

2014 Round Table Implementation Meeting

Provincial Consultation

“Provincial perspectives on the multisectoral (convergent) approaches to address Food and Nutrition Security and the implications for the off-track MDGs”

15th-17th September 2014, Saravane Province

DRAFT CONCEPT NOTE (Version as of 23rd August)

This concept note is prepared to define the rationale for and scope of the upcoming provincial consultation, which will take place in Saravane province in September 2014. The document outlines general background highlighting theme, focus, objectives and programme of the consultation. It also indicates how the outputs of the meeting will contribute to the discussions during the Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) in November 2014.

I. Background of the Provincial Consultation

The Round Table Process presents a unique platform to promote collaboration, coordination and mutual understanding between the Government of Lao PDR and Development Partners (DPs) by stimulating substantive dialogue on the country's development agenda, while strengthening development effectiveness. The provincial consultation is a key milestone leading up to the annual RTIM. With support from UNDP, the Lao PDR has participated in the Round Table Process since 1983. Prior to the policy dialogue held in the capital, Vientiane during the RTM/RTIM, a provincial consultation meeting has been held since 2008.

The primary objective of the provincial consultation has been to provide an avenue for linking the dialogue held at the national level (RTM/RTIM) and the dialogue held at the local level. It will also allow the Round Table (RT) participants to better understand the needs and development challenges of local communities, and develop mutual understanding between the Government, communities and the wider RT participants on how the RT forum could support these needs. The Round Table provincial consultation is therefore an important milestone in the RT process in order to ensure that the local perspectives and developmental realities are grounded in the high level policy dialogue.

II. The Multisectoral (Convergent) Approaches to address Food and Nutrition Security

Since the last provincial consultation on food and nutrition security, which was successfully organized in Laung Namtha on 27-28 June 2013, the Government of Lao PDR with support from DPs has made considerable progress to accelerate the implementation of existing policies and strategies: 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan, the

National Nutrition Policy (2008) and the National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action (2010-2015).

In particular, the Multisectoral (convergent) Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan has been developed to help address malnutrition matter in practical and effective matter. The Government of Lao PDR is highly committed to implement this Multi-Sectoral plan. It is important as it will not only help Lao PDR to achieve MDG 1 targets but also it has implications for efforts to achieve other MDGs targets (specially, MDG 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9). This is a complex and challenging task that will tax the limited resources of capacity of the Government. However, efforts by different sectors to implement this convergent Plan start to prevail in a coordinated fashion. In fact, there is enough progress in some areas to see clearly the areas where progress is distinctly lacking.

On the positive front, a National Multisectoral Nutrition Committee has been formed (PM decree 31 July 2013) which will assume overall responsibility for direction and coordination of the Action Plan. The Secretariat has been established as a body for coordination, technical support, and monitoring and evaluation. At the same time, core group of government staff have now been established and there is now a multi-stakeholder platform for discussing Nutrition issues (SUN) - Technical working group on Food and Nutrition Security (Gov + DPs). In particular, a clear set of recommendations by the UN team in consultations with DPs has been identified and shared with the Government of Lao PDR for consideration. Currently, the Government has agreed that the implementation of the Action Plan will be carried out in three pilot provinces (Saravane, Luang Namtha and Udomxay).

Success is, however, far from certain and many challenges remain. Among others, it is important to highlight that the National FNS Secretariat is not an operational agency and the implementation of the Action Plan is the responsibility of the organizations in the different sectors. Therefore, as highlighted by a recent mission commissioned by the National FNS Secretariat (2-6 June 2014), challenges and opportunities for the Government of Lao PDR are to ensure that:

- There is a clear mandate on the organization and functioning of the *National* Nutrition Committee and its secretariat and the *Provincial and District* Nutrition Coordination Committees.
- The interventions are well-designed and reasonably be expected to reduce malnutrition. They must also reach their intended target groups (coverage). This assumes they have sufficient technical, financial, and managerial resources to operate well and have impact.
- Implementation of the interventions must be coordinated so that they “converge” and reach the same target individual at the same time and place as planned.
- Different partners understand the problem, understand why working together will help solve it, and understand how to work together (This is probably most important to the success of the Multisectoral Approach).

(Please refer to Annex 1 for a list of activities to be completed during the second half of 2014 highlighted under the Mission Report – June 2014)

III. 2014 RTIM Provincial Consultation

Since 2009, three Northern provinces of Lao PDR hosted three RT consultations (Xayaboury in 2009, Xieng Khouang in 2011 and Luang Namtha in 2013) where as there has been only one Southern province (Sekong) organized the Provincial Consultation in 2012. Therefore, for 2014, the Government of Lao PDR tries to redress the balance by organizing the Provincial Consultation in the South.

