as a focal points coordinating with concerned ministries including MoNRE.
9. Green Growth can be taken achieved in different perspectives. Its definition can be varied according to each individual country’s context. Some best practices have been learnt from South Korea which technological advance and large-scale financial inputs have been employed. Sustainable natural resource management in Costa Rica focused on forest resources and ecosystem-based tourism by developing a mechanism on Payment for Ecosystem Services. Mongolia applied Green Growth through single potential sector that is mining. Macedonia focused on multi sectoral approach including energy, agriculture, city development, watershed management

and land administration. Lao PDR is encouraged to select an appropriate approach to suit its local circumstances.

10. The agriculture and forestry sector in Lao PDR has commenced the clean agriculture initiative, which can potentially support the implementation approach in the country.
11. Several sectors in Lao PDR have been affected by the Climate Change impacts. The affected sectors include public health, agriculture and forestry, public work and transport. In addition, the Lao people are also affected by slow onset disaster such as flood and drought.
12. The Government of Lao PDR has paid a special attention on implementing the Intended National Determined Contribution and the Paris Agreement, as well as REDD+ as they are contributing to the implementation of UNFCCC.
13. Some key requirements include building resilience across all sectors and reducing the impact of disasters, facilitating multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral engagement and defined coordination mechanism, and finally maximizing efficiencies and access to financing.
14. Public Private Partnership is strongly encouraged by our development partners and government sectors in order to realize the Green Growth and Climate Change Adaptation in Lao PDR.

To conclude my summary statement, I would like to express my sincere thanks and deepest gratitude to all development partners and concerned sectors for their continuous support. I would like to seek this opportunity to urge on development partners to tighten our cooperation towards implementing Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness as outlined in our 8<sup>th</sup> National Social Economic Development Plan 2016-2020.

## **Summary – 2016 RTIM Pre-consultation on Implementing Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness**

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### **2016 RTIM Pre-consultation on Implementing Green Growth, Climate Change and Disaster Preparedness**

**3 November 2016**

**08:30 – 12:00 at MoNRE Conference Hall, Vientiane Capital**

#### **Chair and Co-Chair**

- His Excellency Sommad Pholsena, Minister of Natural Resources and Environment,
- Ms Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative.

#### **Introductory Presentations**

The presentations provided at the meeting were given by representatives from MPI's DoP, MoNRE's DPC and DDMCC and NERI (formerly in MPI). The details of each presentation are as followings:

- Mr. Phanovanh LouangAphai, Officer from MPI's DoP, presented on Green Growth in Lao PDR;
- Mr. Virana Sonnasinh, DDG of DPC reported on the Green Growth in NRE Sector;
- Dr. Saykham Voladet, Division Director from the National Economic Research Institute, provided Capacity Building on Mainstreaming Green Growth Agenda into National, Sub-National and Sectoral Strategy and Action Plans;
- Mr. Syamphone Sengchandala, DDG of DDMCC, presented on climate change and disaster preparedness strategies.

**Key issues identified are listed below, and more detailed summary points are included.**

1. Cross Sectoral Nature of GG & CC/DRM requires multi-sector coordination and collaboration: Specific issues discussed ranged from forestry and forest degradation, curbing illegal wildlife trade, climate change adaptation and climate change mitigation, pest outbreaks, and other events requiring emergency response. It was highlighted that tackling these issues that are all inter-related and should not be treated in isolation. Also the emergency response requires cross sector collaboration. This would also include promoting approaches such as ecosystem-based approach to foster a more effective way for green growth that is cross-sectoral in nature.
2. Institutional arrangement requiring MONRE oversight role and cross-sectoral coordination: Specific SWG arrangement to induce such collaboration may be needed. Especially taking the example of forestry sector and the need for clarification of institutional arrangements reflecting the recent change. For green growth and implementing CC/DRM strategies, MONRE may position itself as an oversight ministry to better integrate environmental impact and climate/disaster risk consideration as well as support coordination across sectors.

