



# Lao People's Democratic Republic

*Peace, Independence, Democracy, Unity, Prosperity*

## Report 2017 Round Table Implementation Meeting

22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017

Champasak Province, Lao PDR

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

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# **I. A Summary of Key Policy Recommendations**

The Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) was successfully organized on 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 at the Provincial Governor's Office, Pakse, Champasak 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:**

## **1. Review of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and Priorities for 2018**

- Participants presented and discussed progress on the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, including for Champasak province, and identified priorities for the year ahead. In overall terms, there is a strong sense that good progress has been made since the 2015 High-Level Round Table Meeting, and that Lao PDR is on the right path of development, as it moves forward with the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP.

## **2. LDC Graduation and SDG Integration**

- Regarding LDC graduation and SDG integration, one of the four priority topics selected for this year, discussions proved timely.
- There was optimism that Lao PDR would succeed in its goal of graduation and that a smooth transition would be supported by development partners. It was particularly interesting to note the progress towards the SDGs and LDC graduation - not only at the national level but also at the provincial level, as presented by Champasak province, and as witnessed during the field visit organized to three different sites in the province.
- Participants noted that even with LDC graduation, vulnerabilities will remain. Indeed, the impressive and sustained growth should continue and translate even more rapidly into human assets and social welfare gains for Lao citizens. Hence, it will be important to retain a focus on human assets through increased levels of investment in nutrition, in health and in education.
- Additionally, participants highlighted that a continued stronger focus on the poor, vulnerable and more remote rural communities will support inclusive development, reflecting the full diversity of the Lao population. Related to this, the problem with UXO contamination was raised, highlighting the joint efforts by the Government and the development partners towards the achievement of the national SDG 18.
- The RTIM benefited from the attendance of a senior UNCTAD expert, who underlined that Lao PDR has made the right policy choices and is therefore progressing well towards LDC graduation. In this context, participants look forward to the Review by the Committee for Development Policy in 2018.

## **3. Private Sector and Growth**

- Regarding private sector and growth, the second priority topic at the round table, it was agreed that the role of the private sector is central to our development partnership dialogue. The private sector creates jobs, reduces poverty and contributes to domestic resource mobilization through taxation. The private sector's role in making growth inclusive, sustainable and poverty reducing in its impact, is our ultimate shared objective.

- Participants noted that an economic diversification strategy would be essential, supported by a national human resources and skills development strategy, aligned to the drivers and goals of diversification.
- Development partners were encouraged by the steps taken on rule of law, transparency and predictability in order to provide a level playing field between all investors. A holistic Government approach was suggested to strengthen the enabling environment for the private sector. The continued resolve of the Government to engage in reforms on these areas will be crucial, based on international good practice and based on consultations with all stakeholders.
- Delegates noted that sustained attention to the implementation and enforcement of legal and regulatory - including tax and environmental - frameworks, remains critical to attract high quality investors, to improve Lao PDR's ranking on 'ease of doing business' as directed by you.
- Participants recommended that the process for assessing potential investments should be made more rigorous, to ensure their social, economic and fiscal returns are maximized for the benefit of people and any environmental impact minimized in support of the SDG agenda. The overall quality of investment was stressed as being critical to assess.

#### **4. Human Skills and Training**

- Regarding human skills and training, the third priority area, it was emphasized that investment in this area is fundamental to help drive development and long-term growth, as so many examples in the region highlight. Development partners will be happy to collaborate with the Government in planning for national skills development, being more responsive to private sector demands and using ongoing consultation mechanisms with the private sector in this context.
- Further coordination and capacity development for key training institutions was encouraged, as well as improved labour market data and analysis to provide the basis for evidence-based decision making.
- Training programmes that reach the most disadvantaged groups and are flexible enough to provide skills relevant to them would contribute to ensuring no one is left behind.
- While progress was acknowledged on human resources in the health and education sectors, it was agreed that enhancing the quality of teachers and health professionals will get priority attention.
- Furthermore, the transition from primary to secondary education would benefit from greater consideration. Indeed, special focus will be put on the education survival rates of adolescent girls, thereby enabling them to make informed choices. Such continued efforts will result in a positive impact on poverty reduction and social conditions, whereby girls are also less likely to enter into early marriage and child birth.

#### **5. South-South and Triangular Cooperation**

- With regard to the fourth priority topic of the round table, development partners expressed significant interest in exploring opportunities for South-South and Triangular Co-operation in line with the Vientiane Declaration of 2015. Good practices and development solutions are in abundance and transferrable within the ASEAN region.
- It was highlighted that South-South and Triangular cooperation is a 'two-way street' in that Lao PDR can benefit greatly from the experiences of other countries, and that there are areas where Lao PDR's experience will be valuable for other countries. It will be important to strengthen and enhance the existing institutional arrangements to identify and make best use of such opportunities. This would help to ensure that South-South and Triangular Cooperation is demand-based, nationally owned and led and above all mutually beneficial.

## **6. Macro-economic and Fiscal Management**

- Participants acknowledged that macro-economic stability and the prudent management of public sector finances set the context for private sector investment, which underpins SDG and LDC graduation progress.
- The Government's determination for careful oversight over public spending and debt, alongside implementation of domestic revenue reforms and transparency over the budget, and maintaining a competitive exchange rate and a stable financial sector, was acknowledged and underscored for future development cooperation, as it positively contributes to the investment environment. This is particularly the case since foreign investment banks place a premium on these factors when deciding to provide loans and blended financing. Opportunities in South-South Cooperation could also be aligned with private sector investments.

## **7. The development partnership**

- Participants recognized that civil society has an important role to play in livelihoods, access to services and finance for the most vulnerable communities. Yet it is felt that the procedures established for governing their operations are at risk of limiting civil society's contribution as a partner in development. In addition, partnerships between INGOs and NPAs should be encouraged.
- On the draft ODA Decree, participants welcomed the opportunity for further consultations, to reflect on how to enhance the effectiveness of development cooperation and optimize the flow of ODA, which is a shared concern of the Government and Development Partners. A regular exchange of information on ODA will facilitate the collaboration.

## **8. Land Management**

- Related to land management, the Government was commended for the progress in the Land Law Revision which heralds an enhancement for land management, tenure, security and compensation. This helps underline the centrality of land as an asset, in particular for the poor.

## **9. Illicit Activities**

- Related to illicit activities, the Government was commended for its efforts to reduce corruption, illegal wild life trade and illegal logging. Indications of progress on preventing contraband goods were also welcomed. It was noted that this remains a challenge in the rural areas in particular.
- The RTIM received a request to have the issue of wildlife trafficking brought within the scope of the Round Table mechanism. Eradicating wildlife trafficking would be of enormous benefit for the global image of Lao PDR and will also directly contribute to the achievement of the relevant SDGs.

## **10. Statistical Data**

- On statistics, participants highlighted that improved disaggregated data, especially by gender, and overall statistics of high quality would strengthen evidence-based policymaking and provide the foundation for SDG monitoring, reporting and dissemination.

## II. Background of the 2017 Round Table Implementation Meeting

The format of 2017 RTIM 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. It was organised 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.

The Government of Lao PDR is highly committed to ensure the great success of 2017 RTIM as 2017 represents an important year for development cooperation in Lao PDR to take stock of what have been achieved so far particularly the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, and what line ahead in light of the mid-term review of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, the next Triennial LDC review in 2018 by the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP), the voluntary 2018 SDG report, and other related events. It is also a year to further accelerate the implementation of the national development goals, in particular, various aspects of human development toward the aspiration of graduating from the status of Least Developed Countries (LDC) by 2020. While Lao PDR did not reach the threshold during the last Committee for Development Policy (CDP) review in March 2015, it has nevertheless made important progress in each of the three criteria. According to ESCAP's latest estimates, the Lao PDR has met the GNI per capita criterion for LDC graduation and may be able to meet human asset criterion in time for the 2018 review of the Committee for Development Policy if its pace of progress continues over the next few years.

For these reasons, the 2017 RTIM provides an extremely important policy platform for the Government of Lao PDR and its development partners to collaboratively identify means of implementation of the 8th NSEDP, particularly the need to enhance partnership and effective development cooperation for sustainable growth. The main focus of the Agenda of the 2017 RTIM is on interactive discussions less presentations but more on discussions in particular opening the floor for national counterparts to response to all issues raised by the RTIM participants. First day which is 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017, in the morning, was organised as a technical plenary discussion and field visit in the afternoon. For plenary discussion (morning session), four panel type of forums were organised in different meeting rooms to discuss four themes of the RTIM. For the field visits (afternoon session), three site visits were organised which are those related to the four themes of the 2017 RTIM. Second day – policy dialogue – which is an actual RTIM where outcome of the first day discussions were reported and then followed by discussion and policy recommendations.

There are four key focused areas of the 2017 RTIM. Therefore, pre-consultations were organized in addition to series of SWG meetings through the year. First RTIM pre-consultation is on preparatory consultations of LDC Graduation & SDG Integration. Second RTIM pre-consultation is on realizing quality private sector investment for development. Third RTIM pre-consultation is about investment in skills for human development. Fourth RTIM pre-consultation is on further enhancing south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation.

Field visits to development projects are: 1) UXO related activities (Paksong District, Km50) - particularly focusing on mine risk education that directly contributes to SDG 18 - These activities are supported by UNDP and USA. 2) Coffee plantation project (Ban E Tou, Km35) - involving activities related to coffee plantation/harvest, packing, processing and employment generation. The activities were supported by AFD. And 3) Skill labour technical and vocational training center of Champasack province (Km7) - seeing how the training programme affects employment and decent jobs.

*(Please refer to Annex 1 for the Agenda of the 2017 RTIM)*

The actual 2017 RTIM was opened by H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and keynote address was delivered by H.E Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific. It was then chaired by His Excellency Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasak Province, Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment and Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative.

More than 300 participants attended the 2017 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 16 for the list of Government and Development Partner Participants)*

### **III. Proceedings of the Meeting – Day 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 – Panel Discussions and Field Visit**

#### **3.1 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

Day 1 of the 2017 RTIM was opened by His Excellency Mr. Bouasone Vongsongkhone, Deputy Governor of Champasack Province and His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning. On behalf of the provincial authorities as well as the People of Champasak, Vice Governor welcomed His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment, Ministers and Vice-Ministers, Ms Kaarina Immonen, and distinguished guests to the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017. His Excellency briefly highlighted the profile of the province which has a total area of 15.350 Km<sup>2</sup> consisting of 74% plain lands, and 26% plateaus. The province is rich in natural resources and suitable for development in various sectors including Agriculture (Livestock and Plantation), Industry, Trade, Culture and Tourism. To continue the Socio-Economic Development of the province and develop Champasak into an economic Hub for the Southern provinces, Vice Governor stated that a development strategy of the province has 4 Objectives: 1) Focus on the Development of the Agriculture production to ensure food security and production of goods; 2) Focus on Development in the sectors of Services, trade and investment; 3) Focus on Development in the sector of Tourism services; and Focus on Development in the sectors of Hydropower and Mining.

Vice Governor Bouasone also highlighted key achievements and challenges of the province before ending his opening remarks. His Excellency also stated that the province highly values the Round Table Implementation Meeting, as it will highly benefit the province of Champasak, providing a platform for exchanges of opinions, lessons and experience related to development and governance between the province, development partners, the private sector as well as the CLV member countries, all of which will contribute to a greater partnership for Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan, realizing LDC graduation and achieving SDGs.

Vice Minister of MPI, Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury also delivered opening remarks. His excellency took the opportunity to congratulate and express gratitude to the Governor of Champasak province for providing such a convenient meeting venue at the land of the world heritage site like Wat Phu Champasak; natural sites like Khone Phapheng Waterfall, the and 4,000 Islands, and the origin of the famous local song namely “Kularp Pakse” (Pakse Rose) which are well recognized by the domestic and international visitors. Special thanks also go to the provincial authority as well as the members of sub-committees, especially the Provincial Planning and Investment Department for working closely with the central Government in preparing and making the 2017 RTIM happened. Appreciation was also extended to the UN family as well as the development partners and other stakeholders who closely worked and cooperated with MPI and other line ministries and sectors involved in the RTIM preparatory process.

His excellency also reiterated that the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 is one of the key supporting events to discuss in detail on the preparation of the LDC graduation triennial review in 2018. Lao PDR is expected to meet the criteria on Gross National Income per capita (GNI per capita) and Human Asset Index (HAI) provided its pace of progress continues. However, it is also essential to draw attention on meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> LDC graduation criteria - Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) as it reinforces the first two criteria. 2017 is also the year to prepare for the first National SDG Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report that is going to be

brought to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018. Vice Minister Kikeo also highlighted that the discussion of the four topics were based on the results of the SWGs' workshops throughout the year. Prior to today's meeting, pre-consultation meetings were held in Vientiane Capital on the 4 topics. So, for group discussions, Vice Minister encouraged participants to bring the outcomes from 4 pre-consultations into the discussion. Before ending the opening remarks, vice Minister of MPI briefly highlighted key achievements for 2017 and key policy discussions of the 4 focused areas of the RTP.

*(Please refer to Annex 2 for the actual Welcome Remarks of the Vice Governor, and Annex 3 for the actual Opening Remarks of the Vice Minister of Planning and Investment)*

## **3.2 Presentation of the Champasak Provincial Socio-Economic Development Plan: Implementation Progress and Challenges**

The presentation was delivered by Mr. Saythong Sayavong, Director of the Provincial Department of Planning and Investment, Champasak Province.

*(Please refer to Annex 4 for the actual Presentation of Champasak Province)*

## **3.3 Parallel Panel Discussions**

Four panel discussions were organised based on inputs from the 2017 RTIM pre-consultations organised in Vientiane.

### **3.3.1 LDC graduation and SDG integration**

#### **Panellists:**

1. **Madam Phetsamone Sone**, Deputy Head of Lao Statistic Bureau, MPI - (Key area: statistical matters for SDG monitoring and reporting)
2. **Dr. Sitthiroth Rasphone**, Division Director, Development Policy Research Center - (Key area: LDC and Human Development Report)
3. **Mr. Tim Enderlin**, Director of Cooperation for the Mekong Region (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Key area: support for the SDG integration and implementation)
4. **Mr. Mussie Delelegn**, Chief, Landlocked Developing Countries' Section, Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes (UNCTAD) – UN perspective on LDC graduation
5. **Mr. Amphone Souvannalath**, Director, Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI) (Key area: contribution for SDG integration and implementation)
6. **Mr. Sinouk Sisombat** – Sinouk Café Gourmet Lao - (Key area: contribution for SDG implementation)

**Moderator: Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo**, Director General, Department of International Organisation, MOFA

## **Technical support – UNRCO and UNDP**

*(Please refer to Annex 5 for Presentation on LDC graduation and SDG achievement)*

*For a summary of key discussion points, please refer to 4.3.1*

### **3.3.2 Realizing quality private sector investment for development**

#### **Panellists:**

1. **Ms. Valy Vetsaphong**, Vice President, LNCCI - (Key area: Linkage with LBF)
2. **Mr. Phouvieng Phongsa**, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation – MOIC - (Key area: SWG related matters such as business development and enabling environment)
3. **H.E. Mr. Leo Faber**, Ambassador of European Union to Lao PDR – (Key area: SWG related matters as Co-Chair)
4. **Mr. Mombert Hoppe**, Senior Trade Economist, World Bank – (Key areas: Ease of Doing Business and Green Growth)
5. **Mr. Takeshi HUKIHARA**, Ambassador of Japan to Lao PDR – (Key area: Quality of FDI)
6. **Mr. Jack Sheehan**, Vice President of ECCIL - (Key areas: Taxation and Enabling Environment)

**Moderator: Mr. Outakeo Keodouangsinh**, Deputy Director General, Investment Promotion Department, MPI

**Technical support:** Technical support – EU

*For a summary of key discussion points, please refer to 4.3.2*

### **3.3.3 Investment in skills and labour force for human development**

#### **Panellists:**

1. **Ms. Sophie Wilkinson**, Second Secretary - Human Resource Development and Political, Australian Embassy in Lao PDR – (Key area: support for the implementation of the national education development plan and human resource development strategy)
2. **Mr. Phouthavong Phoummasak**, Director of Labour Market Information Division, Skills Development and Employment Department, MLSW – (Key area: Labour market information system)
3. **Mr. Tony Donovan**, Chief Technical Adviser, Lux Development Project Lao/029 - Skills for Tourism – (Key area: vocational trainings and employment)
4. **Mr. Tee Chee Seng**, General Manager of Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone - (Key area: local employment and recruitment issues)

5. **Mr. Graeme John Buckley**, Director, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific and ILO Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR – (Key area: Global labour framework)

**Moderator: Ms. Dockeo Phonthachit**, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning, MOES

**Technical Support:** Australia

*For a summary of key discussion points, please refer to 4.3.3*

### **3.3.4 Enhancing south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation: “Institutional arrangement for effective development and monitoring”**

#### **Panellists:**

1. **Ms. Sisavanh Didaravong**, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning/Ministry of Planning and Investment - (Key area: SSC/TC experience – regional work on green growth and planning process)
2. **Dr. Bounpheng Philavong**, Director General, Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion, Ministry of Health - (Key area: SSC/TC experience – food and nutrition security, particularly working with partners in the region)
3. **Mr. Lim Yihong**, Second Secretary (Political), Embassy of the Republic of Singapore in Vientiane, Lao PDR - (Key area: current initiatives on TC)
4. **Ms. Wonyoung YEO**, Deputy Resident Representative, KOICA Office in Lao PDR- (Key area: support for SSC and TC)
5. **Mr. Balasubramaniam Murali**, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative – (Key area: SSC/TC and RTP/SWG)

**Moderator: Dr. Arounyadeth Rasphone**, Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, MPI

**Technical support:** UNDP

*For a summary of key discussion points, please refer to 4.3.4*

## **3.4 Summary of Open Discussions**

### **Lao Front for National Construction (LFNC)**

LFNC applauded and congratulated the Government and Champasak province for organization of the 2017 RTIM in a province. Six key policy areas which need extra attention during the remaining period of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP at both national and provincials as highlighted by LFNC are: road accident, health and disease control, child exploitation, family planning, social issues and drawbacks, and UXO.

### **Australia**

A girl must have the opportunity to decide her own future. In Lao PDR, considerable overall progress was made in education and health in the past decades; however, there are still a number of issues that these girls are facing including lack of education and job opportunity, and poor health and nutrition status. There is a need to invest more in adolescent girls for sustainable development. It is important to generate more awareness on issues adolescent girls and a call to everyone for more investments in adolescent girls in order to ensure the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals. There is a clear linkage between adolescent girls and each goal. Therefore, the success of 2030 Agenda will depend on whether the potential of everyone including adolescent girls are realized or not.

### **Ministry of Education and Sports**

In Champasak province, there is a need to look at reasons why enrolment rates at secondary and higher education are still low. In addition, drop-out rate is still high compared to other provinces. Therefore, it is important that more efforts are needed to look at these matters in a strategic manner.

### **A representative from Non-Profit Association (NPAs)**

Civil society plays a role in development processes and is important for putting local communities and villages at the heart of any development approach. **Particularly, for NPAs,** their main activities are on rural development and most NPAs are working with local communities. Further efforts by NPAs are on enhancing gender equality and women empower. There are also needs to pay more attention on disadvantage groups and work with relevant stakeholders for inclusive and sustainable growth.

### **UNFPA**

The social media campaign on the adolescent girl initiative for sustainable development including the introduction of “Noi” is one of various activities to further increase awareness on issues facing adolescent girls in Lao PDR. Brochure of this initiative is available.

### **National Assembly**

Foreign Direct Investment in Champasak is still limited and there is a need to further enhance public private partnership in order to increase resource envelop needed for the development of the province. It is important to establish proper and effective mechanism to facilitate work in these areas, particularly, there is a need to carry out more monitoring and evaluation work to ensure high quality FDI contributing to the development of the country.

### **Japan**

Sustained economic growth in recent years has been impressive. Importantly, therefore, growth needs to become more inclusive going forward. In order to achieve sustainable and inclusive growth in the long term, more focus is needed on provision of job opportunities for a young population, better management of natural resources and the environment, enhancement of competitiveness of the non-resource based sector, investments in public infrastructure, and better health and educational outcomes.

In addition, investment promotion policy for quality domestic and foreign direct investment is also an important contributor to meeting the financing needs of the NSEDP and help reduce financial burden of the Government. It is important to promote private sector development and participation in order to foster development of the country. Therefore, it is important to further enhance Public-Private Partnership

### **Lao Women Union**

In line with the Government's policy to promote gender equality for greater development results, it is important that we have a specific system for monitoring gender inequality and regional disparities. Also, accelerated efforts are needed to collect, analyse, report and disseminate harmonized approaches to disaggregated data. This will greatly assist and inform policy and investment decisions particularly on targets for women's empowerment and gender equality in the public and private sectors, and in particular for poverty reduction.

### **Vice Governor of Champasak**

The Vice Governor thanked participants for useful comments and recommendations which will be looked at in more detail during the remaining period of the implementation of the provincial development plan. While economic growth is important, a focus will also be on social and environmental aspects of development. Extra attention will be on education, health, UXO and other cross cutting themes.

In term of resource and investment, it is a challenge task for the province. There is a need to work with our national and international counterparts to ensure sustainable and effective resource mobilization. The combination of good administration, increased effectiveness and the mobilization of increasing levels of government revenues and other sources such as domestic and foreign direct investment are required to ensure adequate direct development financing over for long-term. To meet resource target, a province will need to ensure that projects and programmes are timely formulated and there are credible plans for implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation. These are some of the areas that the province will study carefully.

## **IV. Proceedings of the Meeting – Day 2: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 – Policy Implementation Dialogue**

### **4.1 Welcome and Opening Remarks**

To officially open the 2017 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 second year of the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2017).

The Deputy Prime Minister extended his warm welcome to all delegates and expressed a special thank you to the Governor of Champasak Province, His Excellency Dr. Bounthong Divixay, for hosting the 2017 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, 2017 RTIM is an important forum to discuss progress made during the second year of the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and key development priorities in the Lao PDR for the years to come. The government has put tremendous effort in implementing the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2017. The country could maintain stability and peace in general in term of politics, security and financial management. His excellency also highlighted various key achievements in various sectors.

His Excellency Somdy also stated that although progress has been made in the implementation of NSEDP 2017, there are some pending issues and challenges to be addressed: 1) The macroeconomic situation has not yet been regularly stable, the state budget lacked liquidity, the budget deficit ratio to GDP was still high; implementation on exchange rate, fiscal and monetary policies has not yet been as effective as it should be. 2) The economic structure has not impressively reformed, especially in the agriculture sector production which largely still old fashioned; despite overall economic structure has moved towards industry and services sectors, the internal structure reform of the industry sub-sectors has not yet been much improved, especially the manufacturing sector has not yet been highly effective; 3) Management on import - export and prices of goods, especially consumer goods has not been strong and comprehensive as it should be, commodity prices are relatively high compared to neighbouring countries, 4) Commercial production has not yet been strongly promoted in sectors and localities, pilot activities were still limited in both quantity and quality, model families were very few; 5) Strengthening labor skills, quality, vocational education and professional skills has not yet been widen, such that labor supply could not meet the development demands, especially domestic and foreign private investment in industrialization; 6) Public administration still consisted of many levels of hierarchy, sectors and provinces has not yet able to undertake their tasks strictly to their management roles, the coordination between each level of authorities, and the public and social management were still weak; and Despite high level of average economic growth, there was vast disparity between sectoral and local development in urban and rural area.

Before ending his remarks, the Deputy Prime Minister reiterated the national measures for the achievement of the remaining period of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP including SDGs and LDC graduation:

- **Macroeconomics:** The economic sector must regularly monitor and manage the macroeconomics by imposing strict measures on inflation rate, exchange rate, money supply (M2) to keep them at the target level. Additionally, further increase in exports, reduce imports of unnecessary goods are required.

- Monetary policies: To monitor and keep the exchange rate stable and yet flexible in response to the exchange rate movement in the market with good and tight management; improve the policies on interest rate and management on the proportion of foreign currency deposits against compulsory reserves of the banks.
- Finance and Budgeting: To modernize the revenue collection and taxations to ensure accuracy and adequacy, all of all is to ensure the budget liquidity and reduce budget deficits; pay more attention on building permanent revenue base; strictly implement the saving policy according to Order No. 09 / PM.
- Investment Promotion: To improve the enabling environment and favorable climate of investment by solving problems at all levels that hindering local and international business operations; implement one-stop services at both central and local levels to reduce procedures of approval and speed up the processes with transparent, fair and effective investment management.
- Implement policies to promote small and medium enterprises to be strong, creative, and create opportunities and mechanisms for facilitating them to access to finance; use modern technology to diversify and increase the value of goods and services to create a strong foundation for the national economy.
- Social sector development, rural development and poverty eradication: To continue developing social sector, rural areas, and further eradicate poverty for the people; actively undertake researches to establish development projects and activities that are suitable and in accordance with real situations in order to improve and upgrade the quality of education and public health in rural and remote areas by investing in improvement and construction of infrastructures in rural areas such as electricity, road, water supply, irrigation, schools, hospitals, health centers, clean water supply etc.
- Public administration: To improve personnel organization to be more streamlined, improve coordination between central and local government and coordination between sectors, uplift accountability, provide more guidance towards the socio-economic development, and strictly enforce the planning - financial disciplines and laws.
- To implement the plans - programs and activities of the Visit Lao Year 2018 by ensuring peace and security; provide good services and be a good host to welcome visitors; advertise, improve and develop the tourist towns including accommodation and restaurants to be clean, beautiful, impressive and attractive to large number of tourists.
- To put more effort in reducing poverty in the poorest districts by developing detailed projects, following up the progress, monitoring and evaluating poverty status in detailed on the ground.

*(Please refer to Annex 6 for the Official Opening Remarks of the Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR)*

**Keynote Address by: H.E. Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific**

This is a second Round Table Meeting in Lao PDR in three years for His Excellency. In attending this national development forum, Mr. Xu impressed with the efficiency of the process and the diversity of development partners gathered together. Equally impressive is the desire of the Government to make the process more open and participatory, including by having these Meetings take place at locations across the country. This serves as a powerful reminder to the RITM participants that development is about including all people, everywhere, and ensuring ‘no one is left behind’.

Mr. Xu also stated that ‘Leaving no one behind’, which is the central tenet of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, has special resonance in Asia-Pacific. There is a remarkable development story to be told about the region – of which Lao PDR is an integral part. This region of the world has developed at a faster pace than any other. Its share in global GDP has increased from about 10 percent in the 1950’s to nearly 40 percent today. Even more impressive - the number of people living in extreme poverty in the region has decreased, from almost one and a half billion in 1990, to around 323 million in 2013.

Yet despite unparalleled progress, significant challenges remain, which are also mirrored here in Lao PDR: Despite impressive sustained economic growth over many years now, inequalities, rural poverty and malnutrition persists. Environmental degradation still needs to be tackled, and the misery of remnant UXO still inflicts devastating harm and impedes progress for many provinces.

His excellency also point out that the four core themes selected for this years’ Round Table Implementation Meeting are compelling. He touched on each of them briefly within the global and Asia-Pacific regional context.

Lao PDR has long cherished the goal of shedding its Least Developed Country status. The major challenge in this regard lies not in reaching the levels Gross National Income (GNI), since the country is achieving year-on-year growth in incomes. Rather, as most of you know, the sterner challenges relate to human assets and economic vulnerabilities. As a result, there remains an urgent need to secure sustained investments national health and educational programmes: ‘nutrition’, ‘literacy’, ‘secondary school enrolment’, ‘under-5 mortality’ and ‘maternal mortality’. Further progress in these areas will not only propel Lao PDR out of LDC status, but also provide a solid foundation for SDG attainment by 2030.

Concerning the economic vulnerability issues confronting Lao PDR’s LDC graduation, three issues stand out. Firstly, the need to follow the path of greater economic diversification aligned to a strong human resource development strategy - as mentioned already. In this regard, the consultations today concerning, ‘investment in skills for human development’ will be especially important in the pursuit of national and local economic diversification strategies. Secondly, through the roll-out of a system of universal social protection, which is vital for protecting human development from periodic shocks. Thirdly, reducing risk posed from natural disasters. This can be achieved by adopting and integrating the Sendai Framework’s ‘four priorities for action’. This will build resilience and serve to reduce new and existing disaster risks, including risks posed by climate change.

In addition, Mr. Xu highlighted the historic undertaking entered into by all nations – that of achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. In this I extend a special appeal to the representatives from the private sector. According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), between \$3.3 and \$4.5 trillion a year will be needed to meet the targets of the SDG relevant sectors.

