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Press Release

Annual Round Table Implementation Meeting 2012, 23 November

“Partnerships for More Effective Development Results”

The Round Table Implementation Meeting (RTIM) 2012, featuring the participation of more than 300 representatives from the Government and development partners, was officially opened Friday by honorable H.E. Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The RTIM was chaired by H.E. Somdy Douangdy, Minister of Planning and Investment, and co-chaired by H.E. Minh Pham, the UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative.

The key objective of the one-day meeting was to review implementation of the second year of the 7th National Socio Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) 2011-15, as well as to discuss further priorities and resources to achieve the national development objectives. This included progress toward achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly in areas that are still off-track, such as malnutrition and food security, maternal and reproductive health, access to universal education, UXO reduction, and environmental sustainability. The meeting also discussed government fiscal planning and allocation to meet the target set by NSEDP as well as to attain the MDGs. The strengthened cooperation to yield better development results through the effectiveness of development assistance was included in the agenda.

H.E. Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith highlighted a number of key achievements during his opening remarks. In particular, he noted Lao PDR's continuing macroeconomic stability, illustrated by strong economic growth of 8 percent. In terms of social development, the Government has increased budget allocations for the crucial health and education sectors, the DPM said.

Both the DPM and H.E. Minh Pham particularly noted the potential positive impact of the pilot implementation of the Party resolution on decentralization, known as “Sam Sang.” This is important for development partners because the Round Table Process, which largely focused in the past at central level, is gradually extending to local level; in May, a Local Round Table Consultation was successfully organized in Xieng Khouang Province.

The DPM further emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination between the central and local levels to achieve NSEDP targets and ensure that Lao PDR meets its commitments to integrate into regional and global alliances. This will entail increasing national revenue and enhancing the capacity of human resources, he said, urging Government agencies to accelerate these efforts.

Overall, development partners expressed their commitment to continue supporting the GoL in achieving its goals in the years to come. In his remarks, Mr. Pham also welcomed the expansion of RTIM dialogue with civil society, including the participation of non-profit associations (NPAs) for the first time. He encouraged adoption of a pro-poor perspective in economic diversification and integration; land management issues, especially with regard to the impact of FDI; and health and education.

A total of 24 delegations from Line Ministries and from 17 provinces were represented at the RTIM. For development partners, 92 delegations attended from 35 countries, 42 organizations, 6 international non-Government organizations and 5 NPAs, as well as 5 from the private sector.