



# *Lao People's Democratic Republic*

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*Statement by*

*His Excellency Mr. Thongloun SISOULITH,*

*Deputy Prime Minister*

*and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR*

*at the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Assembly*

*of the United Nations,*

*New York, 28 September 2013*

*Please check against delivery*

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Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Excellency John Ashe of Antigua and Barbuda on your election as President of this 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly. May I assure our full support and cooperation to Your Excellency in the discharge of your noble duty. Likewise, I would like to sincerely commend Excellency Vuk Jeremić for the successful completion of his task as President of the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNGA.

The Lao Government offers its condolences to the Government and people of Kenya on the loss of life as a result of terrorist attack last week in Nairobi, and I join the international community in condemning such an inhumane act.

Mr. President,

The year 2013 marks a new turning point in promoting international cooperation for development and in addressing global poverty. At the World Summit on Sustainable Development or Rio+20 held in Rio De Janero, Brazil in 2012, the world leaders initiated an international consultative process to chart out vision and concrete action for enhancing sustainable development in the post-2015. This clearly testifies that poverty eradication and sustainable development remain our prevailing priority, because throughout the past decades, despite tremendous efforts made by the international community to achieve poverty eradication and development targets, 1,2 billion poor people or 22 percent of the world population still live in poverty. In addition, natural environment continues to be threatened and damaged that has led to climate imbalance, frequent occurrence of natural disasters, which have become unfamiliar phenomenon that had rarely been seen in the past years. Moreover, political and social unrests and armed conflicts occurred in different parts of the world continue to

prolong and there has yet been any sign of immediate resolution. Likewise, the global and regional economic and financial crisis has intensified its gravity that has posed long-term impact on developing countries, especially the least developed ones.

Mr. President,

Such state of development of political, social-economic and environmental situation continue to obstruct and impede all nations in attaining sustainable development goals including the MDGs. Against this backdrop, it is more crucial than ever for the international community to redouble its efforts in enhancing development cooperation based on sincere and mutual assistance for the benefits of all and for a secured world. As the world today becomes increasingly inter-dependent, no single country can develop and survive on its own without engagement and cooperation of the international community. In this context, the global institutions, like the United Nations, have an important duty to fulfill in advocating international development cooperation. On this occasion, I would like to commend Secretary General Ban Ki-moon for his tireless efforts in promoting international cooperation including cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in different parts of the world in this complex and challenging global environment.

A nation's political stability and security constitutes a vital factor for enabling environment and condition to advance sustainable development. However, many regions of the world are experiencing social unrest, political strife and military confrontation and all this has posed a major threat to global and regional peace and security. In this regard, we share the common concern over the deteriorating situation in the Middle East, which has lasted for years now. Therefore, we call upon all parties concerned to work together and find a peaceful solution in order to save the lives of innocent people. In this spirit, the Lao PDR welcomes the agreement reached by Russia and the United States on Syria's chemical weapons.

Addressing the issue of Palestine based on the principle of creating two independent states of Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace requires an urgent attention from the international community. In this regard, the Lao PDR commends the efforts made by Israel and Palestine to resume peace negotiation, which marks an important milestone for the promotion of peace in the region.

The unilateral embargo on the Republic of Cuba, an independent State, is deemed unjust and contrary to international law, causing major impact on the lives of the peace-loving Cuban people. Therefore, it is now time to put an end to the embargo.

Mr. President,

The Lao PDR always attaches great significance to creating peaceful environment and to safeguarding political stability for national development with a view to graduating from LDC status. To this end, the Government of the Lao PDR has deployed its utmost efforts in pursuing consistent foreign policy and promoting international cooperation at all levels. We continue to attentively fulfill our international obligations in maintaining peace and promoting the rule of law. In this vein, the Government of the Lao PDR has mapped out a policy direction on state governed by the rule of law, on promotion and protection of the fundamental rights of people of all strata. To date, the Lao PDR is party to many international instruments on human rights. The national law on human rights, including the law on the rights of women and children, has been enacted and amended. To continue fulfilling its international obligations, the Lao PDR has presented candidatures for membership in the Human Rights Council for the term of 2016-2018 as well as membership in the Executive Board of UNDP/UNFPA for 2016-2018. We do hope that the Lao PDR will be given an opportunity to work with the international community within the aforesaid frameworks.