In terms of the public funds to be invested in the SDGs, the Government and provincial authorities have a lead role to play, both through policy leadership, as well as increasing the volume of domestic revenues generated and allocated to the SDGs. At the same time, development partners will be stretching to sustain current levels of official development assistance (ODA) to Lao PDR in a post-LDC environment. Yet, ODA will remain indispensable for catalysing development, and will need to be utilized ever more judiciously. The most important emergent development partner to the 2030 development agenda, is therefore the

private sector. Indeed, there is growing interest from the private sector globally. According to a recent survey of 100 countries by Accenture, 87 percent of CEOs believe the SDGs provide an opportunity to rethink sustainable value creation; 85 percent see cross-sector coalitions and partnerships as essential for transformation; and 84 percent call for close collaboration with government on SDG action plans.

His excellency put a question to the meeting that “How do we fully unleash the economic power of the private sector to realize the SDGs in Lao PDR?”. Global best practice informs us that when national governments and provincial authorities understand the needs of business, and business understands the development priorities of governments and local authorities, everyone stands to benefit. This will happen through the design of policies that enable business to flourish, and which encourage business to move beyond corporate social responsibility to make sustainable development a core part of their operating model. This transformation can be initiated by CEOs by making sustainable development essential within business strategies and a core competence of their companies. We all need to spread the word more effectively to our private sector partners that responsible business is not only a force for good, it is good for the bottom line. In this regard, Mr. Xu was very pleased to hear that the Round Table process and the Lao Business Forum have been able to link up more directly in the run up to this years’ Round Table Meeting.

Before closing, Mr. Xu stated that diverse partnerships truly hold the key to SDG success. For this reason, His Excellency was also delighted to see ‘Public-Private’ Partnerships featured prominently in the new Vientiane Declaration and its Action Plan. Private companies are purposefully collaborating with national and provincial governments to create jobs, establish value chains, build infrastructure, deliver services, and participate more in public policy and regulation that advance national development goals. This involves sharing responsibilities and risks, joint investment and transparency.

Critical to the elements of our dialogue today, is that it gets translated into action. This links closely to the final area of consultation at this years’ Round Table Implementation Meeting – that of ‘south-south’ cooperation. From a national economic development perspective it is worthwhile recall the many positive experiences we have in the ASEAN region itself. Mr. Xu just travelled from Singapore, a country which in 1960 adopted a focused roadmap for development with innovative ideas in areas such as engineering, education, tourism, retail, financial services and container shipping. This shaped Singapore’s economic and industrial development success.

Within this spirit of cooperation, partners encourage Lao PDR to benefit from the example of Singapore, and many other examples of countries in the near region that have charted, then systematically pursued, focused economic diversification and competitiveness strategies, backed up by solid national human resource investment plans.

Mr. Xu concluded by making brief mention of the UNDP Social Impact Fund that we recently established. It is a 'blended finance' platform to promote social impact investing and investment in SDG implementation in Asia-Pacific. The Fund is now ready to receive proposals thanks to a partnership with the Haifu International Finance Company.

*(Please refer to Annex 7 for the Keynote Address of UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific)*

## **Welcome Remarks by: H.E. Dr. Bounthong Divixay, the Governor of Champasack Province.**

On behalf of the provincial authorities as well as the People of Champasak, Vice Governor welcomed His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Somdy Douangdy, His Excellency Mr. Haoliang Xu, Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment, Ms Kaarina Immonen to the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017. His Excellency briefly highlighted the profile of the province which has a total area of 15.350 Km<sup>2</sup> consisting of 74% plain lands, and 26% plateaus. The province is rich in natural resources and suitable for development in various sectors including Agriculture (Livestock and Plantation), Industry, Trade, Culture and Tourism. To continue the Socio-Economic Development of the province and develop Champasak into an economic Hub for the Southern provinces, Vice Governor stated that a development strategy of the province has 4 Objectives: 1) Focus on the Development of the Agriculture production to ensure food security and production of goods; 2) Focus on Development in the sectors of Services, trade and investment; 3) Focus on Development in the sector of Tourism services; and Focus on Development in the sectors of Hydropower and Mining.

The Governor also highlighted key achievements and challenges of the province before ending his opening remarks. His Excellency also stated that the province highly values the Round Table Implementation Meeting, as it will highly benefit the province of Champasak, providing a platform for exchanges of opinions, lessons and experience related to development and governance between the province, development partners, the private sector as well as the CLV member countries, all of which will contribute to a greater partnership for Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan, realizing LDC graduation and achieving SDGs.

*(Please refer to Annex 8 for the actual Welcome Remarks of the Governor of Champasak Province)*

## **Remarks by: H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment**

His Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay welcomed the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Haoliang Xu and distinguished guests. His Excellency stated that the Government of Lao PDR has highly valued the Round Table Process in contribution to the sustainable and green development. The organisation of the RTIM in province has a main aim to enhance the role, responsibility, participation and ownership of sectors and provinces in mobilizing support and policy dialogue, as well as strengthening local capacity in accordance with the Sam-Sang directive.

Minister of MPI highlighted the agenda of the RTIM 2017 and stated key achievements for 2017 and plan for 2018. To guide the policy dialogue at the RTIM 2017, His Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay pointed out key issues that need attention as follow:

1. On LDC graduation and SDG integration, key issues would be
  - To maintain macroeconomic stability in sustainable manner by shifting the economic structure from production in non-resource sector into quality commercial production and services, and diversify the products using innovative technology to increase productivity and create higher value in production to upswing to income stable.
  - To create new sources of revenue that are more stable, reform revenue collection and expenditure management with modern, rigorous, transparent and accountable system. Once the country graduates from LDC status, it is perceived

that the development aid will gradually decline. As a result, the sources of revenue must be able to cover public expenditure and investment at some level.

- To improve mechanism on coordination, cooperation and division of responsibilities between ministries and agencies concerned at both central and local levels in integrating SDG indicators into socio - economic development plans of sectors and provinces in each period along with the management and identification of SDG supporting projects in detail for actual implementation.
2. On realizing quality private sector investment for development, attention must be paid to the following issues:
    - Ministries, sectors and provinces must improve business environment and climate for both domestic and foreign private investment by improving the mechanisms and legal instruments on one-stop service at central and local levels; reduce the procedures and time required for approving business operations to be more simplified, transparent and fair; solve bottlenecks to facilitate and reduce the cost of doing business and promote both domestic and foreign private investment quantitatively and qualitatively.
    - Strengthen and upgrade management skills and competitiveness for small and medium enterprises in producing and providing quality goods and services, and effective business management and administration; promote the learning and utilization of modern technology and techniques to strengthen business competitiveness in the region and the world.
  3. On National Human Resource Development and skill development, special focuses should be:
    - To upgrade the quality of basic to higher level education, improve public health services both quantitatively and qualitatively with emphasis on grassroots that are poor and remotely located, increase income for the ethnic people in remote area to reduce the disparity between urban and rural areas development gradually.
    - To find a way in accelerating development and upgrading of labor skills for high productivity while expanding labor market extensively to enhance competitiveness and availability of the labor force in diverse occupations and sectors in the national economy.
  4. On the South - South and Triangular Cooperation, it is important:
    - To create awareness and understanding for sectors and provinces in terms of meaning, modalities and concept of the South - South and Triangular Cooperation, especially the mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and evaluation to develop such cooperation in effective manner.
    - To expand partnership for effective development in the context of ASEAN, ASEAN Pluses, GMS, CLV and others in order to support the development new era on basis of mutual benefit.

*(Please refer to Annex 9 for the actual Remarks of the Minister of Planning and Investment)*

**Remarks by: Mrs. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative**

On behalf of UNDP, Co-Chair to the 2017 Round Table Implementation Meeting, Mr. Immonen welcomed participants to Champasak. Ms. Immonen stated that yesterday, participants

were able to take a closer look at a number of development projects taking place in the province. Partners were able to see the tangible contribution that local initiatives are making to the achievement of the LDC graduation and to the SDGs. In addition, yesterday also saw this year's series of 'pre-Round Table consultation meetings', reach their conclusions. Mr. Immonen looked forward to hearing their recommendations in the course of the 2017 RTIM.

Mrs. Immonen highlighted that this is her fourth Round Table Meeting. Therefore, she stated rational on what makes this forum worth the care and effort that all partners, especially the Government, invest in it. Firstly, the Round Table is not just a talking shop – to the contrary. Discussions at the Round Table meetings originate directly from the 10 Sector Working Groups. Or they have been generated from the specific, 'issue-based', pre-consultation meetings that are now organised as part of the annual Round Table process. Secondly, in most instances, the dialogue that takes place at these meetings, leads Government and Development Partners to a more complete understanding of the priority development issues. We cannot, and should not, expect to agree on all matters that appear on the agenda of this forum. Nevertheless, Round Table meetings do provide a 'space' for policy dialogue, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, which is an asset to everyone. The third major benefit Ms. Immonen sees, is that of the emergence of a stronger and more diverse partnership, as His Excellency, Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister mentioned in his own remarks. This vision of the Government, of a broader partnership, was at the heart of the new Vientiane Declaration, endorsed at this forum two years ago. In evidence of that declaration alongside senior representation from government today, we have representatives from the private sector, civil society, the national assembly, provincial authorities, as well as a wide representation of longstanding development partners from the region and globally. Such a robust development partnership is needed to square up to meet the challenges and ambitions of the 2030 global development agenda.

For the United Nations in Lao PDR, 2017 has been another busy and productive year. Support to the Government has been provided in terms of deepening the SDG integration process, including helping further embed SDG indicators and targets within the monitoring and evaluation framework of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. In this context, the UN, together with Government, recently published the report 'From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals: Laying the Base for 2030', to further contribute to the policy dialogue. More broadly, in its first year of implementation of the Lao PDR UN Partnership Framework, the UN has been engaged in assisting capacity development, coordination support and policy formulation to areas as diverse as governance reform, climate change, rural development, health, education, food and nutrition security, and of course, the UXO sector – in support of achieving the Laos' specific SDG 18.

Ms. Immonen also took the opportunity to commend the Government on steps being taken to meet various international commitments and obligations based on open and participatory processes, which we witnessed during the recent visit by the UN Special Rapporteur. Looking ahead to 2018, this will include the mid-term review of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, the process of LDC graduation, and not least, presentation of the first National Voluntary Review on the SDGs.

*(Please refer to Annex 10 for the actual Remarks of UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative to Lao PDR)*

## **4.2 Main Presentation “Summary annual NSEDP progress, challenges 2017 and priorities for 2018**

The main presentation for the 2017 RTIM was presented by: H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment. The focus of the presentation is on

- 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcome 1 (Economic) including reference to LDC EVI status & priorities
- 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcome 2 (Social/Human) including reference to LDC HAI status & priorities
- 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Outcome 3 (Environment) including reference to LDC EVI status & priorities
- Cross-Cutting Issues
- Resourcing/Expenditures
- Priorities for 2018

*(Please refer to Annex 11 for the actual Presentation of the Vice Minister of Planning and Investment)*

## **4.3 Outcomes of Panel Discussion**

### **4.3.1 LDC graduation and SDG integration**

By: H.E. Mr. Sengphet Hounboungnuang, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Representative of Group I)

#### **Key policy recommendations**

1. **Linkage between SDGs and LDC graduation criteria.** There is a close inter-linkage between the SDG indicators and the LDC graduation criteria, which both have the ultimate aim to improve people's lives and well-being. Therefore, these two goals will not be seen in isolation and efforts will ensure that they are complementing each other over the course of implementation of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. In particular, LDC graduation is not a goal in itself, but an important milestone in the sustainable development of Lao PDR. The aim should be sustainable socio-economic development across the Agenda 2030.
2. **Reinforcing all LDC criteria.** While Lao PDR did not reach the LDC graduation thresholds during the 2015 review, we are optimistic the country will become pre-eligible for LDC graduation during the 2018 review. However, pre-eligibility will not resolve the vulnerabilities that made Lao PDR an LDC. Therefore, it is important for the country to continue addressing the LDC graduation criteria in order for its vulnerabilities to be reduced, its development to be sustainable and graduation to occur smoothly. The 5<sup>th</sup> National Human Development Report provides important policy recommendations in this regard.
3. **Human Asset Index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI).** A maximum increase in HAI would occur if the incidence of undernourishment in the population were to be reduced. This is followed by an increase in literacy, an increase in secondary school enrolment, and a reduction of under-5 mortality. An additional component of the HAI expected to be added in 2018 is maternal mortality. Addressing undernourishment however is the one key component that needs to be addressed to reach the HAI graduation threshold. For economic vulnerability index, immediate attention needs to be given to economic diversification and reducing the exposure of the population to natural disasters.

4. **Implication of graduation, challenges and transition.** The quality of development remains of high importance, to ensure smooth graduation from LDC status. Preparing for the transition is a long-term effort that requires great attention. Learning the lessons from past graduates, enhancing regional cooperation will be crucial for this endeavour. Moreover, priorities for consideration include the following:
  - First, focus needs to be put on the impact graduation will have on external financing, trade preferences, and special and differential treatment.
  - Second, attention should be put on persistent commodity dependence, the risk of reversion of progress achieved and the middle-income trap.
  - Third, the impact of graduation on external debt, Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment needs to be carefully assessed, including the impact on poverty and inequality.
  
5. **Economic diversification.** With 70 percent of the economic output of Lao PDR currently originating from the natural resource sector, which creates limited employment, structural economic transformation will be required for smooth LDC graduation. Systematic efforts are needed to promote diversification and to enhance the competitiveness of domestic industries through systematic productivity improvements, particularly agricultural productivity. Improving human assets and promoting technical skills that are linked to the requirements of the labour market will be important in this regard.
  
6. **Preparation of the 2018 Voluntary National Review on SDGs.** Lao PDR has formally registered with the United Nations for presenting its Voluntary National Review during the 2018 High-Level Political Forum. The preparation of the Review will be government-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants. The preparation process will provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of national and international stakeholders at all levels. The work plan and an outline of the 2018 SDG Voluntary National Review has been shared with partners during the pre-consultation on SDG integration and LDC graduation on 10 November 2017.
  
7. **Data and statistics.** High quality disaggregated data is essential to ensure equitable progress against goals and targets. A broad set of SDG indicators is required, given the inter-linkages and integrated nature of the SDGs. Realizing our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda will profoundly improve the lives of all men and women. Currently, over 200 SDG indicators are identified, of which 92 indicators are prioritized in the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's Monitoring and Evaluation framework. The remaining indicators will be monitored throughout the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Special attention will be put on the standardization of national indicators and data collection to ensure proper assessment of results and outcomes - rather than different methodologies and processes. While avoiding unrealistic data, additional sources of data need to be taken into consideration, using new technologies where possible. The Review "From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals: Laying the Base for 2030" provides useful data and statistics, and contributes to the technical basis of the Voluntary National Review. In addition, there is a need for ongoing capacity development of the national statistics system, and the identification of key research activities to act on the identified priorities.
  
8. **Integrated nature of the 2030 agenda.** The 2030 Agenda is an integrated one. Its implementation will require integrated strategies to address the intertwined challenges of poverty eradication, inclusive and rapid economic growth, environmental sustainability

and structural vulnerability in a coherent manner. Broad coalitions are therefore required to achieve the SDGs, including a whole-of-Government approach – across sectors and all levels of Government, and increased coordination also among the development partners to enhance efficiencies, improve division of labour and avoid duplications. The active engagement of all partners, including Government, development partners, civil society, private sector and academia in development will continue to be crucial and should be supported.

9. **Horizontal and Vertical Integration** - Lao PDR was commended for its efforts to localize the SDGs and integrating them into the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. The SDGs and their targets will continue to be integrated into sectoral and local strategies to guide the effective implementation, monitoring and reporting on SDGs at all levels.
10. **Equality.** The Agenda 2030 underlines that no one should be left behind. There is the need to ensure that the benefits of the rapid economic growth are evenly distributed and translated into inclusive and sustainable human development. Widening development gaps between rich and poor, urban and rural areas of the country, and ethnic groups need to be addressed. The development of infrastructure in rural areas is essential for improving livelihoods and creating equal access to public and private services. Particular importance should be attributed to SDG-5 on gender equality, which is one of the cross-cutting priorities of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Disaggregating data by sex will allow the identification of priority areas. While there has been significant progress on gender equality at central level, lead positions and local level positions remain dominated by men.
11. **SDG-18.** Lao PDR was the first country worldwide to adopt an 18<sup>th</sup> national SDG, on removing unexploded ordnance (UXO), which is a significant obstacle to national development. The presence of unexploded ordnance in the country continues to pose serious challenges, destroying lives and limiting agricultural productivity.
12. **Nutrition** remains an ongoing challenge related to the SDGs and LDC graduation, with undernourishment the single largest obstacle to LDC graduation. While good progress has been achieved, and malnutrition and underweight have been reduced, the incidence remains high when compared to the other countries in the region. Inter-sectoral partnerships will be required to continue progress in this area, including through, capacity development and behavioural change communication, improvement of services, and enhancing the availability of nutritious foods.
13. **Financing the SDGs and LDC graduation.** The 2030 Agenda and LDC graduation will require different types of resources. Building on the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, further discussion is required on how the SDGs can be prioritized and on where it makes sense to focus efforts and resources. A robust private sector will create a strong foundation for greater investment. In this context, attention needs to be shifted to domestic resource mobilization, including through tax collection. This is crucial in terms of funding national development and addressing public debt. Tax reforms, investments in modern tools for tax collections, and improving the efficiency of public financial management will ensure everyone benefits from Lao PDR's economic development, also outside the capital. Domestic resource mobilization is also important in view of the potential decline in ODA expected following LDC graduation.

14. **Advocacy and awareness-raising.** Public awareness raising and communications for SDG are important aspects of SDG implementation to gain support and promote partnerships which are essential for achieving the SDGs. Therefore, it is important to promote common awareness of the Agenda 2030 and the national priorities not only at national level but also at local level.
15. **South-South Cooperation.** Participants highlighted the continued importance of South-South cooperation. For instance, Cuba underlined the potential for collaboration in the areas of health, education and agriculture. Indonesia stressed the importance of a national marketing strategy to achieve the SDGs and LDC graduation, and for all public employees to learn how to market their country.

*(Please refer to Annex 12 for the Outcome Summary of panel discussion on LDC graduation and SDG integration)*

### **4.3.2 Realizing quality private sector investment for development**

By: H.E. Dr. Khamlien Pholsena, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment (Representative of Group II)

#### **Key policy recommendations**

1. **Quality investment** is an investment that does not solely rely on natural resources, but makes use of intellect, skilled labor, modern technologies while being environmental friendly, uses clean energy and creates employment as well as income for the Lao People across the country in an aim to gradually reduce poverty and develop human resources, ensuring an engaging development.
2. **Paris Climate Change Agreement and developing clean and universally accessible energy.** In 2015, the Lao PDR has committed itself to the preservation of the environment by signing the Paris Climate Change Agreement along with 179 other countries. As of 07 September 2017, the Lao PDR is the country in ASEAN to have ratified the Agreement. Furthermore, the Lao PDR have focused its effort in developing clean and universally accessible energy, which is one of the 18 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
3. **Development of solar energy in provinces.** Over the past year, the Government of the Lao PDR has signed Memorandums of Understanding with companies from China and the United States to develop solar energy in the provinces of Sekong, Savannakhet, Borikhamxay and Attapeu with the projects expected to be implementation the following year.
4. **Special Economic Zones (SEZs).** The private has contributed to inclusive growth through the creation of employment for the Lao People in an effort to gradually reduce poverty. Today, the Lao PDR has established 12 Special Economic Zones, most notably Savan-Seno SEZ in Savannakhet Province, Vita Park, Saysettha Development Zone in Vientiane Capital, Pakse-Japan SMEs, etc. In 2017, the SEZ created over 14,000 jobs (for over 7,500 Lao labor force) and generated a total export valued at 780 million US Dollars with a tendency to increase and directly contribute the poverty reduction in the area. In the near future, the Ministry of Planning and Investment will submit draft Decree on Special Economic Zones for endorsement by the Government to further increase the administrative rigorousness, speed and transparency, thereby creating trust in investor.

5. In terms of **human resource development and labour skill**, it has been recognized that the skill of Lao labour remains limited, the Lao Government is addressing this issue, with the contribution of Foreign Direct Investment. In addition, the Government has focused on developing labour skill through domestic resources mobilization and ODA. As of today, there are 6 Government institutions for Skill Development and 147 private institutions for Skills Development. In the first half of 2017, we have been able to develop skills for 13,000 individuals and contributed more than 70,000 labour force into the domestic and international markets. The Government must also contribute 19% of the Government budget into the Education sector. Lao Labour is not only limited in skills, but also in discipline and patience. It had been observed that Foreign support projects have included training of these aspects, particular institutions in Vientiane Capital.
6. **Small and Medium Enterprises** have been able to create employment, particularly in women. The Government had issue the Law on SME Promotion in 2011 to administrate and promotion 200,000 SMEs across the country and the Government has emphasized other aspects of SMEs, including the drafting of SMEs Development Plan for 2016-2020 endorsed by the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR as well as the creation of SMEs Funds to promote, strengthen and provide opportunities for SMEs. The SME Funds is a combined support by the Government and the World Bank valued at 21 million US Dollars. SO far, the Funds have financed over 100 businesses. In order to further strengthen the SME sector, the Government plans to revised the Law on SME Promotion as well as develop the SME Funds into a Financial Institution to ensure effective and transparent administration.
7. **Improvement of the business environment.** Realizing the importance of private investment in achieving targets of the abovementioned Five-year plan, the Government has also made efforts in improving the Business Environment. Based on the Ease of Doing Business Ranking by the World Bank, the Lao PDR is currently placed 141<sup>th</sup> out of 190 countries worldwide and the Lao PDR has intensified its efforts to improve its ranking. The Ministry of Planning and Investment has been mandated by the Government in coordinating with concerned line ministries including the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the Bank of Lao PDR, etc to improve performance in different indicators such as the index of starting business, the index of obtaining approval for construction, index on access to electricity installation, index on asset registration, index on small scale investors protection, index on taxes, index on foreign trade, index on Contract implementation and index on Bankruptcy.
8. To ensure **ease, speed and transparency of investment**, the Government has established Committees for Investment Administration and Promotion at central and provincial levels based on the Investment Promotion Law of 2016 as endorsed by the National Assembly on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The committees have been tasked with the approval of new investment as well as addressing issues pertaining to existing ones. The Government considers these issues the private sector a part of the Government issues.
9. **Consultations with partners on issues relating to private sector.** The successes of the Government's economic administration are closely linked to the successes of the Private sector. The Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, H.E. Dr. Khamlien

Pholsena, had the opportunity to work with H.E Mme Claudine LEDOUX, Ambassador of France to the Lao PDR as well as H.E Mr. Takeshi HIKIHARA, Ambassador of Japan to the Lao PDR and businesses from Japan and other countries to consult and solve issues encountered in the Lao PDR. The Deputy Minister hopes to have the opportunity to do so again in the future.

10. **The 3 Open policies.** H.E Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR has stated in the National Assembly that the Government will implement the 3 Open policies to promote investment: Open Doors, Open Barriers, and Open Minds. The Government has open itself to the investor and hopes that investor will do the same. Investor should emphasize on building mutually beneficial relationships with the Government. Even during economic stability and depression/crisis or difficult business environment, the private sector is encouraged to fulfil its commitment and emphasize following aspects: increase employment of Lao Labour force, use of modern and new equipment, provide opportunity for less skilled labour compared to foreign labour force, and contribute to society through Corporate Social Responsibilities.
11. **Key issues for further realizing quality sector investment for development include:** the important role of the Private sector in the policymaking process of the Government and the linkage between the Lao Business Forum and the Round Table Implementation Meeting; the Promotion of transparency and clarity of relevant laws and regulation to ensure a level playing field in terms of investment at all levels (central and subnational); importance of Tax Administration reforms to ensure efficient business environment; and the importance of macroeconomic stability and administration of public debt to build trust from investors.

*(Please refer to Annex 13 for the Outcome Summary of panel discussion on realising Quality Private Sector Investment for Development)*

### **4.3.3 Investment in skills and labour force for human development**

By: H.E. Associate Professor Dr. Khamphay Sisavanh, Deputy Minister of Education and Sports (Representative of Group III)

#### **Key policy recommendations**

1. **Laos's labour force.** Laos has made good progress in policy dialogue on human resource development by beginning to view the challenges in a holistic way. There is a recognition that Laos has a significant youth demographic that is a key strength in Laos's labour force. However, improvements are needed to current policies and practices to ensure that the labour force is skilled, trained and employed, and that development plans and programs address the reality of the labour market situation in the Lao PDR.
2. **The basic literacy, numeracy and health of Laos's children.** The first and most fundamental area of importance is to continue the strong focus of the Lao Government and Development Partners on improving the basic literacy, numeracy and health of Laos's children – factors which are the basic foundation of job readiness and a work force that can engage in high value industries and decent work.
3. **Rate of enrolment in secondary school and investment in non-formal education.** There is also a need to ensure that this foundation is not wasted by a low rate of

graduation from primary to secondary education. The Lao Government and Development Partners recommend that additional attention be paid to improving the rate of enrolment in secondary school, as the critical path to skilled labour development. Similarly, increased investment from Development Partners in non-formal education would be an effective and cost efficient way to improve livelihoods and income generation, particularly for Laos's disadvantaged groups.

4. Another crucial area identified for improvement is in **Labour Market Information Collection and Analysis**. The Government and Development Partners agreed on the need to strengthen the development of a national Labour Market Information System (LMIS) based on meeting the needs of the public and private sectors. For Laos to achieve its socio-economic development goals in regards to skills and labour force, the LMIS needs to provide accurate, high quality and timely information to meet the planning and investment cycles of Government agencies, the needs of the education and training system and be responsive to private industry. There is an acknowledgement that there is already a substantial amount of labour market data available, but there is a gap in coordination, collection, analysis and use of this data. A recommendation is that the National Commission for Human Resource Development agree on appropriate governance arrangements for the LMIS, to ensure that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is able to work with other Government agencies, Development Partners and the private sector to improve the process of data collection, the analysis of information and the dissemination of information to stakeholders on a regular and timely basis. This cannot happen without the Government allocating appropriate technical expertise, such as from the National Statistics Bureau, improving coordination with clear roles and responsibilities, and systematic, complementary support from development partners. There is also an acknowledgement that an effective LMIS must also be integrated into a process of adapting of the supply Education, Training and Skills Development to labour market demand.
5. **The National Commission for Human Resource Development** is responsible for ensuring that education and training policies and programs, including higher education, overseas scholarships, TVET, other post-secondary schooling and industry based training are directed towards national human resource development priorities and the demands of the labour market in the Lao PDR. It was agreed that the Commission will undertake workforce development planning for each industry/sector, in consultation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Planning and Investment and representatives from the private sector, and with the support of technical expertise from development partners. The Ministry of Home Affairs will lead the development of a public-sector workforce development plan covering all relevant Ministries and agencies. However, the coordination mechanisms for implementing these plans need to be reinforced.
6. **Increased support to the Secretariat of the National Council for Training and Skills Development**. The Government and Development Partners agreed on the need to increase support to the Secretariat of the National Council for Training and Skills Development, including clearer roles and responsibilities, qualified staff, a governance plan, and stronger collaboration with the private sector, Government, civil society and trade unions to adapt training and skills development to priority needs. It was recommended that the National Council for Training and Skills Development, in cooperation with the private sector and with training providers, lead the development of occupational standards and skills competencies for TVET and industry based training

conducted in the Lao PDR, ensuring as far as possible that these skills and competencies meet industry and ASEAN requirements.

7. **The capacity of the Quality Assurance Center of the Ministry of Education and Sports.** It was also agreed that the Quality Assurance Centre of the Ministry of Education and Sports needs to develop the capacity to ensure that all Government and non-Government education and training providers are duly authorised and certified to award qualifications based on the National Qualifications Framework for all levels of education.
8. **Establishment of an English Language Training Working Group.** The consultations also recommended that the Government establish an English Language Training Technical Working Group to develop a Language Training Strategy for the public sector, taking into account existing and planned training programs, the level and nature of expected demand, identifying priority areas that require English and setting selection criteria for agencies and participants.
9. **A national training fund.** An agreement has also been made that Government, Development Partners and the private sector shall work together to ensure that education and skills development in the Lao PDR is sustainably financed through a national training fund
10. **Employment Information and Services.** A key challenge acknowledged was the difficulty of incentivising students to progress to vocational education – a problem that can only be solved through cultural change and informed career guidance on labour market opportunities. It was agreed that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Sports shall ensure the effective dissemination of information on labour market conditions, changing employment demand and education and training opportunities to the people of the Lao PDR, especially to school leavers and those entering the workforce.
11. **Increased focus on disadvantaged groups and protecting vulnerable groups.** It was recommended that the Lao Government and Development Partners increase focus on methods to ensure Laos's disadvantaged groups, including people in rural and remote areas and people with a disability, are able to access training opportunities. Increased attention must also be paid to protecting vulnerable groups, such as young women migrating for work.