This year's provincial consultation will take place in Saravane province between 15th and 17th September 2014, prior to the annual RTIM scheduled for 10th November 2014 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Saravane is chosen to host this year RTIM Provincial Consultation as it is not only one of the three pilot provinces for the implementation of the Multi-sectoral Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan but also it has a number of challenges relating to the MDGs such as

- Saravane is ranked 5th in the country with the highest percentage of children under age 5 who are stunt, underweight and wasted (after Oudomxay, Huaphan, Phongsaly and Sekong);
- Employment to population ratio for Saravane is also high (82%) – this means an abundance of poor quality jobs. Note – high employment to population ratio in poor countries/provinces means the quality of jobs is the concern (usually poor quality jobs);
- Survival rate for student enrolling up to grade five - is the lowest in the country around 30-40%;
- Child mortality - Saravane is ranked 4th next to [Huaphan](#)[Houaphanh](#), [Khammouane](#)[Khammouane](#) and Phongsaly;
- Saravane is in the bottom half of the provinces for births assisted by trained health professionals; and
- Saravane is one the heavily bombed provinces in the country.

The design of this Consultation is based on the recent progress since the [Laung Namtham](#)[Namtha](#) consultation and a need to help with the National FNS Secretariat to coordinate and support the implementation of the Multi-Sectoral Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan.

3.1 Objectives

As the National FNS Secretariat has still been at its early establishment, this 2014 RTIM Provincial Consultation can be used as a platform to help facilitate the design of the interventions and the effective coordination for their implementation based on lessons learnt and experience of the three pilot provinces. Against this backdrop, the objectives of the 2014 RTIM Provincial Consultation are:

- to deepen the understanding of challenges at provincial level with regards to the a Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan and its implications for the achievements off-track MDGs targets. This will help identify lessons learnt and what actions and resources would be required to support the local needs.
- to help the FNS Secretariat to make more progress of the implementation of the Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security – in particular ensuring that relevant stakeholders involved share common understanding of key interventions and how they are implemented in effective and coordinated manners.

3.2 Rationale underpinning the theme of this year Provincial Consultation

While the implementation rests with each relevant sectoral agency and the coordination is a primary responsibility of the National FSN Secretariat, this year RTIM Provincial Consultation is a complimentary platform as a follow up from the last year Provincial Consultation held in Laung Namtha to bring various stakeholders to appraise and reflect on what are needed towards the implementation of Multi-sectoral Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan which has implications for some of the off-track MDGs.

It is a forum for the Government of Lao PDR at national, sectoral and provincial levels to discuss and strategize meaningful policy options for the implementation of the Multi-Sectoral Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan based on international experience as recommended by DPs. Therefore, discussions and how the Consultation are structured are heavily dependent on both technical work of relevant sectors and overall coordination by the National FNS Secretariat.

3.3 Expected outputs and how they can be fed into the discussions at the 2014 RTIM in November

Therefore, the Consultation is expected to generate **a set of focused recommendations, which will be presented and discussed at the RTIM in November 2014 and it will help ensure the incorporation of local perspectives during the preparation of the 8th NSEDP.** The recommendations will be based on discussions during the Provincial Consultation in accordance to the recent progress of the key activities as proposed by the mission commissioned by the National FNS Secretariat in June 2014 (as highlighted under section II of this note and as per Annex 1).

3.4 Meeting format

The Provincial Consultation will be organised in a panel discussion mode with a focus on the multisectoral (convergent) Food and Nutrition Security Action Plan and the implications for off track MDG targets for Saravane, and reflect the discussion upon the current initiatives and actions defined from the 2013 RTM and then inform these local inputs to the formulation of the next NSEDP agenda.

The discussion will be divided into four sections. Each section is structured around a standard format to ensure focus and coherence of the discussion and the outcome. For each session, a lead government agency and partner will be appointed.