3. In particular, importance of forestry sector and clarification of institutional arrangements: Forestry is a key sector that impacts Natural Resources and Environment, Green Growth, Climate Change Adaptation, Climate Change Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction – with national goals of 70% forest cover target, forest categories delineation and reclassification. Clarifying institutional mandate is urgent as MAF oversees all forest categories while MONRE oversees issues related to watershed management, land use and climate change.
4. Building stronger governance system with data/information, monitoring and reporting system: enhancing government strategies and implementation on GG & CC/DRM rely on having sound data and information, reliability and access. This includes strengthening the monitoring and enforcement for investments, wildlife trade, compliance of permits, etc. Use and availability of sufficient data from reports, surveys and databases, i.e. cadasters, and from plans like the NSEDPs and PIPs need to be enhanced. This includes (1) data sharing across departments and ministries, (2) data analytical and presentation capabilities for planning and evaluation, and (3) the required hardware, software and personnel capacities and investments by the government. Geo-data based planning, would greatly strengthen coordination and investments targeting capabilities.
5. Importance in the clarity of rights of ownership, access and use: clarity regarding assets in the form of land, forests and aquatic resources in Lao PDR will provide a solid basis for green growth and participation of the agencies and the people. When considering green economy as well as climate change issues and the corresponding policy options and implementation measures, it is indispensable for all parties to have clarity of land rights. Without clarity on entitlements and rights, especially regarding communal land rights, there will be no clear responsibility and no motivated participation of the people concerned. Furthermore, land conflict may be induced or aggravated, which would be detrimental to building peace and harmony.
6. Efficiency and effectiveness of plans and investments by the government: efficiency and effectiveness of efforts can and should be enhanced, by emphasizing evaluation and learning from implementation, for improvements and up-scaling. A systematic strengthening of a learning and information sharing culture would be highly beneficial.
7. Engaging the Private Sector for green growth: Nature of the engagement with private sector needs to be clarified as the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP is dependent on FDI; and green growth strategies, for example, will require private sector engagement.
8. Reduction of Illegal Wildlife Trade: Lao PDR has been identified as a transshipment country for illegal wildlife trade. This is a key emerging priority identified by the CITES Secretariat during a Mission to Lao PDR earlier this year, which produced recommendations for curbing the illegal trade in wildlife. GoL also committed to taking the necessary steps to reduce the illegal trade at the CITES COP. The Wildlife Working Group 15.7 is committed to supporting the Government on implementing the CITES recommendations.
9. Implementation at sub-national level: Continued and increased attention and support to sub-national implementation of GG & CC/DRM strategies and actions are needed. Enhanced capacity to implement policies and enforce regulations need attention when adopting stronger and more appropriate rules and regulations. A good illustration of this lies in the area of pesticides, where the new law is currently

being considered by the National Assembly but its implementation will be critical to the environmental health of Lao PDR.

10. Implementing Sam Sang policy in the context of green growth and improved preparedness: in implementing the Sam Sang policy and with the need to ensure people's participation in and benefits from land allocations, investments and mitigation measures local planning and oversight competencies have to be built carefully and systematically across all central and decentral levels of government and administration. The appropriate general development management and administration capacities will have to be strengthened over all levels and sectors, particularly on the district level.