*(Please refer to Annex 14 for the Outcome Summary of panel discussion on Investment in Skills and Labour Force for Human Development)*

#### **4.3.4 Enhancing south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation: “Institutional arrangement for effective development and monitoring”**

By: H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment (Representative of Group IV)

#### **Key policy recommendations**

1. **South-South and Triangular Cooperation provides an important contribution** to the existing development cooperation for the achievement of the national development

goals including the Sustainable Development Goals and LDC graduation. The focus should lie on capacity development, technical assistance and increase efforts to learn from each others.

2. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. **A comprehensive national approach to South-South and Triangular Cooperation**, including a clear process and content, is crucial. This should be guided and supported by a comprehensive national roadmap, a strong institutional setup and clear arrangements. It is also important to ensure all partners understand the core concepts and modalities, particularly on division of labour with full participation and engagement of concerned partners and monitoring mechanism is established.
3. **National ownership** is key for enhancing the effectiveness of South-South and Triangular Cooperation programmes and initiatives. Lao PDR will need to ensure alignment to national systems and development priorities. South-South and Triangular Cooperation has to be demand-driven.
4. **Horizontality and solidarity.** South-South and Triangular Cooperation requires that countries collaborate with each other as equal partners. This means that, irrespective of their different levels of development, collaboration is established voluntarily without any party linking its participation to the setting of conditions. It is important the benefits are distributed equitably among partners.
5. **Capacity development, learning and sustainability.** Engaging in South-South and Triangular Cooperation required enhanced capacities to help establish supply and demand, improve modalities of cooperation, and better seize opportunities for knowledge and technology transfer. Where possible, local systems, expertise and resources should be used, to ensure sustainability.
6. **Transparency, accountability and information management.** This will prevent overlaps, facilitate greater complementary and reduce transaction costs. Information-sharing thus needs to be improved to ensure better quality and results.
7. **Inclusive partnerships.** These should be engaged in the Round Table Process and Sector Working Groups to enhance effectiveness of development cooperation and in line with Vientiane Declaration.
8. **South-South Cooperation in the Global Arena.** To further enhance South-South and Triangular Cooperation, it is important that country-level action is strategically linked to regional and global initiatives, including in particular the engagement in regional and international platforms for experience-sharing, for example in the ASEAN context.

**Potential next steps that will require technical and financial resources, to strengthen the foundation for South-South and Triangular Cooperation include the following:**

1. Strengthen existing **institutional arrangements**, looking for instance into terms of reference of, and division of labour between, key institutions.
2. Strengthening **capacity building for effective implementing mechanism**, particularly where guideline, instruction, ToR of involved partners shall be defined.

3. Enhance **coordination mechanism**, such as sharing of work task and information, identify opportunities and challenges to ensure effective result of cooperation between South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
4. Identify the urgent need for **capacity building** on South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation.
5. **Participate in global event** on South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation to learn for the best practice from others, including international organisation through knowledge exchange, peer learning and short-term & long-term experts.
6. **Promote lesson learnt**, exchange and peer learning from North-South and South-South partners.
7. With strong ownership, projects and programmes for South-South cooperation and Triangular cooperation should be developed and identified.

*(Please refer to Annex 15 for the Outcome Summary of panel discussion on Enhancing South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation: “Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring”)*

#### **4.4 Summary of open discussions**

##### **Australia**

Australia congratulated the Government, Champasak province and the UN/UNDP for successfully organizing the 2017 RTIM which focuses on important areas for the development of Lao PDR. Three key issues highlighted by Australia include:

- Rapid and sustained poverty reduction requires inclusive growth that allows people to contribute to and benefit from economic growth. Rapid pace of growth is unquestionably necessary for substantial poverty reduction, but for this growth to be sustainable in the long run, it should be broad-based across sectors and inclusive of the large part of the country’s labor force. Inclusive growth refers both to the pace and pattern of growth, which are considered interlinked, and therefore in need to be addressed together.
- In terms of education financing, challenges exist to ensure that the overarching goal, specific goals, targets and focus areas of the education and sports sector will be met, public investment needs to reach the sector budget requirement of 18% of the national budget allocation identified in the education law. Also, the budget allocation should be aligned with the priorities of the education sector development.
- The role of the private sector is central to our development partnership dialogue. The private sector creates jobs, reduces poverty and contributes to domestic resource mobilization through taxation. An economic diversification strategy would be essential, supported by a national human resources and skills development strategy, aligned to the drivers and goals of diversification. Australia together with other stakeholder acknowledged the steps taken on rule of law, transparency and predictability in order to provide a level playing field between all investors. In this regard, there is a need to have a holistic Government approach to strengthen the enabling environment for the private sector. The continued resolve of the Government to engage in reforms on various areas will be crucial, based on international good practice and based on consultations with all stakeholders. Sustained attention to the implementation and enforcement of legal and

regulatory - including tax and environmental - frameworks, remains critical to attract high quality investors, to improve Lao PDR's ranking on 'ease of doing business'. Australia also recommended that the process for assessing potential investments should be made more rigorous, to ensure their social, economic and fiscal returns are maximized for the benefit of people and any environmental impact minimized in support of the SDG agenda. The overall quality of investment was stressed as being critical to assess.

## **European Union**

Laos' European Development Partners – the European Union and the Member States of the European Union together with Switzerland – commended the government's efforts in ensuring swift progress in the second year of the implementation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) 2016-2020. 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. Challenges remain to translate economic growth into equitable and inclusive growth as set in the 8th NSEDP and along the lines of the ambition to graduate from LDC status. Some of key policy issues that highlighted by EU are:

The most challenging of the three criteria for the LDC graduation is the achievement of the Human Assets Index. A recent analysis of marginal contributions of individual components of the Human Asset Index showed that a maximum increase in the HAI value would occur if the nutritional status of the population were to increase. In this context, EU highlighted the importance that basic social services play in ensuring that the development process benefits all, including populations from remote rural areas and vulnerable groups, in an equitable and inclusive manner.

EU welcomed that the government of Lao PDR is committed to implement reforms towards introducing universal coverage of social health protection by 2020 and to expand the free maternal and child health care policy. However, EU stated that Lao remains one of the countries with the lowest public spending on health as a percentage of GDP both regionally and globally. EU also acknowledged the high level of political commitment that the Government of Lao PDR has demonstrated, both at the central and provincial level, with a successful 3rd National Nutrition Forum, as well as a series of Nutrition Orientation Meetings for improved Nutrition Coordination organized in provinces across the country. This high level of commitment should be followed up with increased government budget and targeted resource allocations. Using the Government's own, predictable, resources for nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions (including nutrition sensitive agriculture) should be a main objective.

Macroeconomic stability and sound Public Finance Management are essential to a successful development policy and we congratulate recent efforts made by the GoL in these areas. In doing so, the Government should strike a balance between servicing debt and providing the right level of social services to the population. Managing the high debt levels would bring greater confidence by the private sector to invest and would unlock opportunities for more concessional loans by European development banks. Domestic resource mobilisation should increasingly become an important source of financing, and gradually become the recipe for reversing the current disproportional fiscal deficit and mitigating macro-economic vulnerability to external shocks. Efforts made to increase revenues and improve tax legislation and enforcement are commendable and we look forward to our continued cooperation in this area.

European partners congratulated the Government for making the budget widely accessible to the public, through the publication of the State Budget on the Ministry of Finance's website. Budget transparency is the best practice for the Government to address financial leakages and

corruption. Moreover, it encourages development partners to rely increasingly on country systems, including budget support, offering "additionality" – not "substitution". European partners commended the important steps the Government has taken in the fight against corruption, which hinders economic development, damages private sector integrity and taps off the finances intended to reduce poverty.

Civil society organisations are recognised in the Vientiane Declaration and SDG 17 as essential partners in development. As per the Istanbul Declaration, civil society organisations play a key role in supporting not only social services' delivery, but also public participation in the national policies' formulation. Promoting an enabling environment for civil society is therefore vital for development. In this regard, EU raised the concerns of the European partners on the new NPA Decree 238 that has just entered into force. While it provides a new, important legal framework for the associations to operate in the country, several articles would deserve more clarity on the way – for example – the NPAs registration process shall be conducted. The lengthy process the NPAs are now requested to go through on a yearly basis, at local and national levels, may indeed make even more complex the environment in which many NPAs work. EC expressed hope that the present situation, where almost no NPAs have been registered over the past five years, can be overcome soon. EC confirmed commitment to support awareness and dissemination initiatives, as well as to increase the capacity of the civil society to interact with the authorities.

The European partners welcome the on-going consultations on the formulation of the new ODA Decree that should help in better defining and regulate the development assistance's flows. While EU supports the government in its endeavour to make development cooperation flows more efficient, effective and better benefitting national priorities and the people of Lao PDR, EU notes that several important questions remain unclear, for instance, the integration of ODA through the national treasury accounting system or the participation of development partners in steering committees. EU furthermore strongly encourages the government of Lao PDR to include civil society into this consultation process as the Decree will also apply to them allowing in particular INGOs to effectively work with, and support, NPAs under their programmes.

EU commended Lao PDR on the progress experienced in the Voluntary Partnership Agreement negotiations with the EU, EU is confident that the progress made in developing a Timber Legality Definition, in line with the Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan, will support the implementation of the reform process strengthening sustainable and legal forest management, improving governance and promoting trade in legally produced timber.

EU also encouraged the Government to continuously engage with the CITES mechanism to combat wildlife illegal activities. We strongly encourage and support Lao authorities in translating the commitments made at the CITES COP17 into actions. We hope that the recent changes in the institutional set up would not prevent a more action oriented effort to tackle this critical issue that affects the international reputation of Lao PDR.

EU also congratulated the Government of Lao PDR on the “Resolution of the Party’s Central Committee on the Enhancement of Land Management and Development”, which reflects at large the positions of the Land Subsector Working Group on improving land governance and the land tenure security of the Lao people. EU encouraged the Government to swiftly finalize the revision of the National Land Law, as it is crucial for the national development process. In this context, EU recommended Lao PDR to follow the FAO Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Forest and Fisheries as internationally agreed

guidelines for responsible land governance. EU invited the Government to use these Guidelines as the main reference for the revised National Land Law. EU also supported the intention of the Prime Minister to address “complications and mistakes surrounding land use and management” like “illegal occupation of land and other disputes” which have occurred during the past years. EU furthermore appreciated the Government’s pledge to establish a committee in charge to negotiate fair compensation for properties of local people impacted and displaced by domestic and foreign investment projects.

### **France**

Lao PDR seems on track to graduate from its LDC status. However, of the three criteria for LDC graduation, Lao PDR is most lacking in economic vulnerability, followed by human asset. Human development plays a critical role in addressing both deficits. While elements of human development overlap with the indicators of human asset, Lao PDR needs to develop human capital to diversify its economy in order to reduce vulnerability. Heightened commitment to human development is needed, not only to reach LDC graduation thresholds but also to face the post-graduation challenges and to reap the benefits from openness. In any case, eligibility to graduation does not remove all vulnerabilities that used to make Lao PDR an LDC. Therefore, whether the country is eligible or not, it is very important to keep working on reinforcing all of those criteria in order for its vulnerabilities to be reduced, its development to be sustainable and LDC graduation to occur smoothly.

Civil society plays a vital role in development processes and is important for working and supporting local communities to ensure sustainable development. Therefore, it is important that there is an ongoing need to further improve the enabling environment by streamlining lining processes and continuing capacity development for all concerned parties.

For the revision of the ODA decree, France requested the Government to carry out more consultations with all partners concerned.

### **Germany**

Inclusiveness is an important aspect for sustainable development. No bigger policy challenge preoccupies leaders than expanding social participation in the process and benefits of economic growth. Therefore, it is important that we improve our understanding of how countries can use a diverse spectrum of policy incentives and institutional mechanisms to make economic growth more socially inclusive without dampening incentives to work, save and invest.

Germany also highlighted the importance of land management and compensation. Alongside improving legislation, it is necessary that land rights of local people are strengthened, by securing customary land rights for all Lao people, preferably through issuing titles, and ensuring gender equality, safeguards and proper compensation for land acquisition in lease and concession agreements.

In term of vocational training, it is important for labour force and skill development. While partners have been working closely with the Government to further enhance work in this area, it is important that funding for TVET, skill development and other related initiatives needs to be sustainable which need strategic planning and commitment from the Government.

### **Japan**

Japan congratulated the Government for its achievements made during the past years and applauded the Government for the organization of the 2017 RTIM in Champasak. Key policy areas that Japan recommended are:

- Continued efforts are needed to promote macroeconomic stability which are precondition for making further progress on inclusive growth and sustainable development.
- Quality foreign investment is important for inclusive growth. Particularly, absorptive ability is a significant factor in determining the impact of FDI and its spill over effects. To support what Australia highlighted, of great importance is the government's ability and willingness to engage and negotiate with foreign investors for the best potential outcome for the economy and its citizens. This presupposes that a strategic path for sustainable socio-economic development is mapped out; that rules and regulations for engagement with investors is clearly and transparently set out; and that implementation, monitoring and assessment is accompanied by a corrective mechanism for non-performance, including satisfactory legal recourse and remedy.
- In term of ODA decree revision, why there is a need for better management of ODA, it is important to further strengthen dialogues with traditional and emerging partners. Therefore, it is recommended to look at the coverage of the ODA decree: existing partners, new donors, and others.
- There is also a request to have more information on policy direction and guidance including various on-going initiatives and mechanisms for the country development.
- Dialogue among various stakeholders – bilateral, public private dialogue, and so on need to be a focused dialogue “result oriented dialogue”.

## **Luxembourg**

Luxembourg appreciated efforts made the Government for inclusive and sustainable development, particularly the Government plan to improve social sector including health and nutrition outcomes. There is a strong link/correlation between agriculture, education, health, other sectors and nutritional outcomes. To tackle nutrition and health challenges, in particular, there is a need to have a significant scaling up of the efforts at the decentralized and community level.

## **Vice Minister of Health**

Since the adoption of the policy framework of the 8<sup>th</sup> Health Sector Development Plan (2016-2020), the Ministry of Health has made positive progress in various areas toward the sector indicators, especially the number of Mother and Child Health (MCH) mortalities which has been lower than the national set target. 2017 has witnessed implementation of health sector reforms in line with the 8<sup>th</sup> Health Sector Development Plan (2016-2020) and Sector Reform Framework to 2025. The focus is on various activities contributing to the achievement of sector outcomes in the five priority areas: (i) Human resources for health; (ii) Health financing; (iii) Governance, organisation and management; (iv) Service delivery and hospital management; and (v) Health information system towards Universal Health Coverage by 2025.

## **World Bank**

- A priority needs to be given to a promotion of private sector's initiatives in combining the utilization of modern technology with labor skills and disciplines as well as local knowledge in order to create niche products, increase competitiveness and diversify the forms of investments.

- Lao PDR has become a better place to do business for both domestic and foreign firms. A number of new regulations consistent with WTO and ASEAN principles were introduced to improve predictability and transparency in regulatory environment. Despite significant improvement in the business environment, there are still certain gaps between policy and implementation and without reducing this gap the potential of key economic sectors is likely to go unrealized. In term of ease of doing business, there is a need to implement reforms to make an impact of the ranking- two stage processes. Further improvement in the enabling environment will require a wide range of sectoral and cross-sectoral initiatives. In particular, economic expansion must be accompanied with accordant controls to protect an already fragile and at risk environment.
- Private sector engagement must be sustained, inclusive and founded on two-way-dialogue. In particular, more evidence based consultations are needed. Also, there should be a strong commitment and effective mechanism across stakeholders to further enhance work in this area.
- To ensure sustainable development, stable investment climate and doing business will help the country to move toward LDC and SDGs. Importantly, structural economic transformation and diversification are required for smooth LDC graduation. Therefore, greater efforts are much needed to promote diversification and to enhance the competitiveness of domestic industries through systematic productivity improvements.

### **Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC)**

SDC congratulated the Government for making various positive progresses in a number of development areas. Key points that SDG highlighted include:

- Achievement of the LDC graduation is not an end in itself but milestone. Preparation to transition is a long-term work that needs great attention. It is very important to keep working on reinforcing all of those criteria in order for its vulnerabilities to be reduced, its development to be sustainable and LDC graduation to occur smoothly. It is important to address social and environmental issues including equality. It will be useful to learn more about mechanism that the Government has in place to ensure smooth graduation.
- A focus should also be on high-quality labor market information which is essential for facilitating employment shifts and promoting employment growth across and within sectors. In order for employment services to be effective in helping to reduce gaps between labor supply and demand, good-quality labor market information is needed to identify the emerging employment opportunities for workers and the skills that are in demand so that training programs can be designed and tailored accordingly.
- SDG implementation needs contribution from various stakeholders including NPAs, INGOs. Therefore, there is a need to facilitate smooth cooperation between INGOs and NPA. In addition, good governance related SDGs is another area that we need to discuss and work together.
- In term of the SDG voluntary report, it will be good to learn from the Government on what would be key focused areas.

- To help ensure proper planning, we need data and evidence based information. Therefore, greater efforts are needed in this area.
- For Vientiane Declaration, there are 14 action areas which need proper monitoring and reporting. Therefore, it will be useful to have an update on yearly basis.

## **Canada**

Canada supported what has been highlighted on quality private sector investment and the process for assessing potential investments which should be made more rigorous, to ensure their social, economic and fiscal returns are maximized for the benefit of people and any environmental impact minimized in support of the SDG agenda. Canada also acknowledged the important steps the Government has taken in the fight against corruption, which hinders economic development, damages private sector integrity and taps off the finances intended to reduce poverty. More efforts are further needed on this matter. Canada also supported what has been mentioned on the issues relating to the revision of ODA decree and adolescent girls and SDGs.

## **Ministry of Natural Resource and Environment**

The Government of Lao PDR places great importance on sustainable natural resources management and utilization, such as ensuring sustainable land use planning, implementing the national sustainable hydropower development, environmental friendly mineral extraction. The protection and improvement of the environment is also fundamental to the third criteria for LDC graduation. The water and sanitation targets of SDGs are also directly linked to under-five mortality rate and to undernourishment. The direction that the Government is taking with the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP framework is to ensure continued quality, green and sustainable economic growth where development and natural resource management (of land, forests, biodiversity, mineral resources, water and wetlands) will need to be planned in a practical, sustainable, fair and most effective manner. A number of rules, regulations, instructions and decrees has recently been updated and issued in Lao PDR with the ultimate aim to achieve this direction

## **Ministry of Finance**

Lao PDR's risk of external debt distress has been reclassified from moderate to high by IMF. However, due to a significant part of the external debt being long term concessional loans, it is anticipated that there will be no difficulties in servicing debts and the public debt level will remain manageable. Also, a relative long maturity profile of loans would help mitigate the risks of debt distress. Importantly, the Government has been putting greater emphasis on tightening fiscal policy, strengthening public financial management and forging a plan for a comprehensive debt management strategy which will be proposed to the National Assembly in due course. The important task is to focus on serving existing debts rather than creating new debts. Steps have been taken to limit the contracting of additional debt to concessional borrowing. A new legal framework for the contracting and management of public debt has been prepared and Ministry of Finance has now been reorganized to merge the management of all debt (domestic and foreign) in one department. The contracting of central banking financing of off-budget investments has now been eliminated.

## **Ministry of Home Affairs**

The Government totally understands that the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and LDC graduation is joint responsibilities. 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, policies and guide as appropriate in order to further enhance working environment for all partners working in Lao PDR. The revision of the NPA decree has now been approved. It is important that NPAs report their activities and coordinate support. Line ministries also have responsibilities to facilitate and create an enabling environment for the operation of the NPAs. Through the year, meetings were carried out to facilitate coordination among NPAs and raise awareness about their work with other development actors.

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

To response to some key request, Vice Minister of MPI stated that:

- SDG VNR will focus on three dimensions of sustainable development which are in line with the three LDC criteria. Currently, 60% SDG indicators are integrated into the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP M&E framework. More SDG indicators will be integrated into the national planning process during the remaining years of the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> NSEDP.
- Preparation for the sooth LDC gradation including the transition will be within the context of the mid-term review 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, 9<sup>th</sup> NSEDP and 10<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Efforts will be made to avoid middle income trap and related challenges as least from recent graduated countries.
- On the revision of ODA decree, more work will be done taking into various recommendations provided so far and consultations with various partners have been carried out. Programme Based Approach will be promoted and there has been an attempt by the Government to provide more information on development cooperation through a development of Foreign Aid Report which.
- On the VDCAP, it monitoring framework has been shared during the 2017 RTIM. It is expected that a country survey will be done in 2018 which coincides with the global survey on global partnership for effective development cooperation. The national survey to report on VDCAP implementation will be done every two years.

### **Norway**

Norway highlighted that a continued focus on the poor, vulnerable and rural communities will support inclusive development. In this regard, Norway continues support efforts by the Government and other partners to address UXO and cluster munition issues which will be necessary for the achievement of the national SDG 18. Norway also highlighted an issue of illegal logging which needs to be addressed as it has an impact on climate change and the lifestyle of ethnic and rural communities. Norway also applauded the Government for taking a lead and showing great ownership of the preparation of the SDG voluntary national review.

### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**

To add to what MPI mentioned on the SDG voluntary national review report, a national mechanism is in place. The national steering committee on SDGs is chaired by Prime Minister and a national secretariat and focal points in relevant ministries and institutions have now been established under MOFA supervision. Outline of the SDG VNR is available and it was shared and consulted with partners during the RTIM pre-consultation in Vientiane. A work plan for the preparation of the SDG VNR has also been documented. Consultations with national and international partners will be done periodically within the timeframe set in the work plan.

## **United Kingdom**

At the top of the list of the UK support to Lao PDR is education. UK promotes university-to-university links including scholarships for Lao students to study in the UK. First scholarship programme for Lao PDR has now been created. A number of senior government officials have asked the Embassy in particular to provide support on English language training (ELT). With British Council assistance, UK has developed a focused set of recommendations in this area, including a proposal to help the Lao Government create an ELT national framework for the first time. This is important as in the context of skill development, learning English and other languages will help create knowledge based and skills needed for advancement of individual careers. Particular, in tourism sector linking to the visit Laos year 2018, a number of English speaking workers is still limited. Therefore, it is necessary that we work on language skills. Also, it is important that more efforts are needed to attract young people into the sector.

## **UNCTAD**

Lao PDR has made the right policy choices and is therefore progressing well towards LDC graduation. In this context, participants look forward to the Review by the Committee for Development Policy in 2018. When to graduate is important. However, more important than this is how to graduate. To meet two criteria of the LDC graduation is vital. In term of EVI, Lao PDR has done well in recent years to reduce the index around 60 to around 40 in recent years. In term of HAI, UN and other partners support is crucial particularly a transition period once Lao PDR is recommended for graduation.

## **A representative from NPAs**

On behalf of 152 NPAs in the country, the revised Decree on NPAs is highly welcomed and appreciated. NPAs in the country pledges to work within the framework of this revised decree. The focus of work is on rural development in various sectors and work with local communities to ensure the achievement of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP including SDGs and LDC graduation. NPAs have welcomed and greatly appreciate the Government's efforts to further strengthening partnership with NPAs. The Round Table Process has current been a suitable and constructive platform for policy dialogues and NPA's representation at this forum including those at sectoral working level helps ensure that local issues are brought into attention for policy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Capacity of NPAs is still limited. Therefore, continued support and trainings are needed to ensure common understanding of the exiting regulatory framework and procedures for project and programme implementation at local level.

## **Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LNCCI)**

On behalf of members, Lao business and private sector looks forward to supporting the Government to implement the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP including the achievement of SDGs and LDC graduation. The organisation of the LBF early 2017 provided various recommendations for further enhancing private sector in Lao PDR. Therefore, it is important that those recommendations are well and effectively addressed in a timely manner. In addition, there has been a great effort in recent years to create a better link between Lao Business Forum (LBF) and the Round Table Process. It is recommended that clearer roles and responsibilities between MPI and MOIC are documented to facilitate the linkage taking into various initiatives at national and the relevant sector working group. To create a better link, one of recommendations could be organisation of LBF before the Round Table Meeting and then outcomes of the LBF and progress update could be reported to the RTM. In term of capacity of private sector itself, more work needs to be done in term of competitiveness, understanding of government rules and regulations, partnership arrangements, and so on. To help facilitate common understanding, there might be a case that private sector is invited to attend and provide comments during

different sessions of the Government meetings throughout the year. For ease of doing business, LNCCI strongly support the Government's willingness and commitment to reduce the ranking to two digits. LNCCI is now working with different provinces to map out and how to improve situation in this area.

### **Lao Women Union**

Lao Women Union expressed its appreciation and highly committed to work with the Government and all partners to address issues relating to child and mother mortality. Furthermore, women and men will need to work together to ensure great gender quality and women empowerment.

### **A representation from INGOs**

On behalf of 75 INGOs working in Lao PDR, INGOs work in different sectors across the country to support sustainable and inclusive growth. INGOs welcomed the clarification and revision of Decree 238. However, some concerns remain, for instance, involvement of line ministries as oversight agencies, approval process, INGOs and NPAs cooperation and support provided to civil society in the country. For South-South and Triangular Cooperation, Civil society has been supporting various initiatives on this area and looking forward to continuing the work in more systematic manner.

### **National Assembly**

NA highly values and appreciates support and assistance from various partners for the development of Lao PDR. LDC graduation needs to be based on reality considering various matters such as economic diversification, structural foundation of economic, fiscal discipline and so on. It is important to pay great attention on Human Asset Index, particularly skilful labour force, health, youth, education – higher degree vs vocational training – quality education rather than educational supply. In this regard, end the end of 2020 which is the final year of the current NSEDP, it might be a good idea if a roadmap or a plan after 2020 could be identified within the framework of the NSEDP.

### **Asian Development Bank (ADB)**

ADB appreciated and applauded the Government for positive progresses made in various development areas. It is important that Lao PDR maximize benefits from regional integration. Private sector is important and it might be a good idea to learn from neighbouring countries on how to foster great public private partnership. Therefore, South-South and Triangular Cooperation is important for technology and knowledge exchange within the regional framework such as ASEAN. ADB continues its support to the economic corridor programme and look forward to work with the Government and other partners in various other related areas such as health, education and others.

**Two partners that didn't have a chance to meet interventions during the RTIM but provided key policy recommendations to the Chairs and Co-Chairs of the RTIM include:**

**United Nations**

- Data and statistics. Reliable, timely and readily available data and statistics will continue to be essential for all these endeavours. Data and statistics allow us not only to monitor progress but also to follow up by taking decisions that are based on evidence. Where data is disaggregated, it allows us to identify those who are most disadvantaged and thus require our support first.
- Focusing on those most left behind. Realizing that the human dignity of every man and woman is fundamental, efforts across sectors need to be redoubled to reach the most vulnerable groups. Together, we need to ensure no one is left behind. Together, we need to ensure that everyone has access to nutritious food, to quality education and to quality health services. And together we need to ensure everyone has the opportunity to develop their full potential and live a life in dignity.
- Integrated Financing. Achieving these aspirations will require significant resources. While the Lao economy has been dominated by public resources at the turn of the millennium, the liberalization over the past years has opened the doors for an increasing flow of international and domestic private resources. As highlighted by the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, these now need to be tapped into for development, all the more as graduation from Least Developed Country status may impact the volume of Official Development Assistance in the long term. As highlighted by the Agenda 2030 and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, an integrated national financing framework could help make sense of the ever-shifting development financing landscape, and critically enhance domestic resource mobilization.
- Demographic dividend. With a large number of people in working-age and a declining dependency rate, Lao PDR's demographic dividend provides another window of opportunity that will remain open for the coming 30 years. However, the full benefits of the demographic dividend will only be realized if the availability of new jobs keeps pace with the growth of the working age population, and only if young women and young men are better equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge.
- Integrated actions across sectors, and broad, issue-based coalitions will be required to address the complex development challenges Lao PDR is facing. It is therefore encouraging to see so many partners come together at this Round Table Meeting, who are aligned in their vision to improve the lives of the people in Lao PDR.
- The UN Team in Lao PDR remains committed help Lao PDR achieve its national aspirations, including the Sustainable Development Goals and graduation from Least Developed Country status.

**United State of America**

- Importance of Private Sector. A competitive and vibrant private sector could be the catalyst for sustainable development in Lao PDR by contributing to economic growth, job creation, and tax revenue. The private sector represents the most realistic

employment opportunity for individuals, particularly in the rural areas, and is often the source of innovation and economic diversification. Providing the right enabling environment is crucial for private sector growth and development, and requires investment in infrastructure and human capital, developing strong institutional and regulatory frameworks, providing access to markets and capital, and improving the competitiveness of Lao businesses. The U.S. government is committed to investing in private sector development in support of Lao PDR's sustainable development goals.