At regional level, the Lao PDR has played an active part in the process of ASEAN community building consisting of three pillars namely political-security community, economic community and social-cultural community, which will commence on 31 December 2015. We believe that political and economic strength of ASEAN community will form a solid ground for regional cooperation, thus contributing to the maintenance and promotion of peace, security and development in the region and the world at large.

The Lao PDR played an important role as Chair of the framework of cooperation between the two continents, Asia and Europe (or ASEM) from 2010-2012 and was given a great honor to host the 9<sup>th</sup> ASEM Summit from 5-6 November in Vientiane, under the theme "Friends for Peace, Partners for Prosperity", which was successfully concluded. At the Summit, Leaders from the two continents had constructive exchange of views on ways and means to promote peace and to enhance development cooperation in their respective regions for the benefits of the two peoples in Asia and Europe as well as

to ensure their legitimate rights to live in peace and to improve their well-being. The Lao Government is proud to be given such opportunity to undertake this important duty and I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude to all friendly countries and international community for the support and assistance extended to the Lao PDR, which have led to the successful outcome as envisaged by the Summit.

Mr. President,

Despite various achievements in its socio-economic development, being both least developed and landlocked country, the Lao PDR remains vulnerable and continues to face numerous challenges in poverty eradication and development efforts, as clearly reflected in the recent Third National MDG Progress Report launched early this month. To achieve all MDGs, the country must continue to overcome daunting challenges such as child malnutrition, gender inequality in education, and impact by UXO contamination. Nevertheless, the Lao Government will continue to lead its people in moving ahead together with the international community in tackling numerous challenges in order to achieve the MDGs.

The Lao PDR is one of the most affected countries by cluster munitions and unexploded ordnances (UXO), which continue to pose major constraints to the national social-economic development and poverty reduction. In this regard, the Lao PDR calls upon all countries to consider acceding to the Convention on Cluster Munitions with a view to ensuring total ban on cluster munitions as well as helping address the impacts of cluster munitions in the affected countries.

Mr. President,

In 2014, the group of LLDCs will hold a 10-year review Conference on the implementation of the Almaty Program of Action on addressing specific problems and special needs of the LLDCs. Addressing specific problems of LLDCs has become regional and international obligation. Regardless of their development level, these countries will not be able to address the impacts of their landlockedness without international cooperation, especially from transit countries and development partners.

In this context, the Review Conference scheduled in 2014 is of great importance not only for the LLDCs, but also for all development partners. This Conference will provide an excellent opportunity for

the international community to identify the emerging challenges and adopt a new cooperation framework aiming at addressing the impact of landlockedness faced by the LLDCs. We have high hope and expectation on the outcome of this Conference as it would adopt a new policy direction and more concrete measures reflecting current development environment that can form a basis for addressing the specific problems faced by LLDCs in the next decade. The success of this Conference would certainly demonstrate the spirit of genuine partnership and mutual assistance among members of the international community. Therefore, in my capacity as Chair of the Group of LLDCs, I wish to take this opportunity to call upon all parties including international organizations, as well as the United Nations System, international financial institutions, and private sector to participate actively in the preparation and organization of this Conference in view of ensuring its successful outcome.

Mr. President,

We have only two years left to meet the MDGs, however there remain numerous challenges facing us. Therefore, our post-2015 development agenda process is important for all countries and stakeholders to fully engage in reviewing how various measures have been undertaken to achieve MDGs during the past years, and chart out new and appropriate future direction. I am convinced that in the spirit of effective and sincere cooperation, we will be able to achieve the set targets and goals and overcome the challenges and constraints we are facing.

Thank You.