### **Detailed open discussion**

- Representative from FAO emphasized that tenure assets comprise of land, aquatic resources, forest and products in the forest. With regards to the emerging issues in the area of Green Growth, Climate change and Disaster Preparedness. He emphasized it is critical for all parties to have clarity of rights of ownership, access and use. FAO's Voluntary Guideline on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries (VGGT) are now being finalized in a Lao language version in consultation with MONRE, and they will provide good basis for development of the Land Law and associated regulations etc., as well as guiding actions and follow-up. FAO underlined that emergencies can be caused by biological agents, including pests and diseases such as the current locust outbreak and the recent detection of avian influenza. These agents can only be effectively prevented and/or combated by cross-sectoral interventions, as the Government has already shown.
- Representative from UNICEF noted the work needed in sound regulations and guidelines but also a good balanced needed for implementation.
- Representative from GIZ stressed that GG should take into account land rights and the importance of having sufficient data and building a culture of information sharing. Towards this end he emphasized also the need to enhance means to measure effectiveness and efficiency of development efforts. On the importance of land, he emphasized that in considering green economy as well as climate change issues and the corresponding policy options and implementation measures, it is indispensable for all parties to have clarity of land rights. He also highlighted the usefulness of the Voluntary Guideline on the Responsible Tenure of Land, Forests and Fisheries (VGGT).
- Representative from UNDP iterated the three areas of GG concept – efficiency, sustainability and negative impacts on the environment. The most important thing is the engagement of sectors. On climate change response, notable was GoL staying engaged in the climate change dialogue and follow-up on the commitments to the Paris Agreements, by having a delegation from Lao PDR attend the UNFCCC COP 22 in Marrakesh. UNDP is currently working with MAF on a funding proposal for the Green Climate Fund which will look at building resilience to climate impacts to secure livelihoods and enhance food and nutrition security.
- Representative from WB pointed to making use of the Green Growth Strategy and Monitoring and Reporting system that NERI and MPI DOP are developing. Under the umbrella of GG, the M&E framework and reporting system can support

enhancing aid effectiveness. In addition to enhancing cooperation across sectors, institutionalized means of reporting would be examples of good governance and information sharing, which is at the center of green growth and on improving governance around natural resources use.

- Representative from the Philippines Embassy highlighted the social and inclusiveness of green growth and for improved preparedness to climate change / DRM. She also emphasized that MoNRE should increase its efforts to engage and involve the other sectors of the Government at the policy and at the programmatic level to achieve a truly effective approach to Green Growth etc.
- Representative from WHO emphasized ensuring coordination and improving aid effectiveness.
- Representative from HELVITAS referred sustainable agriculture to clean production system that would have sustainability, low impact, and resilience. She highlighted the importance of investment to local community. Good coordination between government agencies and development partners are crucial.
- Dr. Saykham of NERI described in further detail the Green Growth Monitoring and Reporting system, which is part of the activity under implementation with financing from the Environment Protection Fund. Also, he emphasized official definition of GG should be made available in order to effectively implement it. Dr Saykham further commented that strategic formulation process should be clear and measureable.
- Representative from DIC MPI appreciated the meeting organization. He then informed the meeting about the upcoming RTIM to be held in Vientiane Province.



## **Annex 5 - Outcome Statement - Panel Discussion – Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation – Adoption of the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan and update on the revision of the Prime Minister Decree. No 75 on ODA management**

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**Outcome of the Panel Discussion on Partnership for Effective Development  
Cooperation for 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting  
(2016 RTIM Panel Discussion)  
24<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

**Delivered at the 2016 Round Table Implementation Meeting  
By Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment  
25<sup>th</sup> November 2016, Vientiane Province**

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- Governor of Vientiane Province
- Ministers, Deputy Ministers
- Ambassadors
- Development Partners
- Distinguished guests and colleagues; Ladies and gentlemen:

It is an honor for me on behalf of Ministry of Planning and Investment as well as line ministries, provincial representatives, and various development partners to delivery key outcomes from panel discussion taken place on 24<sup>th</sup> November prior to today Round Table Implementation Meeting.

The outcome that I would like to delivery is a result of joint efforts and consultations and discussions throughout the year and pre-consultation taken placed on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016 on the Country Action Plan for the implementation of the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation which is a forward-looking document, shifting attention from traditional donor – recipient relationship to broader partnerships that are more inclusive of other forms of financing, beyond ODA. These partnerships will become more relevant as Lao PDR graduates from Least Developed Country status.

With consensus from all partners, we now have a final Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan (2016-2025) focusing on 14 key action areas for further enhancing our dynamic partnership for achieving the national development agenda including sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to stress that VDCAP is a milestone for Government-Development Partners and other stakeholders to commit ourselves for better development results and outcomes through greater partnership in 14 key action areas.