- Role of Civil Society. Civil society organizations play an important role in the sustainable development of Lao PDR, often filling the gap between available government resources and community needs. Civil society organizations can directly support implementation of the SDGs through advocacy and service delivery for key groups, such as women, youth, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, and other vulnerable populations. By capitalizing on their local networks, knowledge and expertise, civil society organizations are uniquely placed to efficiently assess and address the needs of local communities, and remain accountable to these communities for the services provided. In order for civil society organizations to contribute meaningfully to the implementation of the SDGs, it is imperative to secure for them an enabling environment where they can engage through formal and informal channels, with inclusive participation and decision-making opportunities at all levels.
- A National UXO Survey. Prior to September 2016, the United States had contributed more than \$100 million to the UXO sector since 1995. Former President Obama then pledged a three-year doubling of assistance from \$15 to \$30 million per year, with the additional money intended to conduct a comprehensive national survey of UXO contamination. The survey will help the Lao PDR understand the extent of UXO contamination and prioritize clearance in support of national goals. In addition, it will help the Lao PDR compete for scarce funding in the donor community by showing its commitment to efficient use of resources, and to creating a long-term strategy for addressing UXO contamination.
- The United States also renews its request that future Round Table Implementation Meetings be scheduled to ensure maximum participation of development partners. For the past three years, the Round Table has met on American Thanksgiving, which falls annually on the fourth Thursday of November. This conflict has each year limited the level, size, and ability of the U.S. delegation to participate fully in this important event.

## V. Concluding and Official Closing

### Closing remarks by Mrs. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative

On the RTIM itself, Mrs. Immonen commended the Government for hosting this Round Table Implementation Meeting over the past two days in Champasak. The Government has excelled once again in its organisation of a productive meeting.

Regarding to policy dialogue and the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, Mrs. Immonen believe that the overall objective of the Round Table Meeting has been achieved. We have benefited from, a policy dialogue on the priority national development issues. Progress of implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, including for Champasak, has been presented and discussed, and the priorities for the year ahead identified. The consultations have been supported by an inspiring development exhibition and visits to a sample of development projects. In overall terms, there is a strong sense that Laos is on the right path of development, with significant progress reported over the past couple of decades.

Concerning the pre-consultation of the RTIM, this year's Round Table benefited from significant work invested into the four Round Table pre-consultations. This generated detailed agenda's of work for the year ahead. I will only mention a few of the main issues in summing up, as the official report of the meeting will include the full details.

In addition to key policy recommendations on four key themes, Mrs. Immonen stated that

- Participants welcomed the opportunity for further discussions on the draft ODA Decree. It is important that all forms of development partner and means of development cooperation (beyond traditional ODA) are treated fairly and transparently.
- Similarly, participants recognized that civil society has a very important role to play in livelihoods and access to services for the most vulnerable communities, which is critical for 'leaving no one behind'. Yet the regulatory procedures governing their operations at risk of becoming a hindrance to civil society as a partner to development.
- Development partners were keen to see partnerships between civil society and NPAs developed.
- Specific to education, the transition from primary to secondary education should be given greater attention. There is a special need to focus on the education survival rates of adolescent girls. This will empower them to make informed choices, impact on lifting communities out of poverty, and change social conditions whereby girls are less likely to enter into early marriage
- On land management, The Government was commended for progress on the Land Law Revision which brings an enhancement for land management, including tenure, security, compensation, and the centrality of land for the poor
- Regarding illicit activities, a request was made to have the issue of wildlife trafficking within the scope of the RTIM. Whilst the issue may have a negative impact on revenue, it would be of enormous benefit for the image of Laos. The Government was commended for its clampdown on corruption and logging, and signals of progress on preventing contraband goods was noted
- In terms of gender equality, good progress and good legal basis exists, yet challenges remain, including the need for disaggregated data by sex. This will help inform analysis and policy options.

## **Official Summing Up and Closing Remarks by H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment**

The Minister expressed sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasak province and Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator / UNDP Resident Representative to Lao PDR for jointly being the co-chairs of this important RTIM 2017. Thank you note was also extended to all delegations, friends and development partners for joining this year's meeting and providing frankly opened comments and suggestions on the four focused areas/topics, which are considered very important and useful for the Government of Lao PDR in mobilising resources as well as implementing and managing official development assistance to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency, contributing to the implementation of the 8th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSED 2016-2020), SDG achievement, Lao people's poverty reduction and LDC graduation by 2020 in sustainable and effective manners.

His Excellency thought that this year's RTIM has been proceeded under a good atmosphere with a number of frank and opened discussions and comments provided by meeting participants on the achievements and challenges in mobilising resources as well as implementing and managing ODA in effective and efficient manners in order to contribute to the implementation of the 8th NSED, SDG achievement and LDC graduation by 2020. But, in order to achieve the national goals, Lao PDR still faces a number of risks and challenges. However, the Government believes that with a good partnership and supports in terms of technical and financial aspects from development partners will surely help our country have a smooth transition, changing various challenges into motive power in achieving the national goals in sustainable and effective ways.

His Excellency acknowledged all the recommendations and concerns on various areas/topics raised by participants for consultation. Some of them were already responded by relevant parties. Therefore, in addition to what Ms. Immonen highlighted, the Minister briefly sum up the key recommendations of the 2017 RTIM as follow:

### **1. LDC Graduation and SDG Integration**

- Economic Vulnerability Criteria (EVI): To pay attention to increasing economic diversification by promoting and developing areas for commercial production and quality services in order to create decent jobs and incomes for people and reducing population's risks affected by natural disasters ;
- Human Asset Index Criteria (HAI): (i) To improve nutrition conditions for population; and (ii) to increase the literacy rate and enrolment rate at secondary education, while at the same time decreasing the mortality rate of children under 5 and maternal mortality rate in order to meet the goals;
- On data and statistics: To pay special attention to creation of a standard for indicator identification and data collection, using modern technology to ensure correctness and accuracy of data to be used as basic for detailed programme/project formulation including capacity building for relevant technical staff.
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): To focus on reducing gap between urban and rural development by improving and developing infrastructure in rural remote areas, and ensure equal access to public and private services, especially under the SDG 5. Apart from this, attention to be paid on broadening achievement of the SDG 18 to increase production area and reduce impacts and risks of being UXO victims.

### **2. Realising Quality Private Sector Investment for Development**

- To focus on increasing private sector involvement in revision process of the Government's policies, laws and regulations to ensure alignment with the current investment situation. Also, linking the Lao Business Forum with the Round Table Process mechanism;
- To ensure having equality in business operations at all levels (central and local), there is a need to promote investment through a one-stop service in a transparent, quick, precise and accountable manner;
- To ensure having sufficient incomes and budget allocation to implement various development agendas, there is a need to improve tax management system with modern technology to facilitate effective business operations;
- To ensure stability and sustainability of macroeconomic management, maintaining the public debts at the manageable level to gain trust from private investors.

### **3. Investment in Skills and Labour Force for Human Development**

- To continue focusing on the Government's and development partners' priorities in improving literacy and basic knowledge on calculation and child health which are important and necessary factors for contributing to the labour market and shifting to modern industry;
- To increase an enrolment rate at secondary education, which is important basic condition for Lao labour force's skill development. In addition, increasing investment and mobilizing assistance from development partners to support out of school adolescents/adults, reducing education related costs for deprived groups of people to ensure equal and inclusive access to education;
- The Government and development partners should continue developing the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) with diversity and completeness to ensure people and entrepreneurs can have accessed to high quality, timely and accurate data and information in accordance with the requirement in term of labour force for development in each period;
- To ensure all the education related policies, programmes and training including tertiary education, overseas scholarships, vocational education, post-secondary education and other training programmes are in line with the priorities set in the National Human Resource Development Strategy and labour demand in the Lao PDR.

### **4. Enhancing South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation: "Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring"**

- To increase an international cooperation and knowledge sharing although different countries have different methodologies, but all have a joint vision which is "leaving no one behind". This kind of cooperation will help countries that have similar development conditions be able to exchange good lessons and jointly address development issues;
- To develop a comprehensive national roadmap as a guideline for strengthening institutional capacity with clear division of responsibilities. Another important thing is to ensure all development partners and other stakeholders have understood the initiatives and methods, especially in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development impacts;
- To enhance south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation related programmes and activities which are the key to ensure alignment between a comprehensive national roadmap and development priorities, including supports to enhance such cooperation comprehensively linking with international forums;

- To seek opportunities in exchanging knowledge, transferring quality technology, developing local experts and increasing financial resources to enhance the implementation of cooperation at all levels towards achievement of national development goals.

The Minister also proposed that line ministries and local authorities as well as development partners continue discussions in details to translate all recommendations into actions. In addition, it is important to have a monitoring and evaluation mechanism to ensure transparent and measurable implementation towards effective and sustainable development. Ministry of Planning and Investment will organise a meeting of chairs and co-chairs of Sector Working Groups to discuss the implementation of 2017 RTIM discussion points and convert them into a detailed action plan, including reporting the meeting outcomes to the Government for further guidance.

## Annex 1: 2017 RTIM Agenda

### Day 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017 – Panel Discussions and Field Visits

#### Morning session: – Panel Discussions

08:00 – 08:40	<b>Registration</b>
08:40 – 08:50	<b>Welcome remarks</b> <i>By: H.E. Mr. Bouasone Vongsongkhone, Deputy Governor of Champasack Province</i>
08:50 – 09:00	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <i>By: H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment</i>
09:00 – 09:30	<p><b>Presentation of the Champasack Provincial Socio-Economic Development Plan: Implementation Progress &amp; Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overview: Social &amp; Economic Profile/Status of Champasack Province</li> <li>• Outcome 1. Economic Development – results and challenges (include issues related to relevant Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) as well as efforts/success in attracting ‘Quality Private Sector Investment’).</li> <li>• Outcome 2. Social Sector Development – results and challenges (include issues related to the Human Asset Index (x 4 criteria) and skills development issues in priority development sectors in Champasack).</li> <li>• Outcome 3. Environmental Development – results and challenges (include environmental aspects of the EVI).</li> <li>• Refer to good examples of South – South Cooperation in Champasack.</li> </ul> <p><i>By: Mr. Saythong Sayavong, Director of the Provincial Department of Planning and Investment, Champasack Province</i></p>
09:30 – 10:00	<b>Open Discussion</b>
10:00 – 10:15	<b>Coffee Break</b>
10:30 – 12:30	<b>Parallel Panel discussions</b>
	<p><b>1. LDC Graduation &amp; SDG Integration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information sharing on the latest economic, human and environmental criteria situation including priorities and actions needed to attain LDC graduation.</li> <li>• Preparations for the 2018 Triennial LDC review and summarising the longer-term implications of LDC graduation for Laos PDR and</li> <li>• Outlining the current status of SDG integration, road map, indicators, monitoring, reporting and use of statistics.</li> <li>• Preparations for the High Level Political Forum for July 2018,</li> </ul>

	<p>including the National Voluntary Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree Key Recommendations for presentation to Day 2 of the RTIM</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>Panelists:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1. <b>Madam Phetsamone Sone</b>, Deputy Head of Lao Statistic Bureau, MPI - (Key area: statistical matters for SDG monitoring and reporting)</li> <li>1.2. <b>Dr. Sitthiroth Rasphone</b>, Division Director, Development Policy Research Center - (Key area: LDC and Human Development Report)</li> <li>1.3. <b>Mr. Tim Enderlin</b>, Director of Cooperation for the Mekong Region (Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam) of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (Key area: support for the SDG integration and implementation)</li> <li>1.4. <b>Mr. Mussie Deleegn</b>, Chief, Landlocked Developing Countries' Section, Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes (UNCTAD) – UN perspective on LDC graduation</li> <li>1.5. <b>Mr. Amphone Souvannalth</b>, Director, Association for Rural Mobilisation and Improvement (ARMI) (Key area: contribution for SDG integration and implementation)</li> <li>1.6. <b>Mr. Sinouk Sisombat</b> – Sinouk Café Gourmet Lao -(Key area: contribution for SDG implementation)</li> </ol> <p>➤ <b>Moderator:</b>Mr. Anouparb Vongnorkeo, Director General, Department of International Organisation, MOFA</p> <p>➤ <b>Technical support:</b> UNDP and UNRCO</p>
	<p><b>2. Realizing quality private sector investment for development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalization on the current LBF discussions and priorities organised in March 2017, to identify priority areas in which various partners can add value to the acceleration of progress in key areas, such as in (1) legal environment, (2) taxation; (3) transportation and import/export procedures; (4) business registration/licensing; (5) access to finance; (6) labour market development.</li> <li>• Identify innovative or replicable examples of how ‘quality’ private sector investments have significantly contributed to LDC criteria and/or SDG attainment in the principle sectors of Agriculture, Industry/Manufacturing, and Commerce/Services such as tourism, financial service sector, etc.</li> <li>• Agree Key Recommendations for presentation to Day 2 of the RTIM</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>Panelists:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1. <b>Ms. Valy Vetsaphong</b>, Vice President, LNCCI - (Key area: Linkage with LBF)</li> <li>2.2. <b>Mr. Phouvieng Phongsa</b>, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning and Cooperation – MOIC - (Key area: SWG related matters such as business development and enabling environment)</li> <li>2.3. <b>H.E. Mr. Leo Faber</b>, Ambassador of European Union to Lao</li> </ol>

	<p>PDR – (Key area: SWG related matters as Co-Chair)</p> <p>2.4. <b>Mr. Mombert Hoppe</b>, Senior Trade Economist, World Bank – (Key areas: Ease of Doing Business and Green Growth)</p> <p>2.5. <b>Mr. Takeshi HUKIHARA</b>, Ambassador of Japan to Lao PDR – (Key area: Quality of FDI)</p> <p>2.6. <b>Mr. Jack Sheehan</b>, Vice President of ECCIL -(Key areas: Taxation and Enabling Environment)</p> <p>➤ <b>Moderator: Mr. Outakeo Keodouangsinh</b>, Deputy Director General, Investment Promotion Department, MPI</p> <p>➤ <b>Technical support:</b> Technical support – EU</p>
	<p><b>3. Investment in skills and labour force for human development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Education SWG to look at ways of accelerating implementation of the national skills development/human resource development strategy in light of the shortage of labour market skills to help drive private sector development contributing to the development of the country in general.</li> <li>• Include reference to the youth dividend, yet Lao skilled labour is lagging behind, and higher value adding jobs are being taken up by economic migrants from neighbouring countries. Hence, discussions could be geared towards progress, challenges/bottlenecks and plan of actions to make the Lao national labour market more diverse and competitive.</li> <li>• Agree Key Recommendations for presentation to Day 2 of the RTIM</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>Panelists:</b></p> <p>3.1. <b>Mr. Phouthavong Phoummasak</b>, Director of Labour Market Information Division, Skills Development and Employment Department, MLSW – (Key area: Labour market information system)</p> <p>3.2. <b>Mr. Tee Chee Seng</b>, General Manager of Savan-Seno Special Economic Zone - (Key area: local employment and recruitment issues)</p> <p>3.3. <b>Ms. Sophie Wilkinson</b>, Second Secretary - Human Resource Development and Political, Australian Embassy in Lao PDR – (Key area: support for the implementation of the national education development plan and human resource development strategy)</p> <p>3.4. <b>Mr. Graeme John Buckley</b>, Director, ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific and ILO Office for Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR – (Key area: Global labour framework).</p> <p>3.5. <b>Mr. Tony Donovan</b>, Chief Technical Adviser, Lux Development Project Lao/029 - Skills for Tourism – (Key area: vocational trainings and employment)</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Moderator: Ms. Dockeo Phonthachith</b>, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning, MOES</li> <li>➤ <b>Technical Support:</b> Australia</li> </ul>
	<p><b>4. Enhancing south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation: “Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring”</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussions over policy and institutional framework for South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation;</li> <li>• Identification of south/south co-operation initiatives that fit with the priority themes which demonstrate high quality development results in terms of contribution to LDC graduation and SDG achievement across economic, social and environmental aspects, which could be included within site visits to province/s;</li> <li>• Agree Key Recommendations for presentation to Day 2 of the RTIM</li> </ul> <p>➤ <b>Panelists:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1. <b>Ms. Sisavanh Didaravong</b>, Deputy Director General, Department of Planning/Ministry of Planning and Investment- (Key area: SSC/TC experience – regional work on green growth and planning process)</li> <li>4.2. <b>Dr. Bounpheng Philavong</b>, Director General, Department of Hygiene and Health Promotion, Ministry of Health - (Key area: SSC/TC experience – food and nutrition security, particularly working with partners in the region)</li> <li>4.3. <b>Mr. Lim Yihong</b>, Second Secretary (Political), Embassy of the Republic of Singapore in Vientiane, Lao PDR- (Key area: current initiatives on TC)</li> <li>4.4. <b>Ms. Wonyoung YEO</b>, Deputy Resident Representative, KOICA Office in Lao PDR - (Key area: support for SSC and TC)</li> <li>4.5. <b>Mr. Balasubramaniam Murali</b>, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative – (Key area: SSC/TC and RTP/SWG)</li> </ol> <p>➤ <b>Moderator: Dr. Arounyadeth Rasphone</b>, Deputy Director General, Department of International Cooperation, MPI</p> <p>➤ <b>Technical support:</b> UNDP</p>
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break

### Afternoon Session – Field Visits

13:30 – 17.00	<p><b>Visit to three project sites – based on the priority areas of the RTIM 2017</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. UXO related activities (Kaeng Yao Village, Barjieng Chaleunsouk</li> </ol>
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	<p>District, Km40) - particularly focusing on mine risk education that directly contributes to SDG 18.</p> <p>2. Coffee plantation project of Coffee Production Cooperative (Km24) - involving activities related to coffee plantation/harvest, packing, processing and employment generation.</p> <p>3. Champasack Southern Skill Development Center - seeing how the training programme affects employment and decent jobs.</p>
<b>18:00 – 18:30</b>	<p><b>Courtesy visit to the Governor of Champasack province</b>  <i>By: all delegations</i>  <i>Venue: Arawan Riverside Hotel</i></p>
<b>18:30 – 21:00</b>	<p><b>Baci Ceremony and Dinner Reception</b>  <i>Hosted by the Governor of Champasack Province</i>  <i>Venue: Arawan Riverside Hotel</i></p>

## **Day 2:23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 - “Policy Implementation Dialogue”**

### **Morning Session**

<b>08:30 – 09:00</b>	<b>Registration</b>
<b>09:00 – 09:10</b>	<p><b>Official Opening Remarks</b>  <i>By: H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR</i></p>
<b>09:10 – 09:20</b>	<p><b>Keynote Address</b>  <i>By: H.E. Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific</i></p>
<b>09:20 – 09:25</b>	<p><b>Welcome Remarks</b>  <i>By: H.E. Dr. Bounthong Divixay, the Governor of Champasack Province</i></p>
<b>09:25 – 09:30</b>	<p><b>Remarks</b>  <i>By: H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment</i></p>
<b>09:30 – 09:35</b>	<p><b>Remarks</b>  <i>By: Mrs. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative</i></p>
<b>09:35 – 09:45</b>	<p><b>Photo Session with Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR and Chairs of the meeting</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ministers/Deputy Ministers and Governors/Deputy Governors</li> <li>2. Head Delegations of Development Partners/Ambassadors and Heads/Deputy Heads of International Organisations, INGOs, NPAs and</li> </ol>

	Private Sector
09:45 – 10:30	- Official Tour of the 2017 RTIM Development Cooperation Exhibition - Coffee Break

### **Chairs of the 2017 RTIM**

- H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment
- H.E. Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasack Province
- Mrs. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative

10:30 – 11:00	<b>Main Presentation “Summary annual NSEDP progress, challenges 2017 and priorities for 2018”</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outcome One (Economic) including reference to LDC EVI status &amp; priorities</li> <li>• Outcome Two (Social/Human) including reference to LDC HAI status &amp; priorities</li> <li>• Outcome Three (Environment) including reference to LDC EVI status &amp; priorities</li> <li>• Cross-Cutting Issues</li> <li>• Resourcing/Expenditures</li> <li>• Priorities for 2018</li> </ul> <i>By: H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment</i>
11:00 – 11:45	<b>Open Discussion on NSEDP Progress, Implementation Challenges 2017 and Priorities for 2018</b>
11.45 – 12.00	<b>Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 2 -Quality Private Sector Investment for Development</b> <i>By: H.E. Dr. Khamlien Pholsena, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment (Representative of Group II)</i>
12:00 – 12.30	<b>Open Discussion on Realising Quality Private Sector Investment for Development</b>
12:30– 13:30	<b>Lunch Break</b>

### **Afternoon Session**

13.30 – 13.45	<b>Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 1 -LDC Graduation and SDG Integration</b>
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	<i>By: H.E. Mr. Sengphet Houngbounnuang, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs (Representative of Group I)</i>
<b>13:45 – 14:15</b>	<b>Open Discussion on LDC Graduation &amp; SDG integration</b>
<b>14:15 – 14:30</b>	<b>Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 3 - Investment in Skills for Human Development</b> <i>By: H.E. Asso. Prof. Dr. Khamphay Sisavanb, Deputy Minister of Education and Sports (Representative of Group III)</i>
<b>14:30 – 15:00</b>	<b>Open Discussion on Investment in Skills for Human Development</b>
<b>15:00 – 15:30</b>	<b>Coffee Break</b>
<b>15:30 – 15:45</b>	<b>Outcomes of Panel Discussion - Presentation 4 – Enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation: “Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring”</b> <i>By: H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment (Representative of Group IV)</i>
<b>15:45 – 16:15</b>	<b>Open Discussion on Enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation: “Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring”</b>
<b>16:15 – 16:20</b>	<b>Remarks</b> <i>By: Mrs. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative</i>
<b>16:20 – 16:25</b>	<b>Remarks</b> <i>By: H.E. Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasack Province</i>
<b>16:25 – 16:35</b>	<b>Official Summing Up and Closing Remarks</b> <i>By: H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment</i>
<b>16:45 – 17:15</b>	<b>Press conference</b> To brief media on the outcomes of the 2017 RTIM by <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment</i></li> <li>2. <i>H.E. Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasack Province</i></li> <li>3. <i>Mrs. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative</i></li> </ol>

## **Annex 2: Welcome Remarks of H.E. Mr. Bouasone Vongsongkhone, Vice Governor of Champasak Province**

- **His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment,**
- **Her Excellency Ms Kaarina Immonen, Permanent Resident of the United Nations Development Programme Permanent Resident,**
- **Distinguished Ministers, Vice Ministers, Ambassadors, Diplomatic Corps representatives from international non-government organization, development partners,**
- **Representatives from line ministries and agencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the provincial authorities as well as the People of Champasak, it is my greatest honour and privilege to welcome His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment, Ministers and Vice-Ministers, Ms Kaarina Immonen, Permanent Resident of the United Nations Development Programme Permanent Resident, Diplomatic Corps representatives from international non-government organization, development partners, representatives from line ministries and agencies, provincial authorities as well as representatives from the provincial department of Planning and Investment from 16 Provinces to the consultation session of the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 on this wonderfully civilized land that is Champasak. I wish all distinguished guest a pleasant stay and successful visit. I would like to express my apologies in advance for any inconvenience.

It is my greatest honour and pleasure to be entrusted by the Government of the Lao PDR as well as the United Nations Development Programme with the privilege to co-host the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 today.

First and foremost, allow me to offer you the congratulations and well wishes of the Provincial Authorities as well as the People of Champasak to the success of this Meeting.

(Congratulations)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Champasak province has a total area of 15.350 Km<sup>2</sup> consisting of 74% plain lands, and 26% plateaus, rich in natural resources and suitable for development in various sectors including Agriculture (Livestock and Plantation), Industry, Trade, Culture and Tourism. Champasak Province comprises 10 districts, 643 villages and 694,000 people; The people of Champasak enjoy a calm and peaceful lifestyle, continued improvement to family businesses, peace and political stability as well as social order.

To continue the Socio-Economic Development of the province and develop Champasak into and economic Hub for the Southern provinces, we have laid out a development strategy which focuses on 4 Objectives:

1. Focus on the Development of the Agriculture production to ensure food security and production of goods;
2. Focus on Development in the sectors of Services, trade and investment;
3. Focus on Development in the sector of Tourism services;

4. Focus on Development in the sectors of Hydropower and Mining.

In addition we have created a 122344 policy for socio-economic development as follow:

1. Establish Pakse District as green, clean and beautiful socio-economic hub for the southern provinces;
2. Establish, develop 2 East-West economic corridors and 2 international trading and investment checkpoints;
3. Establish an industrial zone, a special economic zone and a specific economic zone;
4. Establish, develop 4 agriculture zones and 4 tourism zones.

On the basis of hidden potentials, the pragmatic leadership of the provincial authorities, the solidarity of the People and the continued support from international partners, the Champasak province has been able to maintain an economic growth of 8.11%, with a GDP per capita of 19.75 million Kips/year/capita or 2,468 US Dollars/year/capita, the economic structure continues to shift according to targets, with the Agriculture, Industry and Services sectors representing 26%, 35% and 39% of the GDP respectively.

- The environment for investment remains vibrant: a total of 18 companies have invested in Agriculture, Industry and Services. The biggest investor in descending order are Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Japan, South Korea and others.
- The main export products are Agriculture products, processed goods and electricity. As of September 2017, the total export is valued at 193.82 million US Dollars.
- Collective Farming remains the main occupation for the People of Champasak, which has experience rapid growth compared to recent years. There are 323 producer groups in the province (including 138 Cooperatives and 185 General Groups).

However, Champasak province still faces challenges in the implementation of the Socio-Economic Development Plan including the limited effort in discovering hidden potentials and capabilities, the need to make efficient use of the rich natural resources:

- The experience and capabilities of the human resources are still limited;
- There is a lack of access to the Ocean;

Ladies and Gentlemen

I highly value the Round Table Implementation Meeting, as it will highly benefit the province of Champasak, providing a platform for exchanges of opinions, lessons and experience related to development and governance between the province, development partners, the private sector as well as the CLV member countries, all of which will contribute to a greater partnership for Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan, realizing LDC graduation and achieving SDGs.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to wish His Excellency Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice-Minister of Planning and Investment, Ms Kaarina Immonen, Permanent Resident of the United Nations Development Programme Permanent Resident and all distinguished guests great health and success in your endeavors. I also wish great success to the 2017 Round Table Implementation Meeting. Thank you.

## **Annex 3: Opening Remarks of H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice Minister of Planning and Investment**

- **His Excellency Bouasone Vongsongkhone, Deputy Governor of Champasack Province**
- **Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative**
- **Diplomatic corps, representatives of international organizations and development partners**
- **Distinguished participants from central and 18 provincial government**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

On behalf of the Government of Lao PDR, I am delight to extend a warm welcome to all delegates, representatives of international organizations and development partners for your valuable time to take part at the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 today which will be organized under the theme of "Greater Partnership for Implementation of the 8th NSEDP: Realizing LDC Graduation and Achieving SDGs."

First, may I take this opportunity to congratulate and express my gratitude to the Governor of Champasak province for proving such a convenient meeting venue at the land of the world heritage site like Wat Phu Champasak; natural sites like Khone Phapheng Waterfall, the and 4,000 Islands, and the origin of the famous local song namely "Kularp Pakse" (Pakse Rose) which are well recognized by the domestic and international visitors. Special thanks also go to the provincial authority as well as the members of sub-committees, especially the Provincial Planning and Investment Department for working closely with the central government in preparing and making this meeting happened.

Appreciation for the support from the UN family as well as the development partners who cooperated closely with ministries and sectors involved in the RTIM preparation process.

**Distinguished delegates,**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 is one of the key supporting events to discuss in detail on the preparation of the LDC graduation triennial review in 2018, Laos is expected to meet the criteria on Gross National Income per capita(GNI per capita)and Human Asset Index (HAI) provided its pace of progress continues. However, it is also essential to draw attention on meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Criteria of Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) because it reinforcing the first two criteria. In addition, it is also the year to prepare the 1<sup>st</sup> National SDG Voluntary Report that is going to be brought to the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2018. The meeting we will also hear a report on the second year the implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Furthermore, at today's meeting, we will not only hear a presentation on the progress of Champasak Socio-Economic Development Plan and SDG localization status that will reflect the meaning of SDG implementation at the provincial level in order to mobilize support for the province in accomplishing those goals. We will also discuss in group on 4 focus areas in order to exchange experiences and ensure maximum benefit from 1) LDC graduation and the SDG integration;2) quality private investment for development;3) investment in skill development which is an essential component of human development;4) South-South and Triangular Cooperation enhancement in implementing and monitoring

mechanism for effective development. Therefore, in Day 1 of RTIM, we will divide into 4 groups focusing on these 4 topics.

The discussion of the four topics is based on the results of the SWGs' workshops throughout the year. Prior to today's meeting, pre-consultation meetings were held in Vientiane Capital on the 4 topics. So, for group discussion today, I would like to encourage you to bring the outcomes from 4 pre-consultations into the discussion.

