

## National Statement of Commitment to Accelerating Learning Recovery in the Lao People's Democratic Republic

### 1. Foundational Learning

- The foundation of human capital is laid in childhood. The share of children unable to read with comprehension at age ten is a signal of the overall quality of education in a country, and thus its ability to realize its potential for human capital to benefit from the country's demographic dividend<sup>1</sup>. Foundational learning<sup>2</sup> provides the building blocks for all other learning, knowledge, and higher order skills that children and youth need to attain through education.
- Foundational learning is critical to enable all children to reach their full potential and participate in society. Ensuring foundational learning for all contributes to productive citizenship, sustainable development, inclusive growth, gender equality, national cohesion, peace and prosperity, and bolsters progress on all other Sustainable Development Goals.
- We commit to taking urgent and decisive action, where learning levels are low, to ensure all children, including the most marginalized, develop foundational learning to realize their full potential. We commit to reducing the share of children unable to read and understand a simple text by age ten, by half, by 2030.

### 2. Reaching Every Child and Retaining them in school

- Since the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic instability Lao PDR has experienced a decline in enrolments and an increase in dropouts across different levels of education. To ensure recovery and accelerate learning, we will work immediately to enroll all children and keep them in school, increase access to remedial and catch-up learning and teach children at their current learning levels; support teachers, giving them the tools that they need; and support the health, nutrition and psycho-social well-being of every teacher and child.

### 3. Closing the Education Resource Gap

- The Government recognizes that adequate, efficient, and equitable education financing is critical to accelerating learning recovery efforts in the post-pandemic context as well as ensuring all children's right to inclusive and quality education to enhance Lao PDR's human capital and realize the country's vision towards a modern and high-growth economy. We will work together to close the education resource gap, and enable the investments, leveraging technologies and other reforms, needed to effectively advance foundational learning. The Government reaffirms its commitment to improving education financing and to work towards achieving education's share in the national budget to meet the 18% benchmark under the Education Law, including increasing the share of non-wage allocation.

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<sup>1</sup> Demographic Dividend is the economic growth potential that can result from shifts in a population's age structure, mainly when the share of the working-age population (15 to 64) is larger than the non-working-age share of the population (14 and younger, and 65 and older). Lao PDR has one of the youngest populations in Southeast Asia, with over half (50.8%) of the population being between the age of 10 and 35 years. The age structure and demographic transition present an advantageous direction and great potential to reap the demographic dividend in the years to come.

<sup>2</sup> Foundational learning refers to basic literacy, numeracy, and transferable skills such as socio-emotional skills