Our tasks are now to implement and ensure that goals and targets of all 14 action areas are properly monitored and reported against through this Round Table Process (Round Table

Meetings and Round Table Implementation Meetings) including Sector Working Group mechanism.

Keeping these in mind, I would like to highlight follow up and implementation actions which are divided into two clusters

For the first cluster which are need to be addressed immediately in 2017 where results will happen overtime.

1. The Round Table Process, including the Sector Working Groups - which bring together all partners, including private sector, south partners, civil society and others - is a key forum to put the Vientiane Declaration and its Action Plan into practice. Therefore, reporting on the implementation of the VDCAP continues to be the core task of SWG and RTP Secretariat including the VDCAP Secretariat.
2. In particular, the role of the national VDCAP Secretariat and its capacity need to be strengthened. This will also include a revision of Sector Working Groups TOR to take into consideration new principles for effective partnerships such as south-south cooperation, business as partner in development and domestic resource mobilization. Also, the immediate task is also to strengthen the technical secretariats of the Sector Working Groups, which are critical to their functioning.
3. To guide that we all work towards the same goals and priorities, the 8th NSEDP M&E framework and the SDG indicators will need to be finalised in order to guide the efforts of Provinces and Sector Working Groups contributing to the achievement of the national development agenda.
4. An ultimate purpose of coordination is to ensure greater results achieved through greater partnership, it is necessary to systematically integrate financing for SDGs and NSEDP into the round table dialogue, taking into consideration different forms of partnership and finance.
5. Last but not least, the revised decree 75 sets out a clear division of labour on ODA and other flows. It is currently being consulted within Government and it will be opened up to all partners once clear division of labour is confirmed. It is important to align ODA decree with the Vientiane Declaration and to link ODA decree with associated decrees. The existing decrees provide the framework for ongoing collaboration until they have been revised. A national workshop on ODA management will be convened before the finalization of the decree in the second half of 2017.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Now, I would like to highlight second cluster of follow up and implementation actions are those to be addressed over the course 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (after 2018) and beyond.

11. Moving from Vientiane Declaration I (aid effectiveness) to Vientiane Declaration II (partnership for effective development cooperation), we need to make use of all financing flows in a holistic way. Meeting financing needs for sustainable development requires optimizing the contribution from all flows, including public, private, domestic and international. Therefore, it is necessary that Lao PDR develops an integrated financing

framework including a financing strategy linked to results that illustrates how different forms of finance can be used more effectively.

12. At the same time, VD II requires us to match financing flow with appropriate needs and uses. Long-term sustainable development investments should be financed with long term funds. Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks and a more predictable and accountable national budget will help ensure better management and consolidation of resources. And we need to put greater efforts to link planning and budgeting to Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks. Regular Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessments could be conducted to measure progress in this area.
13. South-South cooperation constitutes an important form of knowledge exchange, complementing remittances and other flows.
  - It is important that the cooperation builds on national ownership and clearer needs and requirements.
  - National sovereignty needs to be respected where partnerships build on trust and no interference.
  - At the same time, there is a need to improve understanding on the nature and modalities of south-south cooperation partners and their significant participation in development cooperation management through a clear coordination and reporting mechanism.
  - This includes reflecting ASEAN and regional dimension in national and sub-national policy dialogue.
14. Adopting Programme-Based Approaches (PBAs) and Sector Wide Approaches (SWAp) to support the implementation of the NSEDPs including SDGs requires greater efforts from the Government and providers of development cooperation. To help materialize this, there is a call to identify lessons learnt and share experience from relevant sectors who have been currently applying PBAs/SWApS in their activities.
15. Ensure broader and deeper engagement of the private sector in development process. To do so, there is a need to improve ease of doing business and promote quality investments (domestic and foreign) in line with WTO and ASEAN commitments. Also, there is a request to enhance engagement of private sector in policy development, ensuring involvement at an early stage, for policies to be better adjusted to better reflect national priorities and contributing to the sustainable development over the long run.
16. Developing national capacity to assess the quality of Public Private Partnerships will also help deepen engagement of private sector. Revitalization of the Lao Business Forum can be also done in this process including promoting quarterly meetings between the different national and international chambers of commerce to exchange views on how to strengthen the business environment.
17. Partnerships with Civil Society - Further engage civil society in the development process because of their unique capacity. It is important to continue efforts in enabling International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and National non-Profit Associations (NPAs) to carry out their implementation activities and to participate in development cooperation activities. These partners enrich our conversations on various development challenges. We encourage these partners to implement practices that strengthen their accountability, knowledge sharing and