To ensure that our discussions today are consistent with the development context of Champasak province, you will hear a presentation on the achievements and challenges in implementing the Champasak's SEDP 2017 and its priorities for 2018.

### **Distinguished delegations,**

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

I would like to take this opportunity to inform you that the total investment during the first 6 months implementation of NSEDP in 2017 has reached 419.3 million US dollars, equivalent to 3,518 billion LAK, achieved 40.7% against the annual target (signed) and of which investment from grants will reach 114.7million USD and loans 304.5million US dollars. Overall, the total ODA will reach 962.7 million US dollars or 8,078 billion kips, which I will talk in detail tomorrow.

Regarding the 4 focus areas for discussion today, I would like to emphasize on the following points raised at the pre-consultations as following:

#### 1. LDC Graduation & SDG Integration:

- Continue preparing for the LDC graduation triennial review in 2018, Laos is expected to meet the criteria on Gross National Income per capita (GNI per capita) and Human Asset Index (HAI) provided its pace of progress continues. However, it is also essential to draw attention on meeting the 3<sup>rd</sup> Criteria on Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) because it reinforcing the first two criteria.
- SDG integration into the Socio-Economic Development Plan is essential and required better coordination between central and provincial government who is the implementers.
- Build capacity that is necessary and urgent needed in implementing SDGs within the set timeframe such as mechanism for planning and stronger system for providing timely national statistical data.
- Develop a mechanism to secure funding for SDG integration and performance monitoring more concretely.

#### 2. Quality private investment for development:

- In promoting quality investment, quality investment development is crucial along with the environmental protection and modern technology application.
- The government will need to improve investment approval procedures to lift up Lao PDR from 3 to 2 digits ranking in the Ease of Doing Business by 2020, especially to improve concerned legal instruments.
- Priority must be placed on increasing customs and tax revenues, and expanding domestic sources of funding to accomplish the SDGs.

- To create a implementing guideline on the amended Law of Investment Promotion.
- 3. investment in skill development which is an essential component of human development
  - To concentrate on implementing the National Human Resource Development Strategy, especially the tasks related to human resources and labor skill development according to the targets set out in the NSEDP and SDGs.
  - To develop and mobilize participation from the private sector in implementing tasks related to human resources and labor skill development;
  - To diversify labor markets and strengthen capacity for local labor force domestically and internationally, and
- 4. South-South and Triangular Cooperation enhancement in “implementing and monitoring mechanism for effective development.”
  - South-South and Triangular Cooperation is very important for human resource development through exchanging and sharpening knowledge and skills.
  - Ensuring comprehensive benefits, effectiveness, transparency and accountability in these types of cooperation is highly important
  - Increasing government’s ownership in designing the method of South-South and Triangular cooperation is crucial.
  - It is required to expand widely effective partnership on the basis of mutual benefit, trust and joint decision making with clear task division.
  - To prioritize on assistance with no-conditions, manage and implement the ODA and manage the information flow through national system with transparency and accountability.
  - To monitor and report on the results of South-South and Triangular Cooperation.

To achieve all of these, it requires increase in joint effort from all stakeholders including the development partners at both central and local levels in planning and developing activities and funding to ensure continuous and successful implementation. Previously, the government has improved laws, regulations and a number of decrees for more consistency with the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation such as Decree No.75/PM on existing ODA management and utilization, which is still in process of consultation with the Line Ministries, provinces, development partners, civil society organizations and the private sector before finalization and submit to the government for approval.

As a chair of the meeting, I urge all participants from provinces and the development partners including representatives from international organizations as well as national and international non-government organizations (NGOs), including non-profit association (NPA) and the private sector to share constructive comments, experiences and recommendations for implementing and achieving all goals within the defined timeframe.

Through all the discussions and exchange on the ideas at today’s meeting, I trust that the development partners will see what are the necessities and needs of Lao PDR in implementing the SDGs and the NSEDP priorities.

Once again, may I express my sincere thanks and best wishes to the Champasak authorities, especially Mr. Bouasone Vongsongkhone, Deputy Governor of Champasack Province for co-chairing today's meeting and wish all of the participants to stay in good health, happiness and succeed in your career. Finally, I would like to declare that today's meeting is officially opened from this moment onwards.

**Thank you.**

# Annex 4: Presentation of Champasak Province

12/14/2017



**Implementation of the Socio-Economic Development Plan as of September 2017, Plans for 2018; Vision for 2030 and 10-year Development Strategy (2016-2025).**

**Presented by: Mr. Saythong Xayavong**  
Head of Provincial Department of Planning and Investment,  
Champasack Province

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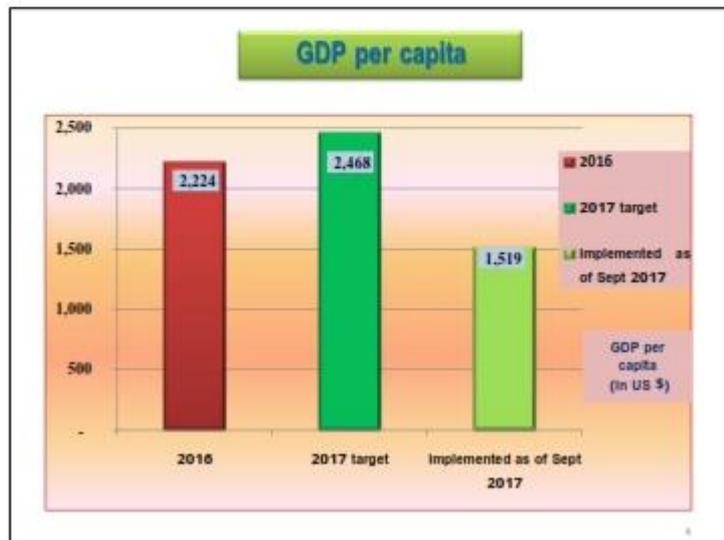
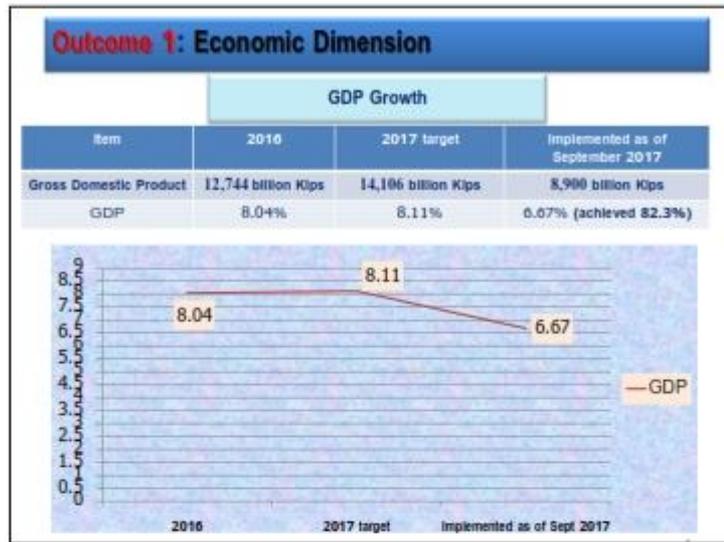


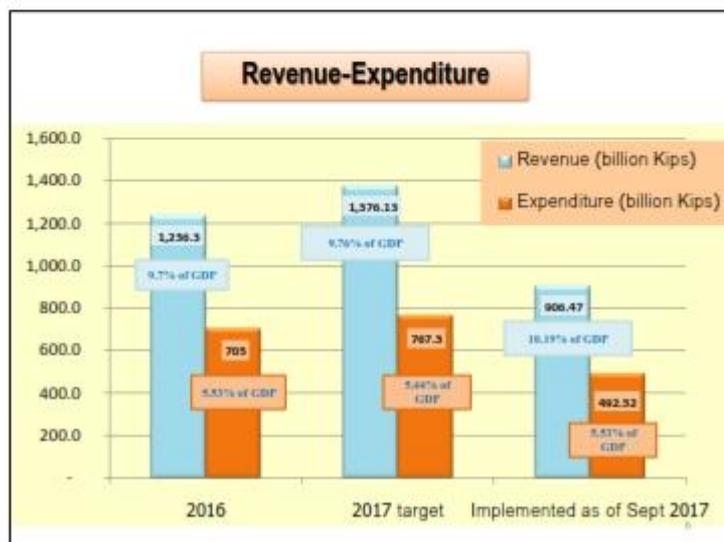
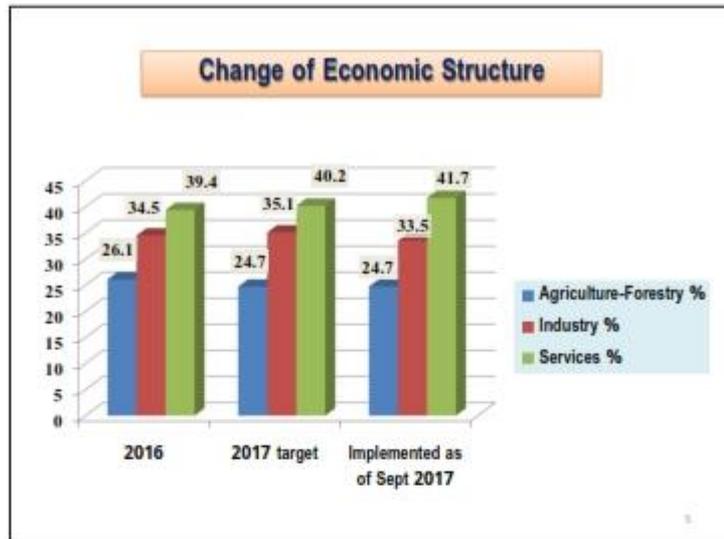
**1. Implementation of the Socio-Economic Development Plan as of September 2017**



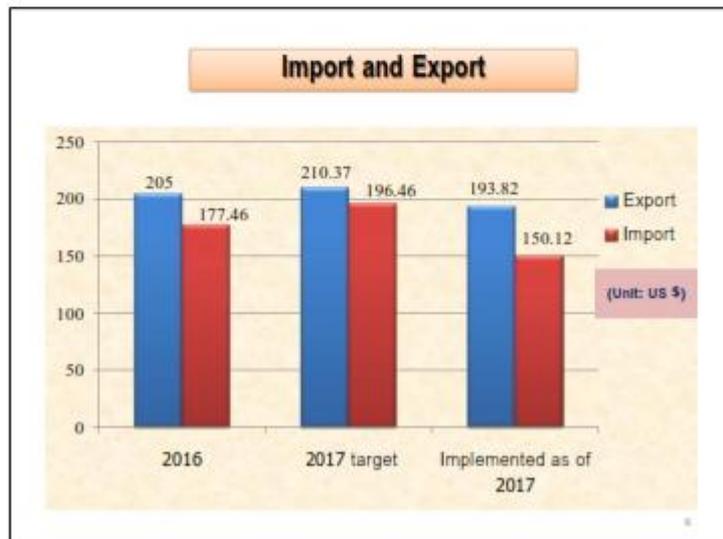
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Use of resources in the Socio-Economic development of Champasack Province			
Item	2016	Plans for 2017	Implemented as of Sept 2017
Public Investment	119,05 billion Kips	132,12 billion Kips	97,92 billion Kips
Official Development Assistance	133,76 billion Kips	148,48 billion Kips	85,92 billion Kips
Foreign Direct Investment	731,6 billion Kips	2.952,68 billion Kips	964,16 billion Kips
Credits	899 billion Kips	618 billion Kips	1.211,8 billion Kips
<b>ລວມທັງໝົດ</b>	<b>1.883,41 billion Kips</b>	<b>3.851,28 billion Kips</b>	<b>2.359,8 billion Kips</b>
<b>Percentage of GDP</b>	<b>14,78 %</b>	<b>31,4%</b>	<b>26,5%</b>



### Implementation of Champasack SEDP 2017

- Inflation rate maintained at 0,74%, exchange rates remain stable but depreciated at 2,41% compared USD.
- Total import valued at 150.12 million US Dollar, including: petrol 60%, vehicle and parts 18%, others 22%.
- Total export valued at 193.82 million US Dollar, including: Agriculture goods 70,15%, Industrial goods 28,33%, wood products 1,5% and forest products 0,02%.
- The total number of visiting tourist is 574,159 people.

### Outcome 2: Social Dimension

- Increased access to electricity in remote areas, leading to increased electricity consumption (97,25%).
- Achieved enrollment rate of 98.7% for primary education
- Primary Dropout rate decreased to 5,8%.
- Survival rate at primary education is at 75.9%
- Total enrolment rates are 68.2% for lower-secondary education and 41.9% for upper-secondary education,
- Literacy rate for people between the age of 15-40 is 99.3%
- Household use of Latrine implemented at 85%.
- Clean Water Consumption rate of population implemented at 90%.

### Outcome 2: Social Development (continued)

- Maternal Mortality Ratio is 220/100.000 (survey by LSIS, 2012)
- Infant Mortality Ratio of children under 01 year is 89/1.000 (survey by LSIS, 2012)
- Infant Mortality Ratio of children under 05 year is 97/1.000 (survey by LSIS, 2012)
- The weight-for-age related to standard deviation is 26%, the rate for stunted individuals is 37% and the rate for underweight individuals is 7% (survey by LSIS, 2012)
- 743 households categorized as developed, representing 0.6% of the total number of households.
- 17 villages categorized as poor, representing 2,6% of the total number of villages.
- 115.174 households categorized as developed, representing 94,7% of the total number of households.
- As of today, activities for UXO impact reduction have led to the clearance of 3,406 Ha from unexploded ordnances.
- The total number of people affected by UXO is 134, including 86 injuries and 48 deaths.

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### Outcome 3: Environmental Dimensions

- **Environment:**
  - Administrated the preservation and forest area expansion in 1,023,118 Ha (66.65%) out of the total 1,535,000 Ha of the province,
  - Successfully conducted tree-planting activities in 997 Ha, equivalent to 65% of the set target. This include 923 of industrial tree plantation and general tree plantation.
  - reforestation activities in 2,620 Ha, equivalent to 17% of the set target. This include 2,020 Ha of production forest and 600 non-production forest.
- **Climate Change:**
  - Impact of cold weather in ...
- Drought
- 186 villages throughout the province affected by floods, total affected area: 5.517,13 ha, damaged area 2.634,2 ha; damaged roads: 75 Km.

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### Outcome 3: Environmental Dimensions (continued)

- Preparatory works for Disaster Response and Disaster Risk Reduction:
  - 2 Water current measurement points, 16 water level measurement points across the province, 6 watershed for rain water measurement, 5 Meteorology and Hydrology stations (1 at provincial level and 4 at district level)
  - Earthquake measurement station in Khong District, with one additional station proposed in Khan Yaeng Village (Phu Sa Lao, Phonhong District)
  - Continued the implementation of Disaster Response and Management Strategy at provincial level.

### Cross Sectoral Issues

- **Governance:**
  - Establishment of the Provincial People's Councils
  - Three builds: Experimental activities conducted in 6 villages of 3 Provincial Districts. Activities include organizational restructuring and construction of infrastructure to promote the growth of the production sector.
  - Gender roles: the gender ratio among government officials is 51.26% female and 48.74% male; the ratio among members of the Provincial People's Assembly 30.5% female and 69.5% male

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### Cross Sectoral Issues (continued)

- Conducted Political training activities for 92.3% of Youth in the province.
- Promoted outstanding students as members of the Youth Union in 81% of the schools.
- Achieved 43.12% of youth promotion at village level
- Achieve 100% of staff integration into the Youth Union

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### South-South Cooperation/Triangular Cooperation

#### 1. South-South Cooperation:

- So far, Champasack has not yet implemented South-South Cooperation (usual modality: Funds provided by China, Project implemented by South Korea and capacity building for provincial staff in South Korea).
- In most cases, donor provide funds and implement the projects themselves, ex: ADB, WB, CHINA supported projects...

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### South-South Cooperation/Triangular Cooperation (continued)

#### 2. Triangular Cooperation:

**2.1. CLV Cooperation:** Champasack Province became a member of the Cambodia-Laos-Vietnam (CLV) Triangular Development Zone on 19/03/2010 in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

- At the 9<sup>th</sup> CLV Development summit in Siem Reap, Champasack province requested for support of two projects, namely:

**1./ Project for the Modernization of Nong Nok Khien International Checkpoint, valued at **3,832,000** US Dollars.**

**2./ Project for the Construction of Asphalt Road 7828 connecting Ban Seth-Ban Sod-Ban Napakieb, Khong District, Champasack Province to the Cambodia border, with a length of 35 Km, valued at **8,200,000** US Dollars.**

### South-South Cooperation/Triangular Cooperation (continued)

**2.2. DCLTV Cooperation:** The Development Cooperation of provinces along the East-West Economic Corridor between Laos-Thai-Vietnam.

8 provinces are current members, including:

- 3 provinces from the Lao PDR (Champasack, Sekong and Attapeu)
- 3 provinces from Vietnam (Kon Toum, Bing Ding and Kuang Ngay)
- 2 provinces from Thailand (Ubon and Sisaket)

**Pending issues to be addressed**

1. Accountability and Ownership of concerned sectors in the implementation of the set targets, some have not been sufficiently addressed. As a result, some targets have not yet been achieved as planned.
2. The integration on income into the provincial budget needs to be more focused, the implementation needs to be more strict in relation with time and regulations, mobilization and promotion of voluntary cooperation between businesses and government staffs need to be improved.
3. Issues related to treasury bond, advance loan and outstanding debt need to be addressed.

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**2. Socio-Economic Development Plan 2018**



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### Macro Economic Targets

<b>GDP Growth</b>	<b>8.13%</b>	
Agriculture	Increase of 2%	23.3% of GDP
Industry	Increase of 9.4%	35.5% of GDP
Services	Increase of 10.8%	41.2% of GDP
GDP per capita	2.859 US Dollars, equivalent to <b>22.8</b> million Kips	
Inflation Rate	Acceptable level (no more than 5%)	
Total Revenue	Target <b>1,602.2</b> billion Kips <b>9.7%</b> of GDP consisting of provincial income <b>700.5</b> billion Kips <b>4.3%</b> of GDP	
Total Expenditure	Target <b>414.6</b> billion Kips <b>2.5%</b> of GDP	
Exchange rate to remain at a manageable level		

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### Balance of Investment

#### Budget needs of 4,289 billion Kips (25.9 % of GDP)

Government Budget Investment	54.74% billion Kips 1.28% of total investment
Official Development Assistance	86.9% billion Kips 2.03% of total investment
Private Investment	3,468 billion Kips 80.85% of total investment
Investment in Fiscal and Monetary System	679,4 billion Kips 15.84% of total investment

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## Economic Targets

- Strive for 519,177 tons of total rice production, including 221,431 tons as rice product, equivalent to 43%
- Roasted Coffee production projected at 470,056 tons
- Rubber production projected at 34,988 tons
- Cassava production projected at 496,470 tons
- Cabbage production projected at 183,837 tons
- Strive for 3,893.65 billion kips in gross agricultural and industrial production
- Strive for 254.86 million US Dollar of total export and 220.93 million US Dollar of total import
- Strive for 12,891.75 billion kips in Domestic Products Movement
- Total number of visiting tourists in the region projected at 698,000 people

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## Social Targets

### Education:

- Achieve increase of enrolment rate at primary level from 98.7% to 99%
- Achieve decrease of dropout rate at primary level from 5.8% to 3.9%
- Achieve increase of survival rate at primary level from 75.9% to 82.8%
- Achieve 3.9% drop out rate at primary level
- Achieve increase of Total enrolment rates from 68.2% to 70.4% for lower-secondary education and from 41.9% to 47.1% for upper-secondary education
- Achieve 100% literacy rate for people between 15-40 years old

### Labor:

- Balance labor according to the vision of Industrialization and modernization: Achieve economic structure of 64.9% Agriculture, 6.9% industry and 26.6% services, create employment for 3,000 people, conduct vocational training for 3,000 people and achieve unemployment rate of 1.6%.

### Health:

- Achieve 80% of vaccination rate for children under one year old.
- Achieve 91.5% of clean water consumption.
- Achieve 87% of latrine.

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## Measures for the implementation of Socio-Economic Development Plan

To achieve the outcomes underlined in the socio-economic development plan for 2018, following measures must be taken:

1. Concerned departments and districts must take ownership in leading the implementation of the socio-economic development plan for 2018 to ensure timely success.
2. Enhance the management of revenue from normalized payment: from businesses such as petrol companies, conduct inspection for businesses that pay low taxes as well as those which have not yet issues annual tax payment certificates. Expand VAT throughout the province and promote the collection of outstanding land taxes.
3. Emphasize production of agricultural goods, especially the increase in productivity of rice product, coffee, passion fruit, rubber, vegetables, fruits, and livestock.
4. Enhance management of prices to conform with reality.

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## Measures for the implementation of Socio-Economic Development Plan (continued)

5. Enhance the management of public investment project to ensure alignment with investment law, national assembly approved budget, establish monitoring and evaluation systems, strictly prohibit off-plan and pre-invested projects.
6. Promote and manage foreign direct investment to ensure smooth implementation, mobilize and attract domestic as well as foreign investors to achieve investment target.
7. Emphasize on improvement of curriculum quality, enforce preventive measure against epidemics, promote mother and child health, focus on key works related to rural development and poverty eradication, particularly the construction of infrastructure, promote the creation of skilled labor, vocation as well as the development of services-tourism.
8. Enhance the political training of Party Members-Official at all level to ensure full assimilation of Government and Party Policies. Reinforce political responsibility towards the laws and regulations, enhance leadership in the socio-economic development, strict implementation of planning-finance, intensify the systematic and inclusive promulgation of laws, strive for transparency of government institutions, ensure full assimilation and compliance with the laws.



**3. Vision for 2030 and 10-year Development Strategy (2016-2025)**



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**Special features, potentials, opportunities, enabling conditions**

- Political and Social Stability, order and solidarity among the People.
- Wide Areas, most of which are rich in natural resources, able to cope with the socio-economic development of the province, agriculture production, industry and services.
- Relatively high potentials in water resources and water sources such as Mekong, Nam Se and other distributaries able to supply water, viability for construction of reservoirs, power generation, plantation, husbandry, fishery, tourism, etc.
- Rich in mineral resources such as Bauxite reserve in Pak Song District which have been subject to inspection and preparation for excavation by several companies as well as inspection of gold reserve in Sukuma District, Iron reserve in Patoumphone District and other sites.

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### Special features, potentials, opportunities, enabling conditions (continued)

- Numerous eco-, cultural tourism and historical sites. In particular, Champasack Province is home to World heritage site Wat Phou.
- The Infrastructure is being developed: Champasack Province has linking road to neighboring provinces as well as Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and has 3 international checkpoints, namely Wang Tao (Lao-Thai Border), Nong Nok Kien (Lao-Cambodia Border) and Pakse International Airport.
- Tangible and rapid results in the Industrialization and modernization process: Champasack Province has proposed to establish two areas as Special Economic Zones in addition to four existing Specific Economic Zones to attract investment and create employment.

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### Challenges

- Limited Human Resources, Capital and Technology to meet the demand of development, limited readiness in regional and international integration as well as strongly limited competitiveness in trade with countries in the region.
- Accountability of government officials and People toward the law must be strengthen, social drawbacks must be addressed and social justice must be ensure throughout the province.
- Climate change and natural disaster, such as droughts, floods, epidemic, etc are a recurrent issue and a challenge to the development.

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### Vision for 2030

The Vision for 2030 include: stable and strong political governance system, People rights are ensure through rule of law state, maintained solidarity among the people, enforced democracy, justice and civilization, improved standards of living for the People, continuous and sustainable economic growth according to the vision for industrialization and modernization, green and environmental friendly growth, economic development through knowledge economy, socialist market economy, achieve four-fold increase of GDP per capita compared to 2015, improved Human Resource quality, improved public health services, effective and sustainable use of natural resources, strong regional and international integration, becoming a center of trade, tourism, services and a pathway in the region.

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### 10-year Development Strategy (2016-2025)

#### 1.) Directions.

- Expand the Resolutions of the tenth and eleventh Congress of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Resolutions of the seventh and eighth Congress of the provincial Party into a socio-economic development strategy in accordance with the **4 breakthrough policy**, ensure political stability, social order, democracy, civilization, and justice.
- Proportionate growth economy, culture, society, development of human resources, environment preservation, with Economic development as a focus, Socio-cultural development as a goal and environmental preservation as a necessity.
- Promote continuous, green and sustainable economic growth, improve economic structure according to the vision for industrialization and modernization.
- Focus on the gradual poverty eradication of the people, preservation and promotion of national culture, promote qualitative and quantitative development of human resources.
- Develop the rule of law state, enhance cooperation, regional and international linkage and integration, promote the development of Champasack province into a center for integration and services among Southern Provinces.

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**10-year Development Strategy (2016-2025)**

**2.) Outcomes and target of development for 2016-2025.**

- Political stability and social order, maintain a strong democracy.
- Strive for an average GDP growth of no less than 8% per year and, by 2025 achieve two or three-fold increase in GDP per capita compared to 2015.
- Qualitative and quantitative development of skilled labour to meet the demand of the labour market and socio-economic growth.
- Achieve basic and sustainable poverty eradication.
- Ownership in the participation of the expansion in trade, investment, exchange experience as well as competitiveness in the process of regional and international integration.

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## Annex 5: Presentation of UNCTAD

12/14/2017



The slide features the UNCTAD logo and name in the top left, and the Lao PDR flag in the top right. The main title is 'The 2017 Roundtable Implementation Meeting' with the subtitle 'Greater Partnership for Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP: Realizing LDC Graduation and Achieving SDGs'. A photograph of a traditional wooden building is on the left. The bottom right contains the text: 'Musste Deleign', 'Chief, Landlocked Developing Countries' Section, 'Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes, UNCTAD', and '22-23 November 2017, Pakse, Lao PDR'.

Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes (ALDC)  
UNCTAD

**The 2017 Roundtable Implementation Meeting**  
*"Greater Partnership for Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP: Realizing LDC Graduation and Achieving SDGs"*

Musste Deleign  
Chief, Landlocked Developing Countries' Section,  
Division for Africa, LDCs and Special Programmes,  
UNCTAD  
22-23 November 2017, Pakse, Lao PDR



The slide has a blue header with the title 'Structure of the presentation'. Below the header is a list of six items:

- I. Key messages from the presentation
- II. Asking the right questions;
- III. Graduation: What are key drivers in Lao PDR?
- IV. International Support Measures (ISMs for LDCs);
- V. Lao PDR, graduates and prospective graduates;
- VI. Conclusions with policy implications to Lao PDR.

1

## Key messages

### Graduation is:

- not an end; it's an important **milestone**;
- an **indicator** of successes and challenges ahead;
- the first step in a long march to sustainable development;
- a **mobilizing factor** to unlock development potential;
- should **be irreversible and sustainable**;
- must be accompanied by "**smooth transition**" strategy;
- ❖ **Ultimately, it must lead to structural economic transformation and sustainable development**

## Key messages (continued)

- Drivers of Laos' progress are **endogenous not exogenous**;
- **ISMs are complementary** but not deciding factors for graduation of Lao PDR;
- For Lao PDR, **positive outcome of graduation outweighs** potential negative (or unintended) consequences;
- **Main challenges ahead: fostering productive capacities and structural economic transformation**

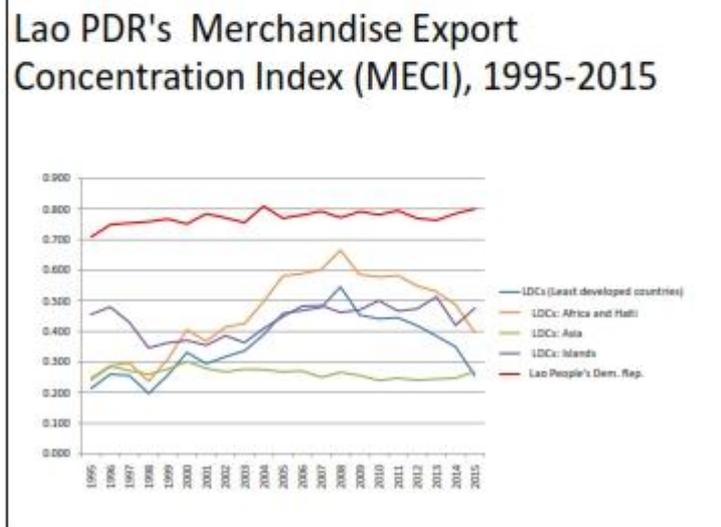
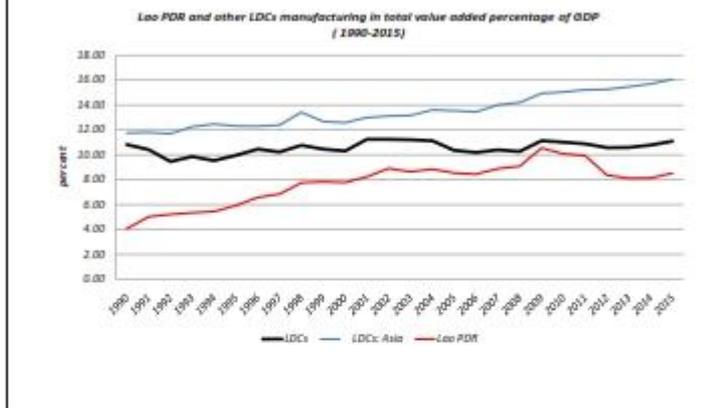
## II. Asking the right questions

- Why are criteria, benchmarks and thresholds important?
- Graduation **from LDCs' to what....** and what will happen after graduation? Will all development challenges go away?
- What policies/strategies to address the "new" challenges? How can we use graduation as a mobilizing factor?