- **Section 1 – Overview of the development progress for Saravan Provinces (achievements, challenges, measures and ways forward)**
- **Section 2 – Update on the national and provincial activities on the multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security**
- **Section 3 - How the multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security can be implemented at both national and provincial levels**
- **Section 4 – What will be the implication for other related MDGs (2, 3, 4, 5 and 9).**

2014 RTIM Provincial Consultation

“Provincial Perspectives on the Multisectoral (Convergent) Food and Nutrition Security Action Plans and Implications for the Off-Track MDGs”

Saravane Province, 15th – 17th September 2014

Tentative Agenda

Monday, 15th September 2014

- 06:30 **Participants leave for Pakse via Lao Airlines (QV?)**
(05:00AM - Check in at the Wattay Airport, Domestic terminal)
- 08:00 **Participants continued travelling from Pakse Airport to Saravane province by the arranged shuttle buses (approximately 2 hours)**
(On the way to Saravane, there will be field visits to local communities and development projects - a detailed programme will be provided once it is confirmed)
- 12:00 **Lunch**
(Place/restaurant in Saravane to be confirmed)
- Accommodation:** Hotels and Guesthouses in Saravane will be booked for participants
- 14:00 - 16:00 **Field Visits to Development Projects**
(Projects to be visited to be confirmed)
- 16:00 – 17:00 **Sport Event– Building solidarity among participants**
(TBC)
- 18:30 **Dinner**
(Place/restaurant in Saravane to be confirmed)

Tuesday, 16th September 2014

- 08:00 - 08:30 **Registration**

Chair and Co-Chairs of the meeting:

- H.E. Mr. Khamboune Duangpangna, the Governor of Saravane province
- H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment

- Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative

- 08:30 - 08:40 **Welcome Remarks**
By: H.E. Mr. Khamboune Duangpangna, the Governor of Saravane province
- 08:40 - 08:50 **Opening Address**
By: H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment
- 08:50 – 09:00 **Remarks**
By: Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative
- 09:00 - 09:15 **Photo Sessions**
- 09:15 - 09:30 **Coffee Break**
- 09:30 - 09:50 **Overview of the Development Progress for Saravane Province - Achievements, Challenges, Measures and Ways forward**
By: Saravane Provincial Department of Planning and Investment
- 09:50 - 10:50 **Plenary Discussion**
(While Saravane will present the development progress, the discussion will be more or less directed toward the provincial perspectives on the 2014-2015 NSEDP, MDG implementation especially the Food and Nutrition Security and the next five year NSEDP 2016-2020).
- 10:50 - 11:10 **Update on the National and Provincial Activities on the Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security**
By *The National FNS Secretariat*
(This will be the Government's status on the implementation of convergent approach to FNS based on the recent progress, challenges, measures and the way forward)
- 11:10 - 12:00 **Plenary Discussion**
- 12:00 - 13:00 **Lunch**
(Place/ restaurant to be confirmed)
- 13:00 – 14:00 **How can the Multisectoral Food and Nutrition Security be effectively implemented at both national and provincial levels?**
(3 presentations by Oudomxay, Luang Namtha and Saravane provinces on the current provincial activities and perspectives)
- 14:00 - 15:00 **Plenary Discussion**
- 15:00 - 15:15 **Coffee Break**

- 15:15 – 15:35 **What will be the implication for other related Off-Track MDGs targets and how these inform the priorities for future development**
A presentation by TBC
- 15:35 - 16:35 **Plenary Discussion**
- 16:35 - 16:50 **Wrap-up**
By: Ms. Kaarina Immonen, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP
Resident Representative
- 16:50 - 17:00 **Closing Remarks**
By: H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment
- 18:00 - 21:00 **Baci Ceremony and Dinner Reception hosted by the Governor of Saravane province**

Wednesday, 17th September 2014

- 08:00 **Participants leave Saravane for Pakse by the arranged shuttle buses**
- 11:00 - 12:00 **Lunch in Pakse hosted by Ministry of Planning and Investment**
(Place/restaurant to be confirmed)
- 12:50 - 14:05 **Travel back to Vientiane (Lao Airlines QV)**

Annex 1 - a list of activities to be completed during the second half of 2014 as highlighted under the Mission Report commissioned by the National FNS Secretariat (2-6 June 2014)

Activities to complete in during the second half of 2014 as highlighted under the Mission Report commissioned by the National FNS Secretariat (2-6 June 2014) includes:

- intervention design and overall implementation plans completed
- coordination mechanism structures designed and established at all levels (national to village)
- district-level implementation plans completed, agreed on, resourced and ready to start
- quality checklist completed
- communications plan developed and resourced
- Secretariat and NNC workplan for 2015 completed
- monitoring and information systems designed - realistically, the full establishment of monitoring and capacity strengthening teams and of information systems may not occur until 2015
- capacity strengthening plan designed and resourced
- technical assistance plan designed and resourced
- learning plan for pilot districts designed
- expansion plan for 2015 sketched out.