their contribution to development effectiveness, guided by international and national principles and frameworks.

Ladies and Gentlemen

While the follow up actions that I just highlighted capture a summary of outcomes from both pre-consultation and the panel discussion, a report of 2016 RTIM will highlight detailed follow up actions. This will help guide our work in 2017 and beyond for great partnership for effective development cooperation.

I will end my remarks here and wish all of you good health, prosperity, and successful in your work.

Thank you very much.

## Summary - Pre-consultation to the Round Table Implementation Meeting on Partnerships for Effective Development Cooperation

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**RTIM Pre-consultation on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and Update on the revision of the Prime Minister Decree No. 75 on ODA Management**

**15 November 2016**

**9:00 – 12:00, Vientiane Plaza, Vientiane Capital**

### **Chair and Co-Chair**

- His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment
- Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Representative/UNDP Resident Representative

### **Objectives**

- Update participants on the final draft of the Vientiane Declaration Country Action Plan (VDCAP) 2016-2025 to be endorsed at the Round Table Meeting; and on the Prime Minister's Decree 75 on Official Development Assistance (ODA) currently under consultation by Government.
- Discuss priority areas for enhancing effective partnerships in 2017, as per the Vientiane Declaration and its Country Action Plan.

### **Panel discussion**

***Moderator*** – Dr. Phanthanousone (Pepe) Khennavong, National Technical Advisor (Aid and Effective Development Cooperation) – UNDP support programme to Ministry of Planning and Investment and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP including SDGs, Round Table Process, policy research and statistics.

### ***Panellists:***

1. Ms. Sisavanh Didaravong, Department of Planning/Ministry of Planning and Investment (National perspective)
2. Mr. Andreas Zurbrugg, Head of Development Cooperation, Australia Embassy in Lao PDR (Global perspective)
3. Mr. Solal Lehec – TA - Secretariat of the Sector Working Group Agriculture and Rural Development (perspective on technical support at the sectoral level)
4. Mr. Simon Rae – Country Director, MAG (INGOs and NPA perspective)

### **I. Vientiane Declaration 2016-2025 and its Country Action Plan**

- The Vientiane Declaration is a forward-looking document, shifting attention from traditional donor – recipient relationship to broader partnerships that are more inclusive of other forms of financing, beyond ODA. These partnerships will become more relevant as Lao PDR graduates from Least Developed Country status. The Vientiane Declaration is fully aligned with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 17 on Partnerships and with the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation agreed in Busan. The Country Action Plan will guide the implementation of the Vientiane Declaration, translating the commitments into practice. It includes a concise set of 14 action areas and indicators (reduced from originally 49).

- The Round Table Process, including the Sector Working Groups - which bring together all partners, including civil society and private sector - is a key forum to put the Vientiane Declaration and its Action Plan into practice.
- Integrate priorities set through Vientiane Declaration, VDCAP, NSEDP and SDGs into the work plans of the Sector Working Groups: The VDCAP sets the priorities in terms of process, and the NSEDP, SDGs set the thematic priorities, with additional guidance from the annual Round Table meetings.
- Sector Working Groups contribute to monitoring the implementation of sector strategies in line with the 8th NSEDP M&E framework and the SDG indicator
- Revise TOR of Sector Working Groups to take into consideration new principles for effective partnerships such as south-south cooperation, business as partner in development and domestic resource mobilization.
- Strengthen the technical secretariats of the Sector Working Groups, which are critical to their functioning.
- Measure impact of policy dialogue in Sector Working Groups on policy development and implementation.
- Pursue harmonization among partners, including Sector-Wide Approaches, and simplification vis-à-vis the Government. The top donors for instance are funding 5,000 activities, with high transaction costs for the Government.