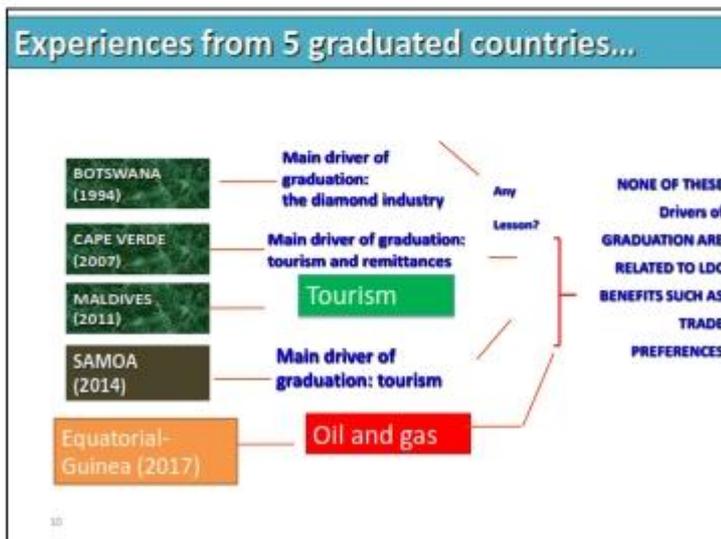
## III. Graduation: What are key drivers in Lao PDR?

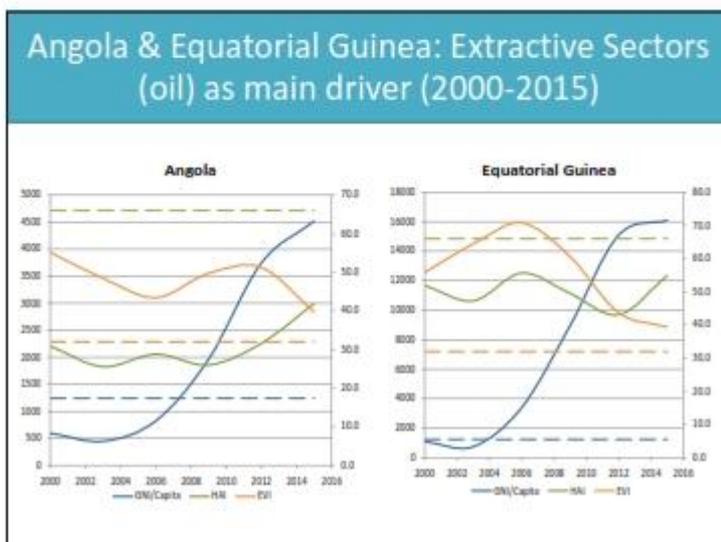
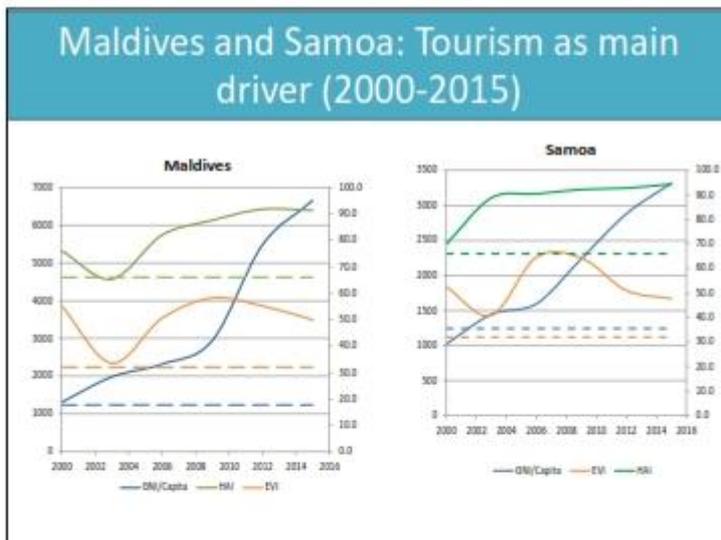
- Continued and robust economic growth;
- Increase in GNI per Capita;
- Decline in extreme poverty rates & improvements in human indicators;
- Extractive sectors & energy (hydroelectricity);
- Prudent monetary and fiscal policies ( avoided Dutch Disease and inflationary pressures);
- Regional trade;
- **But without diversification of exports: This should be the focus of policies- now and in a post graduation environment.**

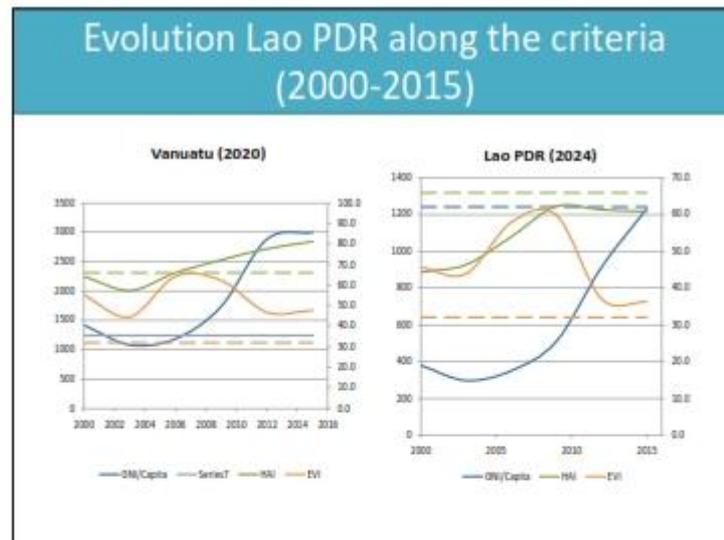
### Why should Lao PDR focus on Diversification Structural Economic transformation?



How does Lao PDR Compare with recent graduates and other perspective graduates?



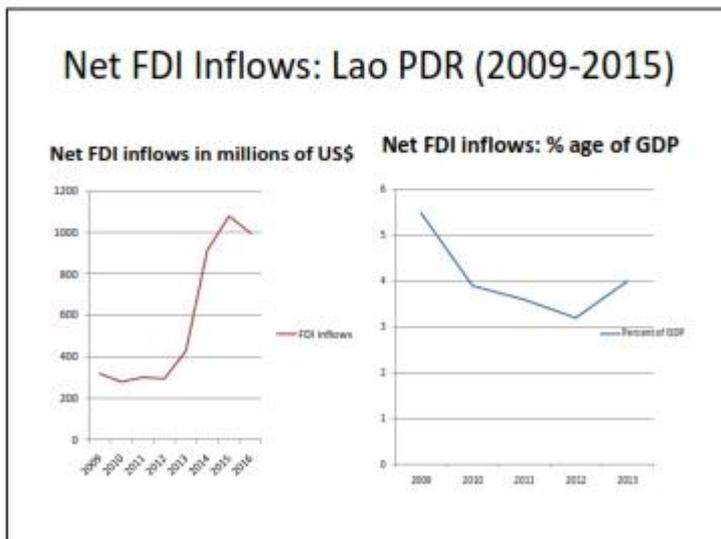
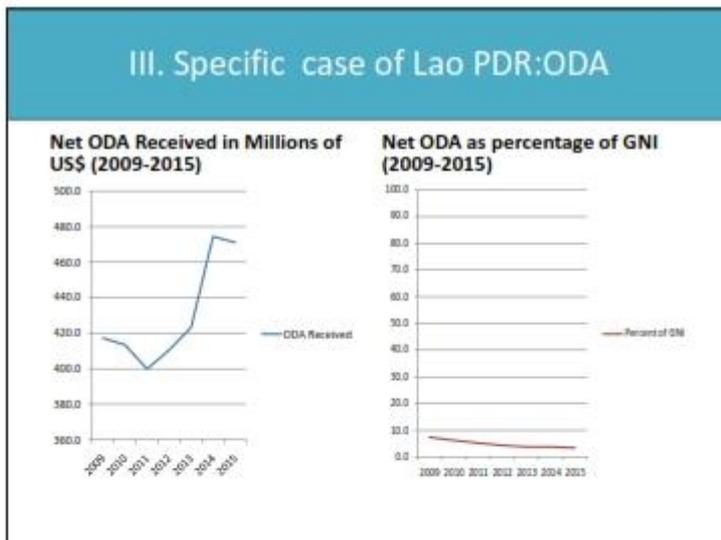




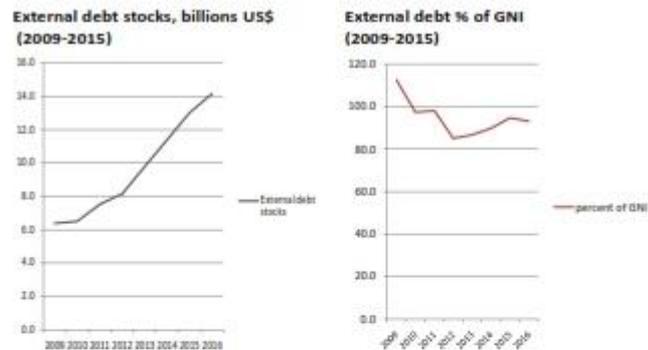
## IV. International Support Measures (IMS)

**International Trade**- total WTO S&D Measures: **148** of which only **14** are LDC specific (market access, TA, and TT)

- ✓ EBA and other bilateral trade preferences;
- ✓ Trade-Related TA: EIF is LDC Specific (countries may be allowed to use even after graduation for agreed durations);
- ✓ Subsidy reduction commitments (especially WTO AOA)
- ✓ Technology Transfer (TRIPS 66.1 & 66.2)
- **Finance**- assessments so far indicate that development finance (aid) is determined more by political and strategic considerations than LDC criteria



## External Debt stocks: Lao PDR



### IV: Some observations on the Case of Lao PDR: Trade and finance

#### a) International Trade:

- Lao PDR joined WTO as an LDC. It should make extra efforts to benefit from S&D Measures, including those which are LDC Specific
- After graduation, Lao PDR will continue benefiting LDC-Specific S&D Measures during a transition period;
- Close to 80% of its international trade is with developing countries of which neighbouring countries account a significant share;

### ....some observations..

#### Finance (Lao PDR):

- **Thailand, Vietnam, China** and to some extent **Japan** are main sources including for infrastructure financing;
- Multilateral agencies (WB, IMF and ADB) are additional sources;
- Asia Infrastructure Bank, BRICs Bank, Chinese Belt & Road Initiative are new sources;
- **None of the financing sources appear to be influenced by LDC status in the case of Lao;**
- ❖ **External debt: if unchecked may become unsustainable (LDC status has never been a factor in debt relief measures, however).**

#### VI. What policy lessons to Lao PDR

- ❑ **"Income only criterion"** : Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Timor-Leste
- ❑ Lao PDR's Progress toward graduation could be on at least two criteria (**GNI Per Capita, HAI**);
- ❑ After graduation Lao PDR will remain **in low-income category** (i.e. financial resources from IDA will be available until Lao reaches Middle Income category);
- ❑ Domestic policies and strategies should focus on addressing the "**low-income trap**";
- ❑ Gains from natural resources wealth are key to enhance socio-economic progress

**The way forward: How UN and other partners support Lao PDR's graduation process?**

- ❑ Important timeline for Lao PDR: **2018, 2021 and 2024**
- ❑ As of now Lao PDR should make **efforts to meet the EVI** as it is not very far from the threshold level;
- ❑ UN system agencies will continue supporting Lao's graduation (e.g. **Vulnerability Profile, environmental impact assessment, international trade and investment opportunities**)
- ❑ We can advise the Government of Lao PDR on opportunities in post-graduation environment.

## **Annex 6: Official Opening Remarks of H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR**

- **The Governor of Champasak province,**
- **Ministers / Deputy Ministers,**
- **Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific**
- **Diplomatic corps, representatives of international organizations and development partners**
- **Representatives from ministries / sectors at central and provincial levels.**
- **Ladies and gentlemen,**

I am so delightful and extremely grateful to representing the Government of the Lao PDR welcoming the delegations of diplomatic corps and representatives of international organizations and development partners who have honored and sacrificed time to be at the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 today, which organized under the theme of "Greater Partnership for Implementation of the 8th NSEDP: Realizing LDC Graduation and Achieving SDGs."

Special thanks also extended to Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific for taking time to join your conference round table of 2017 at this time.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express appreciation and gratefulness to the Governor of Champasak province, the Minister of Planning and Investment (MPI), the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as well as the organizations under the United Nations (UN) and development partners for all the support and cooperation in preparing and organizing the RTIM 2017 in Champasak province together with the Line Ministries.

Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 (RTIM 2017) is remarkably important. It is not only a mechanism to pursue the outcomes of the previous RTM/RTIM, but also a place that provide opportunity to discuss about preparation for the LDC triennial review, which will be taken place in 2018 by the UN Committee for Development Policy (CDP). Lao PDR is expected to meet the national income criterion (GNI per capita) and the Human Asset Index (HAI) in principle, if the country can maintain the current development pace and pay close attention to achieve the third criterion of the Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) as a catalyst for the accomplishment of the above-mentioned two criteria.

In achieving the objectives mentioned, the meeting today will focus on key priority areas as follows: LDC Graduation & SDG Integration; realizing quality private sector investment for development; investment in skills and labor force for human development; enhancing south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation: "Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring." In addition, we will hear a presentation on "summary on annual

NSEDP 2017 implementation and priorities for 2018, which is the second year of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan implementation that focusing on the poverty eradication for the people and the fulfilment of all conditions required for LDC graduation of the Lao PDR by 2020.

Organizing the RTIM 2017 in Champasak province has a remarkable meaning. It is aimed at exchanging opinions on the development situation on the ground including local potentials provided in the Social-Economic Development Plan of Champasak province as presented yesterday in three outcomes as well as the issues related to the Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI), the Human Asset Index (HAI), skill development, environmental issues etc. which highlighted a good example of South-South and Triangular Co-operation in Champasak province. On the whole, these show the government's effort in strengthening capacity of the province according to 3-builds directive (Sam-Sang): "building provinces to become strategic units, districts to become comprehensively strengthened units and villages to become development units."

Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

The government has put tremendous effort in implementing the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2017. The first 6 month implementation and a whole year projection and the priorities for 2018 can be summarized as following:

In 2017, the country could maintained stability and peace in general in term of politics, security and monetary; national economic growth rate continued to rise compared to the previous year, and it is expected that the GDP will grow at the rate of 6.83%, the average income per capita will reach 2,472 US dollars, which will exceed the target set for 2,341 US dollars, such that:

- **Agriculture sector:** will grow by 2.78%
- **Industry sector:** will grow by 9.5%
- **Service sector:** will grow by 6.15%
- **Import tariff:** will grow by 6.9 %
  
- ❖ **Socio-culture sector development:** The government has actively implemented the development tasks to improve the area of socio-culture along with the economic area, environment and other areas related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which can be illustrated as following:
  - **Education:** In 2017, the government or the sectors concerned has under taken priority tasks to meet the targets on expanding education opportunities and quality, especially at the grassroots level such as improved, repaired and constructed school buildings and institutes as well as learning equipment and facilities; widely encouraged the ethnic people to send their children to kindergarten and primary schools;
  - **Health:** Focus has been put on improving and expanding public health service network into grassroots, developing quality of health services, controlling and preventing seasonal diseases.

Although progress has been made in the implementation of NSEDP 2017, there are some pending issues and challenges to be addressed:

- 1) The macroeconomic situation has not yet been regularly stable, the state budget lacked liquidity, the budget deficit ratio to GDP was still high; implementation on exchange rate, fiscal and monetary policies has not yet been as effective as it should be.
- 2) The economic structure has not impressively reformed, especially in the agriculture sector production which largely still old fashioned; despite overall economic structure has moved towards industry and services sectors, the internal structure reform of the industry sub-sectors has not yet been much improved, especially the manufacturing sector has not yet been highly effective;
- 3) Management on import - export and prices of goods, especially consumer goods has not been strong and comprehensive as it should be, commodity prices are relatively high compared to neighboring countries
- 4) Commercial production has not yet been strongly promoted in sectors and localities, pilot activities were still limited in both quantity and quality, model families were very few;
- 5) Strengthening labor skills, quality, vocational education and professional skills has not yet been widen, such that labor supply could not meet the development demands, especially domestic and foreign private investment in industrialization;
- 6) Public administration still consisted of many levels of hierarchy, sectors and provinces has not yet able to undertake their tasks strictly to their management roles, the coordination between each level of authorities, and the public and social management were still weak;
- 7) Despite high level of average economic growth, there was vast disparity between sectoral and local development in urban and rural area.

In overcoming mentioned challenges, the Government of Lao PDR set key targets for the higher effective implementation of the NSEDP in the Year 2018 as following:

### **1. Macroeconomics:**

Strive to promote the GDP to grow higher than 2017, at the rate of 7% with the average GDP per capita of 2,536 US dollars as projected (estimate GNI per capita is 2,004 US dollars)

### **2. Budget:**

- Revenue target is 25,452 billion Kip, of which domestic revenues is 22,700 billion Kip
- Expenditure shall not exceed 32.766 billion Kip
- The total budget deficit should not exceed 7,314 billion Kip

### **3. Sustainable Development Goal Implementation (SDGs):**

Strive to implement the SDGs and localize them into policies and implementing methods more concretely, strengthen the coordination and cooperation between ministries – agencies at both central and local level in integrating SDG indicators in the NSEDP 2018 for further synchronization between the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the plans of the sectors and provinces; at the same time, enhance detailed management on and identify projects to put the SDGs into action more concretely.

To accomplish the directions, goals and priority tasks of the NSEDP 2018, sectors and provinces are required to focus on implementing policies and measures as following:

- 1) **Macroeconomics:** The economic sector must regularly monitor and manage the macroeconomics by imposing strict measures on inflation rate, exchange rate, money

supply (M2) to keep them at the target level. Additionally, further increase in exports, reduce imports of unnecessary goods are required.

- 2) **Monetary policies:** To monitor and keep the exchange rate stable and yet flexible in response to the exchange rate movement in the market with good and tight management; improve the policies on interest rate and management on the proportion of foreign currency deposits against compulsory reserves of the banks.
- 3) **Finance and Budgeting:** To modernize the revenue collection and taxations to ensure accuracy and adequacy, all of all is to ensure the budget liquidity and reduce budget deficits; pay more attention on building permanent revenue base; strictly implement the saving policy according to Order No. 09 / PM.
- 4) **Investment Promotion:** To improve the enabling environment and favorable climate of investment by solving problems at all levels that hindering local and international business operations; implement one-stop services at both central and local levels to reduce procedures of approval and speed up the processes with transparent, fair and effective investment management.
- 5) **Implement policies to promote small and medium enterprises** to be strong, creative, and create opportunities and mechanisms for facilitating them to access to finance; use modern technology to diversify and increase the value of goods and services to create a strong foundation for the national economy.
- 6) **Social sector development, rural development and poverty eradication:** To continue developing social sector, rural areas, and further eradicate poverty for the people; actively undertake researches to establish development projects and activities that are suitable and in accordance with real situations in order to improve and upgrade the quality of education and public health in rural and remote areas by investing in improvement and construction of infrastructures in rural areas such as electricity, road, water supply, irrigation, schools , hospitals , health centers , clean water supply etc.
- 7) **Public administration:** To improve personnel organization to be more streamlined, improve coordination between central and local government and coordination between sectors, uplift accountability, provide more guidance towards the socio-economic development, and strictly enforce the planning - financial disciplines and laws.
- 8) To implement the plans - programs and activities of the Visit Lao Year 2018 by ensuring peace and security; provide good services and be a good host to welcome visitors; advertise, improve and develop the tourist towns including accommodation and restaurants to be clean, beautiful, impressive and attractive to large number of tourists.
- 9) To put more effort in reducing poverty in the poorest districts by developing detailed projects, following up the progress, monitoring and evaluating poverty status in detailed on the ground.

Distinguished guests,

To cope with such challenges, on behalf of the government of the Lao PDR, I urge the ministries, sectors and provinces as well as development partners at the Round Table Implementation Meeting today to discuss and exchange opinions openly and constructively in jointly identifying the causes of weaknesses and finding the way to overcome them with an aim to promote strong and stable economic development. Besides, please jointly identify local potentials to expand sources of revenue, strengthen capacity in managing the economy, and modernizing the productions and services in response to the needs of the green development in the new era; integrate the local economy in regional and international economies to make progress on the SDG implementation and leading the country out of LDC status by 2020.

Therefore, I hope very much that the Round Table Implementation Meeting in 2017, as well as the previous ones, can contribute in creating common understanding among stakeholders, and involve more participation in the national development and hope that you will put the outcomes from today's meeting into your detailed work plan and programmes for effectiveness, particularly the 4 focal areas of discussion mentioned earlier.

Last but not least, may I express my sincere thanks to Champasak province for a good host and gratefulness for support and assistance provided from our friends and international organizations as well as development partners who have contributed financially and technically to the implementation of 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (2016-2020), including the SDGs as well as your support to the Lao PDR in LDC graduation by 2020.

With cordial and good relations between the Lao PDR and our friends including international organizations and development partners, I believe that today's meeting would succeed as planned.

Finally, I wish all of you stayed in good health, succeeded in your career and most of all, I wish you happiness and prosperity.

Ladies and gentlemen, may I announce that the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 in Champasak province is officially open from this moment onward. - Thank you -.

## **Annex 7: Keynote Address of H.E. Mr. Haoliang Xu, UN Assistant Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator & Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific**

- **Your Excellency, Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR,**
- **Your Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment,**
- **Your Excellency Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasak Province,**
- **Excellencies, Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies & Gentlemen.**

Sabaidee. A very good morning everybody.

It is a privilege for me to be able to join this 2017 Round Table meeting in Champasak province and address this opening session.

This is my second Round Table Meeting in Lao PDR in three years. In attending this national development forum, I am always impressed with the efficiency of the process and the diversity of development partners gathered together. Equally impressive is the desire of the Government to make the process more open and participatory, including by having these Meetings take place at locations across the country.

This serves as a powerful reminder to us that development – which is our ultimate goal – is about including all people, everywhere, and ensuring ‘no one is left behind’.

‘Leaving no one behind’ – the central tenet of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – has special resonance in Asia-Pacific. There is a remarkable development story to be told about the region – of which Lao PDR is an integral part.

This region of the world has developed at a faster pace than any other. Its share in global GDP has increased from about 10 percent in the 1950’s to nearly 40 percent today. Even more impressive - the number of people living in extreme poverty<sup>1</sup> in the region has decreased, from almost one and a half billion in 1990, to around 323 million in 2013.

Yet despite unparalleled progress, significant challenges remain, which are also mirrored here in Lao PDR: Despite impressive sustained economic growth over many years now, inequalities, rural poverty and malnutrition persists. Environmental degradation still needs to be tackled, and the misery of remnant UXO still inflicts devastating harm and impedes progress for many provinces.

The four core themes selected for this years’ Round Table Implementation Meeting are compelling: i) LDC graduation & SDG integration; ii) ensuring quality private sector investment; iii) promoting national human resources and skills development; and; iv) South-south & triangular cooperation.

I would like to touch on each of them briefly within the global and Asia-Pacific regional context.

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<sup>1</sup> (US\$1.90/day)

Firstly, Lao PDR has long cherished the goal of shedding its Least Developed Country status. The major challenge in this regard lies not in reaching the levels Gross National Income (GNI), since the country is achieving year-on-year growth in incomes. Rather, as most of you know, the sterner challenges relate to human assets and economic vulnerabilities.<sup>2</sup>

As a result, there remains an urgent need to secure sustained investments national health and educational programmes: ‘nutrition’, ‘literacy’, ‘secondary school enrolment’, ‘under-5 mortality’ and ‘maternal mortality’.

Further progress in these areas will not only propel Lao PDR out of LDC status, but also provide a solid foundation for SDG attainment by 2030.

Meanwhile, the Government (at national and provincial level), supported by development partners, are to be commended for their combined and sustained attention, in tackling food and nutrition security as a national priority, using a multi-sectoral approach.

Enduring effort be needed to hit the target of ensuring that 18% of the national budget is allocated to the education sector, and, at the same time, to increasing investments in health.

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Concerning the economic vulnerability issues confronting Lao PDR’s LDC graduation, three issues stand out.

Firstly, the need to follow the path of greater economic diversification aligned to a strong human resource development strategy - as mentioned already. In this regard, the consultations today concerning, ‘investment in skills for human development’ will be especially important in the pursuit of national and local economic diversification strategies.

Secondly, through the roll-out of a system of universal social protection, which is vital for protecting human development from periodic shocks.

Thirdly, reducing risk posed from natural disasters. This can be achieved by adopting and integrating the Sendai Framework’s ‘four priorities for action’. This will build resilience and serve to reduce new and existing disaster risks, including risks posed by climate change.

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I would now like to turn attention to the historic undertaking entered into by all nations – that of achieving the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. In this I extend a special appeal to the representatives from the private sector present here today.

According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), between \$3.3 and \$4.5 trillion a year will be needed to meet the targets of the SDG relevant sectors.

How do we meet the enormous need?

In terms of the public funds to be invested in the SDGs, the Government and provincial authorities have a lead role to play, both through policy leadership, as well as increasing the volume of domestic revenues generated and allocated to the SDGs.

<sup>2</sup> Lao PDR’s position on the three criteria for LDC graduation as per the review in 2015

LDC Graduation Criteria	2015 Inclusion Threshold	2015 Graduation Threshold	Lao PDR 2012 CPD Review	Lao PDR 2015 CPD Review	% of the LDC Graduation Threshold
GNI per capita	1,035	1,242 (Inclusion+20%)	1,460 (2013)	1,232	99%
HAI	60	66	61.4	60.8	92%
EVI	36	32	37.1	36.2	87%

At the same time, development partners will be stretching to sustain current levels of official development assistance (ODA) to Lao PDR in a post-LDC environment. Yet, ODA will remain indispensable for catalysing development, and will need to be utilized ever more judiciously.

The most important emergent development partner to the 2030 development agenda, is therefore the private sector.

Indeed, there is growing interest from the private sector globally. According to a recent survey of 100 countries by Accenture, 87 percent of CEOs believe the SDGs provide an opportunity to rethink sustainable value creation; 85 percent see cross-sector coalitions and partnerships as essential for transformation; and 84 percent call for close collaboration with government on SDG action plans.

In addition, we are now hearing of many companies incorporating the SDGs into their corporate mission statement, because they understand that future business success will depend on being inclusive and sustainable.

By adopting sustainable practices, companies can also gain a competitive edge, increase their market share, and boost stakeholder value.

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So the question is: How do we fully unleash the economic power of the private sector to realize the SDGs in Lao PDR?

Global best practice informs us that when national governments and provincial authorities understand the needs of business, and business understands the development priorities of governments and local authorities, everyone stands to benefit.

This will happen through the design of policies that enable business to flourish, and which encourage business to move beyond corporate social responsibility to make sustainable development a core part of their operating model.

This transformation can be initiated by CEOs by making sustainable development essential within business strategies and a core competence of their companies.

We all need to spread the word more effectively to our private sector partners that responsible business is not only a force for good, it is good for the bottom line.

In this regard, I was very pleased to hear that the Round Table process and the Lao Business Forum have been able to link up more directly in the run up to this year's Round Table Meeting.

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Diverse partnerships truly hold the key to SDG success. For this reason, I was also delighted to see 'Public-Private' Partnerships featured prominently in the new Vientiane Declaration and its Action Plan.

According to a recent UN DESA<sup>3</sup> report, more than US\$ 800 billion of private investments went into Public-Private Partnerships in Asia from 1994 to 2014, and the amount is increasing. Private companies are purposefully collaborating with national and provincial governments to create jobs, establish value chains, build infrastructure, deliver services, and participate more in public

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<sup>3</sup> United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

policy and regulation that advance national development goals. This involves sharing responsibilities and risks, joint investment and transparency.

Critical to the elements of our dialogue today, is that it gets translated into action.

This links closely to the final area of consultation at this years' Round Table Implementation Meeting – that of 'south-south' cooperation.

From a national economic development perspective it is worthwhile recall the many positive experiences we have in the ASEAN region itself.

