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## Press Release

### **The Round Table Implementation Meeting 2014 Reviews Progress in National Development**

*Vientiane, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2014* - More than 200 representatives from the Government and the development partner community took part in today's Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) to review the country's development progress and cooperation.

The 2014 RTIM, themed "Accelerating the achievement of the 7<sup>th</sup> NSEDP/MDGs and LDC graduation" was opened by the Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment, and co-chaired by Ms. Kaarina Immonen, United Nations Resident Coordinator and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Resident Representative to Lao PDR.

In his opening remarks, H.E. Mr. Thongloun Sisoulith said that the successful execution of the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan has brought "impressive levels of peace, stability and social order as well as economic growth rate" to the country. The Deputy Prime Minister added that while considerable success has been achieved, the country has also continued to encounter many challenges. These include the impact from natural disasters and the current fiscal constraints that need continuous and collective efforts from all stakeholders to tackle.

In addition, the Deputy Prime Minister provided guidance for the discussion during the meeting. He stated that the discussion should be constructive and opened dialogue under mutual accountability for sustaining economic growth and stability. In particular, it is important to focus on the country potential to diversify different sources of revenue and to build national technical capacity in light of a new development era in which Lao PDR is currently integrating itself into regional and global cooperation. All of this aim to achieve MDGs targets by 2015 and LDC graduation by 2020.

The Deputy Prime Minister Thongloun also expressed his sincere appreciation to the development partners for their support to the Government through technical and financial assistance. "As Lao PDR is moving towards the graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) status, support from development partners remains crucial to attaining this goal", he said.

The UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Kaarina Immonen said that the high level of engagement from the government and development partners in the Round Table Process including the provincial authorities, private sector and civil society indicates "our mutual commitment to the development of Lao PDR".

“We will continue supporting the national efforts to accelerate the progress in reaching the off-track Millennium Development Goal targets as well as the preparations for the post-MDG agenda including the LDC status graduation”, she said.

The full-day Round Table Implementation Meeting focused on reviewing development achievements and challenges encountered during the past year. Another focus was also on the implementation of recommendations from last year’s High Level Round Table Meeting such as the country’s macro-economic management, off-track MDG targets, governance reform and ways to increase development effectiveness.

The recommendations from the meeting are expected to feed into the formulation of the 8<sup>th</sup> five-year national development plan. With only a few years remaining until the Least Developed Country (LDC) graduation deadline, the Round Table Process will continue to provide an important platform for the government and development partners to review development priorities and to strengthen national and international development cooperation.

Today’s meeting will be followed by a courtesy call by the development partners to H.E. Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong to brief him on the results of the meeting.

Lao PDR has participated since 1983 in the Round Table Process, which is implemented and facilitated through the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and supported by UNDP and the Government of Luxembourg. The process comprises Round Table Meetings held every three years to present plans, strategies and priorities for national development, while RTIM meetings review annual achievements and recommend further actions.

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