## **II. Revised Decree 75 on ODA**

- The revised decree sets out a clear division of labour on ODA and other flows. It is currently being consulted within Government. These consultations will be opened up to all partners.
  - Align ODA decree with the Vientiane Declaration.
  - Agree on clear division of labor within the Government. A national workshop on ODA management will be convened before the finalization of the decree in the second half of 2017.
  - Link ODA decree with decree 115 on associations, decree 149 on foundations and decree 13 on INGOs. The existing decrees provide the framework for ongoing collaboration until they have been revised.
  - Provide clarity and guidance on how different sources of finance can be fully utilized.

## **III. Partnerships with Private Sector**

- Ensure broader and deeper engagement of the private sector as a development partner to improve ease of doing business and promote quality foreign investments in line with WTO and ASEAN commitments.
  - The Government gives high importance to the private sector as partner in development, and recognizes the need to improve the business environment, for instance through the creation of one-stop shops.
  - While ODA is expected to provide around 12-15 percent of the USD 27 billion required to achieve the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) and graduation from Least Developed Country status, the private sector is expected to provide 54 percent.
- Enhance engagement of private sector in policy development, ensuring involvement at an early stage, for policies to be better adjusted to the requirements of the private sector, improving its operating environment.
- Develop national capacity to assess the quality of Public Private Partnerships and related models and manage them.
- Revitalize the Lao Business Forum to attract quality private investments.

- Promote quarterly meetings between the different national chambers of commerce to exchange views on how to strengthen the business environment.
- Decentralize partnerships between private sector and government to provincial level. ASEAN integration risks some areas being left behind. It will therefore be key to develop economic infrastructure and harness the private sector at the provincial level. This will require a phased approach, and capacity development. This aspect could be integrated into VDCAP.
  - Expand public-private business fora to all provinces.
  - The amended Investment law which is currently with the National Assembly states clearly the division of labour between central and local government. Investments in remote areas will be incentivized.

#### **IV. Partnerships with Civil Society**

- Further engage civil society in the development process because of their unique capacity. It is important to continue efforts in enabling International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and National non-Profit Associations (NPAs) to carry out their implementation activities and to participate in development cooperation activities. These partners enrich our conversations on various development challenges. We encourage these partners to implement practices that strengthen their accountability, knowledge sharing and their contribution to development effectiveness, guided by international and national principles and frameworks.
  - Non-Government partners such as Non-Profit Associations and INGOs can provide high-quality expertise complementary to the Government and should therefore be included in the development dialogue. This will be important to achieve the national objectives, leaving no one behind. It will be important to keep a fair balance.
  - The Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness should be promoted in the Lao context.
  - For some forms of international support the Government channels may be more suitable, while for other forms, civil society may be more suitable. Evidence for such decisions would be useful, for instance an evaluation on how Government implementation compares to INGO/NPA implementation.
  - Economic Growth is currently not inclusive. Every percent of GDP growth leads to 0.4 percent reduction in poverty in Lao PDR, compared to a 1.2 percent reduction in Cambodia for instance.
- Revitalize Village Development Committees. Given a clear mandate and provided with the necessary resources, they present a structured means for community members to be involved in decision making that concerns their everyday lives. Village Development Committees would provide a conduit through which less formal self-organised groups such as farmer or weaving house collectives, social enterprises and youth groups could make their voices heard.
- Continue quarterly meetings between the INGO Network and MoFA, to enhance communication and mutual understanding.
- Introduce a similar regular exchange between Non-Profit Associations and MoHA, which could contribute to streamlining and accelerating their registration, enabling them to participate in the formulation, consultation and implementation of development policies and programmes, for instance in the Sector Working Groups and other elements of the Round Table process.
- Enhance capacities of NPAs through mentoring, coaching, accompaniment, training and awareness raising from partners such as the Government, INGOs and other partners.