For example, I have just travelled from Singapore, a country which in 1960 adopted a focused roadmap for development with innovative ideas in areas such as engineering, education, tourism, retail, financial services and container shipping. This shaped Singapore's economic and industrial development success.

Within this spirit of cooperation, we encourage Lao PDR to benefit from the example of Singapore, and many other examples of countries in the near region that have charted, then systematically pursued, focused economic diversification and competitiveness strategies, backed up by solid national human resource investment plans.

I would like to conclude by making brief mention of the UNDP Social Impact Fund that we recently established.

It is a 'blended finance' platform to promote social impact investing and investment in SDG implementation in Asia-Pacific. The Fund is now ready to receive proposals thanks to a partnership with the Haifu International Finance Company.

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In closing, bold leadership is required from four groups: i) Government officials at the national and provincial levels; ii) CEO's; iii) civil society groups, and; iv) school teachers.

Lao PDR is well placed to facilitate a change from among these four sets of people through a partnership approach.

The aim should be to bring the knowledge and awareness of the SDGs and 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda into every institution, enterprise, school and household across the country.

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The UN system stands ready to continue to support all efforts to end poverty in all its forms and contribute to setting Asia-Pacific on the path to sustainable development.

I wish you every success in your constructive discussions and dialogue today.

Thank you.

## **Annex 8: Welcome Remarks of H.E. Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasak Province**

- **His Excellency Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao PDR,**
- **His Excellency Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General,  
United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional  
Director for Asia and the Pacific,**
- **His Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment,**
- **Her Excellency Ms Kaarina Immonen, Permanent Resident of the United  
Nations Development Programme Permanent Resident,**
- **Distinguished Ministers, Vice Ministers, Ambassadors, Diplomatic Corps,  
representatives from international non-government organization, development  
partners,**
- **Representatives from line ministries and agencies,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On behalf of the provincial authorities as well as the People of Champasak, it is my greatest honour and pleasure to be entrusted by the Government of the Lao PDR as well as the United Nations Development Programme with the privilege to co-host the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 today.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my most sincere thanks, congratulation and warmest welcome to all distinguished to the wonderfully civilized land of Champasak. I wish all distinguished guest a pleasant stay and successful visit. I would like to express my apologies in advance for any inconvenience.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Champasak province has a total area of 15.350 Km<sup>2</sup> consisting of 74% plain lands, and 26% plateaus, rich in natural resources and suitable for development in various sectors including Agriculture (Livestock and Plantation), Industry, Trade, Culture and Tourism.

- Champasak Province comprises 10 districts, 643 villages and 694,000 people;
- The people of Champasak enjoy a calm and peaceful lifestyle,
- The province experiences peace and political stability as well as social order.
- The environment for investment remains vibrant: a total of 18 companies have invested in Agriculture, Industry and Services. The biggest investor in descending order are Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Japan, South Korea and others.
- The main export products are Agriculture products, processed goods and electricity. As of September 2017, the total export is valued at 193.82 million US Dollars.
- Collective Farming remains the main occupation for the People of Champasak, which has experience rapid growth compared to recent years. There are 323 producer groups in the province (including 138 Cooperatives and 185 General Groups).
  - 7 Agriculture Producer Cooperatives
  - 7 Banking Credit Cooperatives
  - 1 Coffee Producer Cooperative (comprising more than 40 producers)
  - 90 meat farms (cattle, pork, lamb, sheep, poultry,) and 25 aquaculture farms.

For the reasons mentioned above, Champasak province was able to maintain an economic growth of 8.11%, with a GDP per capita of 19.75 million Kips/year/capita or 2,468 US

Dollars/year/capita, the economic structure continues to shift according to targets, with the Agriculture, Industry and Services sectors representing 26%, 35% and 39% of the GDP respectively.

However, Champasak province still faces challenges in the implementation of the Socio-Economic Development Plan including the limited effort in discovering hidden potentials and capabilities, the need to make efficient use of the rich natural resources:

- The experience and capabilities of the human resources are still limited;
- There is a lack of access to the Ocean;
- The administrative systems are still limited in coordination.

It is for these reason that I highly value the Round Table Implementation Meeting, as it will highly benefit the province of Champasak, providing a platform for exchanges of opinions, lessons and experience related to development and governance between the province, development partners, the private sector as well as the CLV member countries, all of which will contribute to a greater partnership for Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan, realizing LDC graduation and achieving SDGs.

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to wish His Excellency Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao PDR as well as His Excellency Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and all distinguished guests great health and success in your endeavors. I also wish great success to the 2017 Round Table Implementation Meeting. Thank you.

## **Annex 9: Remark of H.E. Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment**

- **H.E Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance,**
- **H.E Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasak Province,**
- **Ministers / Deputy Ministers,**
- **Mr. Haoliang Xu, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific**
- **Ms. Kaarina Immonen, United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Lao PDR,**
- **Representatives from ministries, sectors at central and local levels**
- **Diplomatic corps, representatives of international organizations and development partners**
- **Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,**

As the Minister of Planning and Investment, Vice President of the National Steering Committee for the Round Table Process, it is my great honor and pleasure to welcome **H.E Somdy Douangdy**, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance for his presence and opening remark at the Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 today, which make very important motivation to the RTM process in meeting objectives and targets as planned. May I also express gratefulness to **H.E. Dr. Bounthong Divixay**, Governor of Champasak Province for his presence and warm welcome remark to delegations at this meeting. Also, sincere appreciation for **Mr. Haoliang Xu**, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General, United Nations Development Programme Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific and **Ms. Kaarina Immonen**, United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator and Resident Representative United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Lao PDR who honorary co-chair this meeting.

Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 (RTIM 2017) is very important to socio-economic development of the Lao PDR, especially for fund mobilization as well as implementation and management on the Official Development Assistance (ODA) for more effectiveness and efficiency. During the first 6 months of this year, we have mobilized total ODA of 419.3 million US dollars, equivalent to 40.7% of the annual target (as indicated in the signed contract with development partners), of which total grants and loans were 114.7 million US dollars and 304.5 million US dollars, respectively. This shows high priority and constant concerns that development partners have given for the socio-economic development of the Lao PDR, especially in SDG implementation that development partners actively support. Therefore, on behalf of the National Steering Committee for the Round Table Process, I would like to express high appreciation and gratefulness for continuous support of the development partners.

The Government of Lao PDR has highly valued and actively implemented the Round Table Process in contribution to the sustainable and green development by widely encouraging participation from all parties concerned at central and local levels. This is to enhance the role, responsibility, participation and ownership of sectors and provinces in mobilizing ODA, as well as strengthening local capacity in accordance with the Sam-Sang directive. Therefore, the RTIM this year is held in Champasak province under the theme "**Greater Partnership for Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP: Realizing LDC Graduation and Achieving SDGs.**"

## Distinguished guests,

In this important meeting, you will hear a presentation on the progress and challenges in implementing the NSEDP 2017 and the priorities for 2018, especially the progress in achieving the GDP growth, GNI in concrete and sustainable manner including the Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) and Human Asset Index (HAI) as they are LDC graduation criteria.

As you may know, in the fourth ordinary session of the Seventh National Assembly, which was successfully organized in the previous week, it was reported that the NSEDP 2017 as the second year of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP (2016-2020) has made progress in many areas such as GDP growth rate stood at 6.8%, average GDP per capita reached 2,472 US dollars, agriculture production increased by 2.7%, industry increased by 9.5% and services increased by 6.15%. Trade and investment continued growing constantly. Noticeably, the country could maintain political stability, the people were in great harmony and solidarity, and ethnic people's livelihood has been gradually upgraded.

Next, you will hear a presentation on summary of results and comments on the development in the Lao PDR from consultation meeting yesterday on 4 key topics: ❶ LDC Graduation & SDG Integration into the five-year plan; ❷ realizing quality private sector investment for development; ❸ investment in skills and labor force for human development; and ❹ enhancing south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation: "Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring."

In regards to these 4 topics, I would like to focus the discussion on following key issues in order to meet our meeting objectives:

1. In meeting the objective on LDC graduation and SDG integrating into socio-economic development plans of sectors and provinces, based on a report from sectors and provinces, there are a high risk and some challenges for the Lao PDR to graduate from LDC status by 2020 that require close attention, which concerning how to maintain sustainable and continuous development in post-LDC, especially how to ensure self-sufficient budget? In order to graduate from LDC status sustainably and effectively, we need to prioritize on following tasks:

- (1) To maintain macroeconomic stability in sustainable manner by shifting the economic structure from production in non-resource sector into quality commercial production and services, and diversify the products using innovative technology to increase productivity and create higher value in production to upswing to income stable.
- (2) To create new sources of revenue that are more stable, reform revenue collection and expenditure management with modern, rigorous, transparent and accountable system. Once the country graduates from LDC status, it is perceived that the development aid will gradually decline. As a result, the sources of revenue must be able to cover public expenditure and investment at some level.
- (3) To improve mechanism on coordination, cooperation and division of responsibilities between ministries and agencies concerned at both central and local levels in integrating SDG indicators into socio - economic development plans of sectors and provinces in each period along with the management and identification of SDG supporting projects in detail for actual implementation.

2. On realizing quality private sector investment for development, attention must be paid to the following issues:

- (1) Ministries, sectors and provinces must improve business environment and climate for both domestic and foreign private investment by improving the mechanism and legal instruments on one-stop service at central and local levels;

reduce the procedures and time required for approving business operations to be more simplified, transparent and fair; solve bottlenecks to facilitate and reduce the cost of doing business and promote both domestic and foreign private investment quantitatively and qualitatively.

- (2) Strengthen and upgrade management skills and competitiveness for small and medium enterprises in producing and providing quality goods and services, and effective business management and administration; promote the learning and utilization of modern technology and techniques to strengthen business competitiveness in the region and the world.
3. To focus on implementing the National Human Resource Development Strategy by reforming education, public health, and skill development according to the target set out in the National Socio-Economic Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals, special focuses should be:
- (1) To upgrade the quality of basic to higher level education, improve public health services both quantitatively and qualitatively with emphasis on grassroots that are poor and remotely located, increase income for the ethnic people in remote area to reduce the disparity between urban and rural areas development gradually.
  - (2) To find a way in accelerating development and upgrading of labor skills for high productivity while expanding labor market extensively to enhance competitiveness and availability of the labor force in diverse occupations and sectors in the national economy.
4. In increasing cooperation, the South - South and Triangular Cooperation should be enhanced as following:
- (1) To create awareness and understanding for sectors and provinces in terms of meaning, modalities and concept of the South - South and Triangular Cooperation, especially the mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and evaluation to develop such cooperation in effective manner.
  - (2) To expand partnership for effective development in the context of ASEAN, ASEAN Pluses, GMS, CLV and others in order to support the development new era on basis of mutual benefit.

#### **Distinguished guests,**

What I just mentioned was only some issues to bring into attention and I hope the RTIM 2017 will lead us to build, improve and implement supporting policies in consistent with and in effective manner towards the socio-economic development of Lao PDR.

Once again, as a chair of today's meeting, I urge all of you to discuss frankly with focus to reach meeting objectives as planned. Hope very much for continuous support from our friends, international organizations and development partners in implementing the action programmes / projects and strategies of the Government of the Lao PDR, so that we can achieve SDGs with great success.

Finally, may I wish the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, H.E Somdy Douangdy stay in good health, succeed in career and continuously provide effective supervision in social-economic development. May I also wish all the chairs and delegations good health and success in your duties as assigned. Most importantly, may I wish the RTIM this year the great success.

**Thanks**

## **Annex 10: Remarks of Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative**

- **Your Excellency, Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister of Lao PDR,**
- **Your Excellency Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment,**
- **Your Excellency Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasak Province,**
- **Dear Haoliang, Excellencies and Ambassadors,**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies & Gentlemen.**

Good morning to you all. Sabaidee.

On behalf of UNDP, Co-Chair to the 2017 Round Table Implementation Meeting, it is also my great honour to be able to welcome you here to Champasak.

We have already been richly rewarded for having made the journey, through the generous hospitality of His Excellency Dr. Bounthong Divixay, Governor of Champasak Province and his wonderful team.

Yesterday, we were able to take a closer look at a number of development projects taking place in the province. We were able to see the tangible contribution that local initiatives are making to the achievement of the LDC graduation and to the SDGs.

In addition, yesterday also saw this year's series of 'pre-Round Table consultation meetings', reach their conclusions. I am looking forward to hearing their recommendations in the course of the day.

This is also my fourth Round Table Meeting. So permit me to comment briefly, on what makes this forum worth the care and effort that all partners, especially the Government, invest in it. Firstly, the Round Table is not just a talking shop – to the contrary. Discussions at the Round Table meetings originate directly from the 10 Sector Working Groups. Or they have been generated from the specific, 'issue-based', pre-consultation meetings that are now organised as part of the annual Round Table process.

Secondly, in most instances, the dialogue that takes place at these meetings, leads Government and Development Partners to a more complete understanding of the priority development issues. We cannot, and should not, expect to agree on all matters that appear on the agenda of this forum.

Nevertheless, Round Table meetings do provide a 'space' for policy dialogue, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, which is an asset to everyone.

The third major benefit I see, is that of the emergence of a stronger and more diverse partnership, as His Excellency, Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Deputy Prime Minister mentioned in his own remarks.

This vision of the Government, of a broader partnership, was at the heart of the new Vientiane Declaration, endorsed at this forum two years ago. In evidence of that declaration alongside senior representation from government today, we have representatives from the private sector,

civil society, the national assembly, provincial authorities, as well as a wide representation of longstanding development partners from the region and globally.

Such a robust development partnership is needed to square up to meet the challenges and ambitions of the 2030 global development agenda.

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For the United Nations in Lao PDR, 2017 has been another busy and productive year. Support to the Government has been provided in terms of deepening the SDG integration process, including helping further embed SDG indicators and targets within the monitoring and evaluation framework of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP.

In this context, the UN, together with Government, recently published the report 'From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals: Laying the Base for 2030', to further contribute to the policy dialogue.

More broadly, in its first year of implementation of the Lao PDR UN Partnership Framework, the UN has been engaged in assisting capacity development, coordination support and policy formulation to areas as diverse as governance reform, climate change, rural development, health, education, food and nutrition security, and of course, the UXO sector – in support of achieving the Laos' specific SDG 18.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the Government on steps being taken to meet various international commitments and obligations based on open and participatory processes, which we witnessed during the recent visit by the UN Special Rapporteur.

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Looking ahead to 2018, this will include the mid-term review of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, the process of LDC graduation, and not least, presentation of the first National Voluntary Review on the SDGs.

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge a few partners, who make this Round Table Implementation Meeting a practical reality for all of us. Firstly, the Round Table Chair, His Excellency, Dr. Souphanh Keomixay, Minister of Planning and Investment, and His Excellency, Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice - Minister of the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and to their team.

Secondly, to all of the development partners, who have participated enthusiastically in the four thematic pre-consultation meetings, as well as those that joined us at preparatory meetings held in Hanoi and Bangkok.

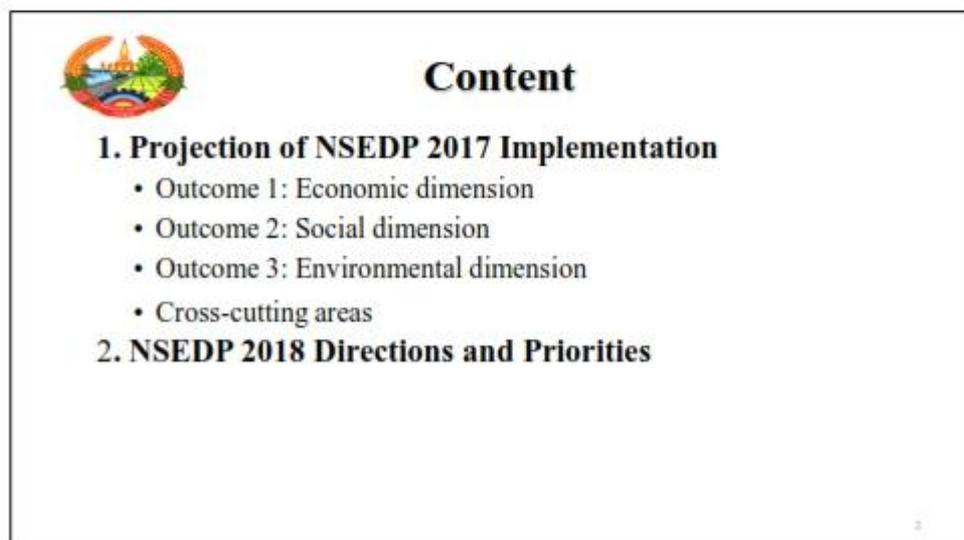
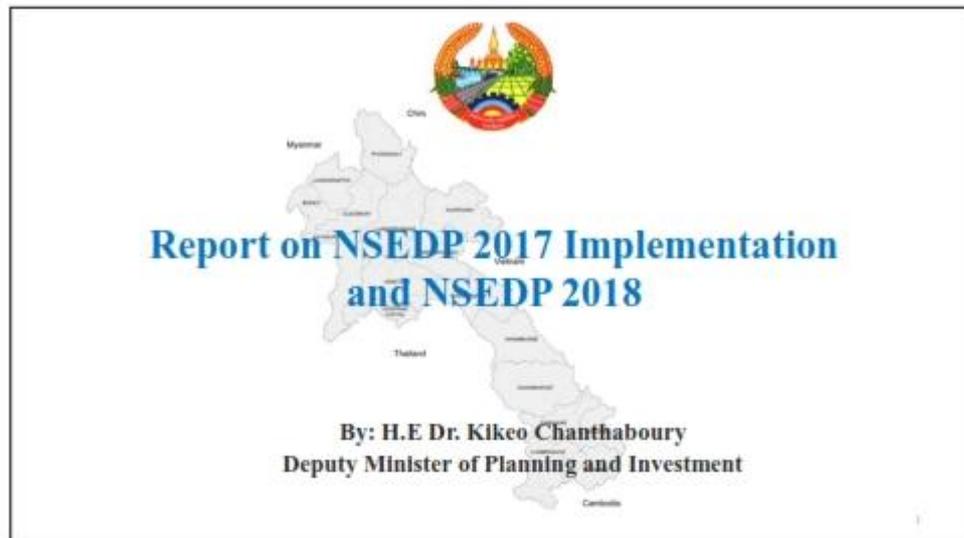
And, not least, to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg for their financial support to the Round Table Process.

I very much look forward to the consultations today and wish each one of you success, good health and happiness.

Thank you.

## Annex 11: PowerPoint Presentation of H.E. Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, Vice Minister of Planning and Investment

14/12/60



1



## Projection of NSED 2017 Implementation

3



## Overview

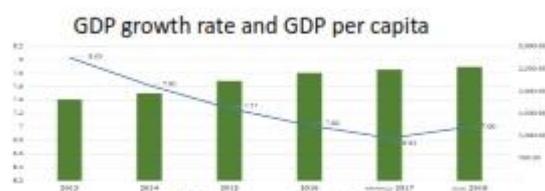
- Regional and global economic situation: slow growth and unstable.
  - ↳ Especially slow economic growth in USA, EU and China.
- ASEAN: Economy grows continuously in key trading partners (Thailand and Vietnam)
- Domestic Situation: Political stability, Lao economy grew continuously and substantially. Business sector and people's production continued to grow.

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## Outcome 1: Economic dimension

### Sustained, inclusive and firm economic growth



## Macroeconomics

### Economic growth:

- GDP growth: 6.83% (target 7%), constant price (2012)
- GDP per capita (LDC indices): 2,472 USD (target 2,341 USD)

Sectors	Growth		Structure	
	Actual	Plan	Actual	Plan
+ Agriculture	2.78%	3.1%	16.34%	18.8%
+ Industry	9.5%	8.9%	30.04%	37.2%
+ Services	6.15%	7.8%	42.08%	34.7%
+ Customs-tax on goods and imports	6.9%	5.0%	11.53%	9.3%



## Macroeconomics

Investment for development:	Actual	Plan
• Total investment	25,330.79 billion LAK (69,5% against target)	36,366 billion LAK
+ Government budget	1,780.97 billion LAK (54% against target)	2,800 billion LAK
+ ODA	419.3 million USD or 3,518.38 billion LAK (40.7% against target)	8,629 billion LAK
+ Private investment	1,970.06 million USD or 16,530.97 billion LAK (actual capital inflow) exceeded the target 10%	14,474 billion LAK
+ Bank credits	3,500.4 billion LAK (44.8% against target)	7,800 billion LAK
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Private investment promotion:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Law on Investment Promotion</li> <li>+ Promoting Public-Private Partnership (PPP)</li> <li>+ Lao Business Forum (LBF)</li> <li>+ Established SMEs Fund</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		



## Macroeconomics

State Budget	Actual	Plan
+ Revenues (6 months)	10,365 billion LAK	23,941 billion LAK
+ Expenditures (6 months)	12,615 billion LAK	32,402 billion LAK
+ Budget deficit (6 months)	2,250 billion LAK	< 8,461 billion LAK
Monetary policy and exchange rate	Actual	Plan
+ Inflation rate	1.45%	≤ 5%
+ Exchange rate: slightly fluctuated		
- LAK against USD (6 months)	0.66% depreciated	±5%
- LAK against THB (6 months)	5.45% depreciated	±5%
+ Foreign reserves	Covered import of 4.14 months	>5 months
+ Money supply M2 (6 months)	16.39%	< 20%



## Macroeconomics

Import-export	Actual	Plan
+ Export	2,378 million USD	4,459 million USD
+ Import	2,336 million USD	4,482 million USD
+ Trade balance	Surplus 42 million USD	Deficit 23 million USD
Labor	Actual	Plan
+ Labor skill development	12,805 persons	131,600 persons
+ Labor supply	69,352 persons	143,230 persons



## Production

	6 months	Year-end projection	2017 target
<b>Rice</b>		4.27 million tons (98,16%)	4.35 million tons
<b>Processing industry and handicraft</b>	4,463 billion LAK	9,217 billion LAK (exceeded 33% against target)	6,927 billion LAK
<b>Goods traffic value</b>	25,618 billion LAK	51,687 billion LAK (exceeded 4.5% against target)	49,420.75 billion LAK
<b>Electricity</b>	13,559 million kWh	29,052 million kWh	30,000 million kWh
<b>Minerals</b>	5,368.67 billion LAK	10,818,7 billion LAK	15,000 billion LAK
<b>Tourist arrivals</b>	2.03 million person-times, revenue 347 million USD	4,8 million person-times, revenue 843 million USD	5.4 million person-times, revenue 875 million USD



## Outcome 2: Social dimension

Human resources are developed; poverty in all ethnic groups is reduced, all ethnic groups and both genders have access to quality education and health services; the unique culture of the nation is protected and consolidated

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## Social sector

LDC indices (HAI)	Actual	2017 targets
- Gross enrolment rate at lower secondary	82.9%	85%
- Gross enrolment rate at upper secondary	51.4%	51%
- Literacy rate in population age 15 or above	92.45% (Census 2015)	
- Literacy rate in population age 15-24	84.7% (Census 2015)	
- Mortality rate of children under 5	1,160 persons (data per 1,000 live births not yet available)	

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## Social sector (cont.)

	Actual	2017 targets
<b>Rural development and poverty eradication:</b>		
+ Poor families	6,546 families	5,580 families
+ Poor villages reduction	36 villages, 20.22% against target	178 villages
+ Developed villages	81 villages, exceeded 3.8% against target	78 villages
<b>Health:</b>		
+ Maternal mortality rate	56 persons (data per100,000 live births is not yet available)	
+ Clean water usage in population	89.3%	87%
+ Sanitation facilities usage in households	70.3%	72%

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## Social sector

	Year-end projection	2017 targets
<b>Health (cont.):</b>		
+ Underweighting in children under 5	27%	22%
+ Stunting in children under 5	38%	34%
<b>Education:</b>		
+ Survival rate from primary Grade 1 to Grade 5	81.1%	82%

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### **Outcome 3: Environmental dimension**

**Natural resources and the environment are effectively protected and utilized according to sustainable principles; there is readiness to cope with natural disasters and the drafting of green growth strategy is initiated**

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### **Natural Resources and Environment**

- Green growth strategy:
  - National Steering Committee – chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister
  - Study visit in the Republic of Korea in September 2017
  - Initial Draft Green Growth Strategy
- PM's Order 15/PM on Halt Logging
- Allocation and management on production forest in a sustainable manner in 51 areas, 3.1 million hectares across the country, which divided into 112 management areas and 330 sub-management areas
- Replantation area: 3,640 ha, 33% against the target (11,000 ha),
- Issued 47,450 land titles, 55.8% against the target (target 85,000 land titles)

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## **Natural Resources and Environment**

- Disaster risk management: National Disaster Relief Fund + Disaster Relief Fund
- Improved 18 weather forecast stations and 8 hydrology stations
- Completed data processing for mapping areas prone to disaster risk and climate change vulnerable areas

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## **Cross-Cutting Areas**

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## Cross-Cutting Areas

- Strengthened the public governance at both central and local levels:
  - Developed and improved a number of legal instruments
  - Coordination between the government and the National Assembly was tightened
  - Coordination between the public audit committee and the public inspection committee was strengthened
- Actively solved the social drawback including issues on corruption, illicit drugs and so on.

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## Cross-Cutting Areas

- Conducted research and development, transferred and adopted science and technology in the areas where applicable, support creative and modern technology in the production
- Provided vocational trainings to a poor and deprived group of women and youth
- Good example of DP support (UNFPA – Noi)

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## Cross-Cutting Areas

- Conducted awareness raising activities related to violence against women and children
- Advertised youth and adolescent activities through different means of communication such as Sinxay New Generation Radio, Lao Youth Newspaper, and magazines
- Provided training on local administration and one-stop services to provincial staff that working in home affairs sector (in Oudomxay, Houaphanh, Xiangkhouang, Luang Prabang and Xayaboury)

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## Challenges and Pending Issues

- Vulnerable macroeconomics, state budget shortage, high budget deficit to GDP ratio, exchange rate fluctuation, low effectiveness in applying fiscal and monetary policies.
- Import-export management, and goods and prices control (consumer products) was not strong and effective enough
- Sectoral and provincial production promotion was still weak, limited number and low quality of pilot projects
- Many issues related to business facilitation need to be addressed to promote quality investment
- SMEs access to finance was still limited
- Expanding education and health services into the remote areas remained a challenge
- Many issues related to disaster impacts need to be solved through regional and international cooperation

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## **Directions and Priorities of the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2018**

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## **Special Features of NSEDP 2018**

- 1) Preparation for the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP Mid-Term Review and further integration on green growth development into the End-of-Term Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP
- 2) Preparation for LDC review (GNI, HAI, EVI)
- 3) Agenda 2030 (SDGs) implementation
- 4) Organization of Visit Laos Year 2018

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### Directions and Tasks of NSED 2018

1. To continue maintaining political stability, social peace and order
2. To maintain macro stability with robust and sustainable growth
3. To improve education and health services both quantitatively and qualitatively, develop labor skills and socio-culture.
4. To organize Visit Laos Year 2018 as one of important events at national level in order to stimulate the economic growth
5. To develop rural areas and eradicate poverty linking with Sam-Sang directive implementation

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### Directions and Tasks of NSED 2018

6. To promote commercial production and exports by actively applying promotion policies on domestic and foreign investment, pay attention on promoting SMEs
7. To improve the rule of law to be more effective in all sectors and provinces
8. To improve organization by lifting up effectiveness on public management and administration at both central and local levels to be more precise, transparent and just
9. To protect the environment and efficiently utilize nature resources for the sustainability
10. To consistently implement international cooperation policies and actively expand the regional and international cooperation

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## Main Targets of the NSED 2018

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## Macro targets

<b>Economics</b>	<b>Target</b>	
GDP growth rate	7%	
GDP Value	149,471 billion LAK	
GDP per capita	2,536 USD (GNI: 2,005 USD)	
Agriculture	Increase by 2,8%	Cover 15.73% of GDP
Industry	Increase by 9,1%	Cover 30.79% of GDP
Services	Increase by 6,4%	Cover 41.83% of GDP
Customs-taxation on goods and imports	Increase by 9.0%	Cover 11.65% of GDP

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## Macro targets

Investment for development	Targets	% of total investment	% of GDP
• Total investment	42,145 billion LAK		28.20 %
+ Government budget	4,600 billion LAK	10.91%	3.07%
- Public investment	2,800 billion LAK		
- Others	1,800 billion LAK		
+ Official Development Assistance (ODA)	8,052 billion LAK	19.11%	5.38%
+ Domestic and foreign private investment	20,730 billion LAK	49.18%	13.86%
+ Monetary system	8,763 billion LAK	20.80%	5.86%



## Macro targets

Budget	Targets
• Revenues	25,452 billion LAK
• Domestic revenue	22,700 billion LAK
• Expenditures	≤ 32,809 billion LAK
• Budget deficit	≤ 7,357 billion LAK 4.92% of GDP

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## Macro targets

Monetary policy and exchange rate	Targets
• Inflation rate	$\leq 5\%$
• Foreign reserves can cover imports of more than 5 months	
• Money supply (M2)	$\leq 25\%$
Import-Export	Targets
• Export	Approximately 5,015 million USD
• Import	Approximately 4,978 million USD
• Trade surplus	Approximately 37 million USD



## Macro targets

Labor balance	Targets
• Agriculture sector	To reduce from 64.5% to 64.3%
• Industry and construction sector	To increase from 11.8% to 12%
• Service sector	23.7%



## Production

	Targets
Rice	4.2 million tons
Processing industry and handicraft	9,614.90 billion LAK.
Goods traffic value	57,386 billion LAK.
Minerals	10,974 billion LAK
Electricity	31,701 million kWh
Tourist arrivals	5.2 million person-times
Revenue from tourism	900 million USD

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## Socio-culture

Rural development and poverty eradication	Targets
+ Poor families	4,833 families
+ Poor village reduction	220 villages
<b>Education:</b>	
+ Survival rate to primary Grade 5	84%
+ Gross enrolment rate at lower secondary level (LDC indices)	83.5%
+ Gross enrolment rate at upper secondary level (LDC indices)	54.3%

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## Socio-culture

	Targets
Mortality rate of children under 1	38/1000 live births (SDG2030: 21/1000 live births)
Underweighting in children under 5	21%
Stunting in children under 5	33.2%
Maternal mortality rate	179/100,000 live births (SDG 2030: 70/100,000)
Percentage of clean water usage	88% (SDG: >95%)
Percentage o sanitation facility usage	73% (SDG 2030: >90%)

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## Natural Resources and Environment

- To continue implementing PM's Order 15/PM on enhancement of forest management, inspection, movement and businesses
- To reforestation in 170,000 hectares of area nationwide focusing on the watershed area, water reservoir, degraded area of the 3 forest types
- To issue 80,214 land titles and 100,000 land registration
- To continue improving the National Master Plan on Land Allocation and develop provincial land allocation plans
- To continue developing the climate change monitoring system, strengthen capacity on the climate change adaptation and mitigation focusing on the GHG reduction

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## Budget Investment Priorities

Domestic investment 2,800 billion LAK	
1. Project debt repayment	40%
2. On-going projects	35%
3. New and co-finance projects	25%

**To prioritize on people's poverty eradication, human resource development, small sized infrastructure development, science and technology research and application**

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## Improvement on Private Investment Climate

- Debt repayment for infrastructural construction projects
- Banking sector and business sector integration
- Business facilitation such as one-stop services
- SME access to finance and development
- Labor skill development to support the FDI

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## Improvement on Public Finance

- To further modernize revenue collection with new systems
- To develop data collection and database for daily information compilation
- To establish Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
- To conduct monitoring and evaluation on PIPs
- To enhance planning and financial disciplines

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## Some cross-cutting tasks and priorities

- Poverty eradication:
  - To focus on public services access (education and health services in remote areas)
  - To solve malnutrition issues
  - To solve UXO issues
  - To solve social drawback issues
  - To build readiness for coping with natural disasters – protecting the environment

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### Implementing policies and measures

- Ensure social peace and order (address social drawback)
- Closely monitor and manage macroeconomic situation: inflation rate, exchange rate, money supply M2 to stay at the target level.
- Monitor, maintain and tight control on foreign exchange rate flexibility within defined range
- Modernize budget revenue collection, customs-taxation to consolidate the revenue in a more accurate and adequate manner by implementing savings policies as defined in PM's Order No. 09/PM
- Improve investment climate by addressing bottleneck that impeding the business operation

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### Implementing policies and measures

- Apply SME promotion policies to increase their capacity and competitiveness
- Focus on inclusive and comprehensive rural development to improve people's livelihood and eradicate the poverty
- Strictly apply planning and financial disciplines and related rules
- Implement work and action plans including activities related to Visit Laos Year 2018 along with ensuring social peace and safety, offering welcome services and good host

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## Annex 12: Outcome Summary of panel discussion on LDC Graduation and SDG Integration

### Outcome Summary

2017 RTIM Panel Discussion on SDG Integration and LDC graduation

By H.E Mr. Sengphet Houngboungnuang  
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs  
23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, Champasak Province

(15 minutes maximum)

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It is an honor on behalf of Ministry of Foreign Affairs as well as line ministries, provincial representatives, and various development partners to deliver a summary of key outcomes from the panel discussion on SDG integration and LDC graduation on 22 November. This statement takes into consideration the consultations that took place throughout the year, including the dedicated pre-consultations on 10 November.

Over the past two decades, significant progress across sectors has been achieved related to the Millennium Development Goals and the criteria for graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status. Looking forward, the Government together with development partners and other stakeholders will closely work together to ensure the achievement of the goals and objectives of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) for 2016-2020, including LDC graduation and SDG achievement. At the same time, the development achieved needs to be sustained and made more robust, using LDC graduation and SDG achievement as catalyst for further progress.

To help Lao PDR in these important endeavours, we have identified the following key policy issues that require further attention:

- 1. Linkage between SDGs and LDC graduation criteria.** There is a close inter-linkage between the SDG indicators and the LDC graduation criteria, which both have the ultimate aim to improve people's lives and well-being. Therefore, these two goals will not be seen in isolation and efforts will ensure that they are complementing each other over the course of implementation of 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. In particular, LDC graduation is not a goal in itself, but an important milestone in the sustainable development of Lao PDR. The aim should be sustainable socio-economic development across the Agenda 2030.
- 2. Reinforcing all LDC criteria.** While Lao PDR did not reach the LDC graduation thresholds during the 2015 review, we are optimistic the country will become pre-eligible for LDC graduation during the 2018 review. However, pre-eligibility will not resolve the vulnerabilities that made Lao PDR an LDC. Therefore, it is important for the country to continue addressing the LDC graduation criteria in order for its vulnerabilities to be reduced, its development to be sustainable and graduation to occur smoothly. The 5<sup>th</sup> National Human Development Report provides important policy recommendations in this regard.

3. **Human Asset Index (HAI) and Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI).** A maximum increase in HAI would occur if the incidence of undernourishment in the population were to be reduced. This is followed by an increase in literacy, an increase in secondary school enrolment, and a reduction of under-5 mortality. An additional component of the HAI expected to be added in 2018 is maternal mortality. Addressing undernourishment however is the one key component that needs to be addressed to reach the HAI graduation threshold. For economic vulnerability index, immediate attention needs to be given to economic diversification and reducing the exposure of the population to natural disasters.
4. **Implication of graduation, challenges and transition.** The quality of development remains of high importance, to ensure smooth graduation from LDC status. Preparing for the transition is a long-term effort that requires great attention. Learning the lessons from past graduates, enhancing regional cooperation will be crucial for this endeavour. Moreover, priorities for consideration include the following:
  - First, focus needs to be put on the impact graduation will have on external financing, trade preferences, and special and differential treatment.
  - Second, attention should be put on persistent commodity dependence, the risk of reversion of progress achieved and the middle-income trap.
  - Third, the impact of graduation on external debt, Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment needs to be carefully assessed, including the impact on poverty and inequality.
5. **Economic diversification.** With 70 percent of the economic output of Lao PDR currently originating from the natural resource sector, which creates limited employment, structural economic transformation will be required for smooth LDC graduation. Systematic efforts are needed to promote diversification and to enhance the competitiveness of domestic industries through systematic productivity improvements, particularly agricultural productivity. Improving human assets and promoting technical skills that are linked to the requirements of the labour market will be important in this regard.
6. **Preparation of the 2018 Voluntary National Review on SDGs.** Lao PDR has formally registered with the United Nations for presenting its Voluntary National Review during the 2018 High-Level Political Forum. The preparation of the Review will be government-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants. The preparation process will provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of national and international stakeholders at all levels. The work plan and an outline of the 2018 SDG Voluntary National Review has been shared with partners during the pre-consultation on SDG integration and LDC graduation on 10 November 2017.
7. **Data and statistics.** High quality disaggregated data is essential to ensure equitable progress against goals and targets. A broad set of SDG indicators is required, given the inter-linkages and integrated nature of the SDGs. Realizing our ambitions across the full extent of the Agenda will profoundly improve the lives of all men and women. Currently, over 200 SDG indicators are identified, of which 92 indicators are prioritized in the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP's Monitoring and Evaluation framework. The remaining indicators will be monitored throughout the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Special attention will be put on the standardization of national indicators and data collection to ensure proper assessment of

results and outcomes - rather than different methodologies and processes. While avoiding unrealistic data, additional sources of data need to be taken into consideration, using new technologies where possible. The Review “From Millennium Development Goals to Sustainable Development Goals: Laying the Base for 2030” provides useful data and statistics, and contributes to the technical basis of the Voluntary National Review. In addition, there is a need for ongoing capacity development of the national statistics system, and the identification of key research activities to act on the identified priorities.

8. **Integrated nature of the 2030 agenda.** The 2030 Agenda is an integrated one. Its implementation will require integrated strategies to address the intertwined challenges of poverty eradication, inclusive and rapid economic growth, environmental sustainability and structural vulnerability in a coherent manner. Broad coalitions are therefore required to achieve the SDGs, including a whole-of-Government approach – across sectors and all levels of Government, and increased coordination also among the development partners to enhance efficiencies, improve division of labour and avoid duplications. The active engagement of all partners, including Government, development partners, civil society, private sector and academia in development will continue to be crucial and should be supported.
9. **Horizontal and Vertical Integration** - Lao PDR was commended for its efforts to localize the SDGs and integrating them into the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. The SDGs and their targets will continue to be integrated into sectoral and local strategies to guide the effective implementation, monitoring and reporting on SDGs at all levels.
10. **Equality.** The Agenda 2030 underlines that no one should be left behind. There is the need to ensure that the benefits of the rapid economic growth are evenly distributed and translated into inclusive and sustainable human development. Widening development gaps between rich and poor, urban and rural areas of the country, and ethnic groups need to be addressed. The development of infrastructure in rural areas is essential for improving livelihoods and creating equal access to public and private services. Particular importance should be attributed to SDG-5 on gender equality, which is one of the cross-cutting priorities of the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP. Disaggregating data by sex will allow the identification of priority areas. While there has been significant progress on gender equality at central level, lead positions and local level positions remain dominated by men.
11. **SDG-18.** Lao PDR was the first country worldwide to adopt an 18<sup>th</sup> national SDG, on removing unexploded ordnance (UXO), which is a significant obstacle to national development. The presence of unexploded ordnance in the country continues to pose serious challenges, destroying lives and limiting agricultural productivity.
12. **Nutrition** remains an ongoing challenge related to the SDGs and LDC graduation, with undernourishment the single largest obstacle to LDC graduation. While good progress has been achieved, and malnutrition and underweight have been reduced, the incidence remains high when compared to the other countries in the region. Inter-sectoral partnerships will be required to continue progress in this area, including through, capacity development and behavioural change communication, improvement of services, and enhancing the availability of nutritious foods.
13. **Financing the SDGs and LDC graduation.** The 2030 Agenda and LDC graduation will require different types of resources. Building on the 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, further discussion is

required on how the SDGs can be prioritized and on where it makes sense to focus efforts and resources. A robust private sector will create a strong foundation for greater investment. In this context, attention needs to be shifted to domestic resource mobilization, including through tax collection. This is crucial in terms of funding national development and addressing public debt. Tax reforms, investments in modern tools for tax collections, and improving the efficiency of public financial management will ensure everyone benefits from Lao PDR's economic development, also outside the capital. Domestic resource mobilization is also important in view of the potential decline in ODA expected following LDC graduation.

- 14. Advocacy and awareness-raising.** Public awareness raising and communications for SDG are important aspects of SDG implementation to gain support and promote partnerships which are essential for achieving the SDGs. Therefore, it is important to promote common awareness of the Agenda 2030 and the national priorities not only at national level but also at local level.
- 15. South-South Cooperation.** Participants highlighted the continued importance of South-South cooperation. For instance, Cuba underlined the potential for collaboration in the areas of health, education and agriculture. Indonesia stressed the importance of a national marketing strategy to achieve the SDGs and LDC graduation, and for all public employees to learn how to market their country.

## **Annex 13: Outcome Summary of 2017 RTIM Panel Discussion on Realising Quality Private Sector Investment for Development**

### **Outcome Summary**

**2017 RTIM Panel Discussion on Realising Quality Private Sector Investment for Development**

**By H.E Dr. Khamlien Pholsena  
Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment  
23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, Champasak Province**

**(15 minutes maximum)**

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- Dear chairs,
  - Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere thanks for giving me the opportunity to provide my remarks today. Allow me to share with you the results of the Panel Discussion on Realizing quality sector investment for development.

This year's Round Table Implementation Meeting is very meaningful as it is a preparation for the third year of the Implementation of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020). It is essential that we intensify our collective effort in achieving the outcomes and targets of this Five-year plan. The private sector plays a key role in this endeavor, as it represents 55% of the total investment.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Quality investment is an investment that does not solely rely on natural resources, but makes use of intellect, skilled labor, modern technologies while being environmental friendly, uses clean energy and creates employment as well as income for the Lao People across the country in an aim to gradually reduce poverty and develop human resources, ensuring an engaging development.

In 2015, the Lao PDR has committed itself to the preservation of the environment by signing the Paris Climate Change Agreement along with 179 other countries. As of 07 September 2017, the Lao PDR is the country in ASEAN to have ratified the Agreement. Furthermore, the Lao PDR have focused its effort in developing clean and universally accessible energy, which is one of the 18 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Over the past year, the Government of the Lao PDR has signed Memorandums of Understanding with companies from China and the United States to develop solar energy in the provinces of Sekong, Savannakhet, Borikhamxay and Attapeu with the projects expected to be implemented the following year.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The private has contributed to inclusive growth through the creation of employment for the Lao People in an effort to gradually reduce poverty. Today, the Lao PDR has established 12 Special Economic Zones, most notably Savan-Seno SEZ in Savannakhet Province, Vita Park, Saysettha

Development Zone in Vientiane Capital, Pakse-Japan SMEs, etc. In 2017, the SEZ created over 14,000 jobs (for over 7,500 Lao labor force) and generated a total export valued at 780 million US Dollars with a tendency to increase and directly contribute the poverty reduction in the area. In the near future, the Ministry of Planning and Investment will submit draft Decree on Special Economic Zones for endorsement by the Government to further increase the administrative rigorousness, speed and transparency, thereby creating trust in investor.

In terms of human resource development and labour skill, it has been recognized that the skill of Lao labour remains limited, the Lao Government is addressing this issue, with the contribution of Foreign Direct Investment. In addition, the Government has focused on developing labour skill through domestic resources mobilization and ODA. As of today, there are 6 Government institutions for Skill Development and 147 private institutions for Skills Development. In the first half of 2017, we been able to develop skills for 13,000 individuals and contributed more than 70,000 labour force into the domestic and international markets. The Government must also contribute 19% of the Government budget into the Education sector.

Lao Labour is not only limited in skills, but also in discipline and patience. It had been observed that Foreign support projects have included training of these aspects, particular institutions in Vientiane Capital.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Small and Medium Enterprises have been able to create employment, particularly in women. The Government had issue the Law on SME Promotion in 2011 to administrate and promotion 200,000 SMEs across the country and the Government has emphasized other aspects of SMEs, including the drafting of SMEs Development Plan for 2016-2020 endorsed by the Prime Minister of the Lao PDR as well as the creation of SMEs Funds to promote, strengthen and provide opportunities for SMEs. The SME Funds is a combined support by the Government and the World Bank valued at 21 million US Dollars. SO far, the Funds have financed over 100 businesses. In order to further strengthen the SME sector, the Government plans to revised the Law on SME Promotion as well as develop the SME Funds into a Financial Institution to ensure effective and transparent administration.

Realizing the importance of private investment in achieving targets of the abovementioned Five-year plan, the Government has also made efforts in improving the Business Environment. Based on the Ease of Doing Business Ranking by the World Bank, the Lao PDR is currently placed 141<sup>th</sup> out of 190 countries worldwide and the Lao PDR has intensified its efforts to improve its ranking. The Ministry of Planning and Investment has been mandated by the Government in coordinating with concerned line ministries including the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, the Bank of Lao PDR, etc to improve performance in different indicators such as the index of starting business, the index of obtaining approval for construction, index on access to electricity installation, index on asset registration, index on small scale investors protection, index on taxes, index on foreign trade, index on Contract implementation and index on Bankruptcy.

To ensure ease, speed and transparency of investment, the Government has established Committees for Investment Administration and Promotion at central and provincial levels based on the Investment Promotion Law of 2016 as endorsed by the National Assembly on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2016. The committees have been tasked with the approval of new investment as well as addressing issues pertaining to existing ones. The Government considers these issues the private sector a part of the Government issues.

In addition, the successes of the Government's economic administration are closely linked to the successes of the Private sector.

I have had the opportunity to work with H.E Mme Claudine LEDOUX, Ambassador of France to the Lao PDR as well as H.E Mr. Takeshi HIKIHARA, Ambassador of Japan to the Lao PDR and businesses from Japan and other countries to consult and solve issues encountered in the Lao PDR. I hope to have the opportunity to do so again in the future.

H.E Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of the Lao PDR has stated in the National Assembly that the Government will implement the 3 Open policies to promote investment:

- Open Doors,
- Open Barriers,
- Open Minds.

The Government has open itself to the investor and hopes that investor will do the same. Investor should emphasize on building mutually beneficial relationships with the Government. Even during economic stability and depression/crisis or difficult business environment, the private sector is encouraged to fulfil its commitment and emphasize following aspects:

- Increase employment of Lao Labour force,
- Use of modern and new equipment,
- Provide opportunity for less skilled labour compared to foreign labour force,
- Contribute to society through Corporate Social Responsibilities.

The abovementioned aspect is proof that Government and Private sector are closely linked interdependent. We are all on the same boat and must therefore work together to achieve quality investment and contribute to sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During the Panel Discussion on Realizing quality sector investment for development held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2017, the participants have consulted and come to an agreement on following issues:

- The important role of the Private sector in the policymaking process of the Government and the linkage between the Lao Business Forum and the Round Table Implementation Meeting;
- The Promotion of transparency and clarity of relevant laws and regulation to ensure a level playing field in terms of investment at all levels (central and subnational);
- Importance of Tax Administration reforms to ensure efficient business environment;
- The importance of macroeconomic stability and administration of public debt to build trust from investors.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This concludes my remarks, I would like to wish success to this Round Table Implementation Meeting as well as success to all of you in your endeavours. - Thank you.

# **Annex 14: Outcome Summary of Panel Discussion on Investment in Skills and Labour Force for Human Development**

## **Outcome Summary**

### **2017 RTIM Panel Discussion on Investment in Skills and Labour Force for Human Development**

**By H.E. Asso. Prof. Dr. Khamphay Sisavanh  
Deputy Minister of Education and Sports  
23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, Champasak Province**

**(15 minutes maximum)**

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Dear chair, co-chair, Excellencies  
Distinguished participants

I am very pleased to be able to report on the outcomes of the panel discussion on Investment in Skills for Human Development, based on our very productive session yesterday and the pre-consultation meeting held in Vientiane Capital on 13 October, 2017.

The objective of the discussions on this theme was to identify recommendations for action to ensure that the current and future labour market demands of the nation will be met by a trained, skilled and qualified workforce.

Overall, we recognised that Laos has made good progress in policy dialogue on human resource development by beginning to view the challenges in a holistic way. We also recognized that Laos has a significant youth demographic that is a key strength in Laos's labour force. However, improvements are needed to current policies and practices to ensure that the labour force is skilled, trained and employed, and that development plans and programs address the reality of the labour market situation in the Lao PDR.

1. The first and most fundamental area of importance is to continue the strong focus of the Lao Government and Development Partners on improving the basic literacy, numeracy and health of Laos's children – factors which are the basic foundation of job readiness and a work force that can engage in high value industries and decent work.

We also need to ensure that this foundation is not wasted by increasing the survival rate of primary education and the enrolment rate of secondary education. The Lao Government and Development Partners recommend that additional attention be paid to improving the rate of enrolment in secondary school, as the critical path to skilled labour development. Similarly, increased investment from Development Partners in non-formal education would be an effective and cost efficient way to improve livelihoods and income generation, particularly for Laos's disadvantaged groups.

2. Another crucial area identified for improvement is in Labour Market Information Collection and Analysis.

The Government and Development Partners agreed on the need to strengthen the development of a national Labour Market Information System (LMIS) based on meeting the needs of the public and private sectors.

For Laos to achieve its socio-economic development goals in regards to skills and labour force, the LMIS needs to provide accurate, high quality and timely information to meet the planning and investment cycles of Government agencies, the needs of the education and training system and be responsive to private industry.

We acknowledged that there is already a substantial amount of labour market data available, but there is a gap in coordination, collection, analysis and use of this data.

We recommend that the National Commission for Human Resource Development agree on appropriate governance arrangements for the LMIS, to ensure that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare is able to work with other Government agencies, Development Partners and the private sector to improve the process of data collection, the analysis of information and the dissemination of information to stakeholders on a regular and timely basis. This cannot happen without the Government allocating appropriate technical expertise, such as from the National Statistics Bureau, improving coordination with clear roles and responsibilities, and systematic, complementary support from development partners.

We acknowledged that an effective LMIS must also be integrated into a process of adapting of the supply Education, Training and Skills Development to labour market demand.

3. The National Commission for Human Resource Development is responsible for ensuring that education and training policies and programs, including higher education, overseas scholarships, TVET, other post-secondary schooling and industry based training are directed towards national human resource development priorities and the demands of the labour market in the Lao PDR.

It was agreed that the Commission will undertake workforce development planning for each industry/sector, in consultation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Planning and Investment and representatives from the private sector, and with the support of technical expertise from development partners.

The Ministry of Home Affairs will lead the development of a public sector workforce development plan covering all relevant Ministries and agencies.

However, the coordination mechanisms for implementing these plans need to be reinforced.

4. The Government and Development Partners agreed on the need to increase support to the Secretariat of the National Council for Training and Skills Development, including clearer roles and responsibilities, qualified staff, a governance plan, and stronger collaboration with the private sector, Government, civil society and trade unions to adapt training and skills development to priority needs.

It was recommended that the National Council for Training and Skills Development, in cooperation with the private sector and with training providers, lead the development of occupational standards and skills competencies for TVET and industry based training conducted in the Lao PDR, ensuring as far as possible that these skills and competencies meet industry and ASEAN requirements.

5. It was also agreed that the Quality Assurance Centre of the Ministry of Education and Sports needs to develop the capacity to ensure that all Government and non- Government education and training providers are duly authorised and certified to award qualifications based on the National Qualifications Framework for all levels of education.

6. The consultations also recommended that the Government establish an English Language Training Technical Working Group to develop a Language Training Strategy for the public sector, taking into account existing and planned training programs, the level and nature of expected demand, identifying priority areas that require English and setting selection criteria for agencies and participants.

7. Finally, it was agreed that Government, Development Partners and the private sector shall work together to ensure that education and skills development in the Lao PDR is sustainably financed through a national training fund

8. The final key area of improvement identified was in Employment Information and Services.

A key challenge we acknowledged was the difficulty of incentivising students to progress to vocational education – a problem that can only be solved through cultural change and informed career guidance on labour market opportunities. It was agreed that the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Sports shall ensure the effective dissemination of information on labour market conditions, changing employment demand and education and training opportunities to the people of the Lao PDR, especially to school leavers and those entering the workforce.

9. It was recommended that the Lao Government and Development Partners increase focus on methods to ensure Laos's disadvantaged groups, including people in rural and remote areas and people with a disability, are able to access training opportunities. Increased attention must also be paid to protecting vulnerable groups, such as young women migrating for work.

I would like to finish by thanking all of the panellists, presenters and participants who contributed to the discussions on this focus area, and helped to make these meetings a success.

Thank you.

# **Annex 15: Outcome Summary of Panel Discussion on Enhancing South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation: “Institutional Arrangement for Effective Development and Monitoring”**

## **Outcome Summary**

**2017 RTIM Panel Discussion on Further Enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation: “Institutional Arrangements and Monitoring”**

**By Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury  
Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment  
23<sup>rd</sup> November 2017, Champasak Province**

**(15 minutes maximum)**

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- Distinguished guests and colleagues; Ladies and gentlemen:

It is an honor on behalf of the Ministry of Planning and Investment as well as line ministries, provincial representatives, and various development partners to deliver a summary of key outcomes from the panel discussion on Further Enhancing South-South and Triangular Cooperation on 22<sup>nd</sup> November. This statement takes into consideration the consultations that took place throughout the year, including the dedicated pre-consultations on 7 November.

The Government, together with development partners and other stakeholders, has realized the important contribution of south-south and triangular cooperation to the achievement of 8<sup>th</sup> NSEDP, including the LDC graduation and SDG achievement. As highlighted in the Vientiane Declaration on Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, countries engaged in South-South Cooperation both provide and receive resources, expertise and technology. This complements traditional forms of development cooperation, rather than replacing them.

During the fruitful consultation yesterday, participants have highlighted that knowledge sharing and mutual learning will be strengthened by:

1. Deepening the understanding of the nature and modalities of South-South cooperation that are guided by the principles of respect for national sovereignty, national ownership and independence, equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs and mutual benefit, and the ways and means to enhance and accelerate its development impact;
2. Developing and scaling up of triangular cooperation initiatives, both at strategic, policy and project level;
3. Encouraging the development of networks for knowledge exchange, peer learning and coordination among South-South cooperation actors as a means of facilitating access to important knowledge pools;
4. Enhancing the collective knowledge concerning the possible arrangements for a facilitation mechanism to promote the development, transfer on voluntary and mutually agreed terms, and dissemination of clean and environmentally sound technologies that can be utilized to the advantage of Lao PDR; and
5. Better integrating south-south cooperation partners into coordination structures such as the Round Table Process and its Sector Working Groups.

In order to further enhance South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the following key points have been highlighted:

1. **South-South and Triangular Cooperation provides an important contribution** to the existing development cooperation for the achievement of the national development goals including the Sustainable Development Goals and LDC graduation. The focus should lie on capacity development, technical assistance and increase efforts to learn from each others.
2. There is no one-size-fits-all approach. **A comprehensive national approach to South-South and Triangular Cooperation**, including a clear process and content, is crucial. This should be guided and supported by a comprehensive national roadmap, a strong institutional setup and clear arrangements. It is also important to ensure all partners understand the core concepts and modalities, particularly on division of labour with full participation and engagement of concerned partners and monitoring mechanism is established.
3. **National ownership** is key for enhancing the effectiveness of South-South and Triangular Cooperation programmes and initiatives. Lao PDR will need to ensure alignment to national systems and development priorities. South-South and Triangular Cooperation has to be demand-driven.
4. **Horizontality and solidarity.** South-South and Triangular Cooperation requires that countries collaborate with each other as equal partners. This means that, irrespective of their different levels of development, collaboration is established voluntarily without any party linking its participation to the setting of conditions. It is important the benefits are distributed equitably among partners.
5. **Capacity development, learning and sustainability.** Engaging in South-South and Triangular Cooperation required enhanced capacities to help establish supply and demand, improve modalities of cooperation, and better seize opportunities for knowledge and technology transfer. Where possible, local systems, expertise and resources should be used, to ensure sustainability.
6. **Transparency, accountability and information management.** This will prevent overlaps, facilitate greater complementary and reduce transaction costs. Information-sharing thus needs to be improved to ensure better quality and results.
7. **Inclusive partnerships.** These should be engaged in the Round Table Process and Sector Working Groups to enhance effectiveness of development cooperation and in line with Vientiane Declaration.
8. **South-South Cooperation in the Global Arena.** To further enhance South-South and Triangular Cooperation, it is important that country-level action is strategically linked to regional and global initiatives, including in particular the engagement in regional and international platforms for experience-sharing, for example in the ASEAN context.

**Potential next steps that will require technical and financial resources, to strengthen the foundation for South-South and Triangular Cooperation include the following:**

1. Strengthen existing **institutional arrangements**, looking for instance into terms of reference of, and division of labour between, key institutions.
2. Strengthening **capacity building for effective implementing mechanism**, particularly where guideline, instruction, ToR of involved partners shall be defined.
3. Enhance **coordination mechanism**, such as sharing of work task and information, identify opportunities and challenges to ensure effective result of cooperation between South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
4. Identify the urgent need for **capacity building** on South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation.
5. **Participate in global event** on South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation to learn for the best practice from others, including international organisation through knowledge exchange, peer learning and short-term & long-term experts.
6. **Promote lesson learnt, exchange and peer learning** from North-South and South-South partners.
7. With strong ownership, projects and programmes for South-South cooperation and Triangular cooperation should be developed and identified.

## Annex 16: List of Government and Development Partner Participants

### List of Government Participants

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