- Streamline MoU review and approval process to enhanced partnerships that result in more effective development cooperation.

## **V. South-South, Regional and Local Partnerships**

- Ensure clear coordination and reporting arrangements to understand better the nature and modalities of south-south collaboration. South-South cooperation constitutes an important form of knowledge exchange, complementing remittances and other flows.
- Reflect ASEAN and regional dimension in national and sub-national policy dialogue
- Include sub-national authorities in national policy dialogue and promote policy dialogue at local level.

## **VI. Financing for Development and Public Financial Management**

- Continued improvement of fiscal management will be crucial to achieve the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP.
  - Introduce Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks by 2018, to ensure better management of resources.
  - Link planning and budgeting to Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks.
  - Introduce rolling investment plans for achieving the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP.
  - Conduct regular Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessments to measure progress in this area.
- Systematically integrate financing for SDGs and NSEDP into the round table dialogue, taking into consideration different forms of partnership and finance.
- Develop an integrated financing framework for Lao PDR, including a financing strategy linked to results that illustrates how different forms of finance can be used more effectively.

## **VII. Recommendations for the RTIM**

### **7.1 Vientiane Declaration 2016-2025 and its Country Action Plan**

- Integrate priorities set through Vientiane Declaration, VDCAP, NSEDP and SDGs into the work plans of the Sector Working Groups
- Sector Working Groups contribute to monitoring the implementation of sector strategies in line with the 8th NSEDP M&E framework and the SDG indicator
- Revise TOR of Sector Working Groups to take into consideration new principles such as south-south cooperation, business as partner in development and domestic resource mobilization.
- Strengthen the technical secretariats of the Sector Working Groups
- Measure impact of policy dialogue in Sector Working Groups on policy development and implementation.
- Pursue harmonization among partners, including Sector-Wide Approaches, and simplification vis-à-vis the Government.

### **7.2 Revised Decree 75 on ODA**

- Align ODA decree with the Vientiane Declaration.
- Agree on clear division of labour within the Government.



- Link ODA decree with decree 115 on associations, decree 149 on foundations and decree 12 on INGOs
- Provide clarity and guidance on how different sources of finance can be fully utilized.

### **7.3 Partnerships with Private Sector**

- Ensure broader and deeper engagement of the private sector as a development partner
- Enhance engagement of private sector in policy development, ensuring involvement at an early stage
- Develop national capacity to assess the quality of Public Private Partnerships and related models and manage them.
- Revitalize the Lao Business Forum
- Promote quarterly meetings between the different national chambers of commerce
- Decentralize partnerships between private sector and government to provincial level; expand public-private business fora to all provinces.

### **7.4 Partnerships with Civil Society**

- Further engage civil society in a development process.
- Revitalize Village Development Committees.
- Continue quarterly meetings between the INGO Network and MoFA.
- Introduce a similar regular exchange between Non-Profit Associations and MoHA.
- Enhance capacities of NPAs.
- Streamline MoU review and approval process.

### **7.5 South-South, Regional and Local Partnerships**

- Ensure clear coordination and reporting arrangements on south-south cooperation.
- Reflect ASEAN and regional dimension in national and sub-national policy dialogue.
- Include sub-national authorities in national policy dialogue and promote policy dialogue at local level.

### **7.6 Financing for Development and Public Financial Management**

- Introduce Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks by 2018
- Link planning and budgeting to Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks.
- Introduce rolling investment plans.
- Conduct regular Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessments.
- Systematically integrate financing for SDGs and NSEDP into the round table dialogue.
- Develop an integrated financing framework for Lao PDR.

## Annex 6 - List of Participants

### List of Government Participants

No.	Name and Surname	Position	Organization	Email
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