



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

His Excellency Dr. Thongloun SISOULITH,

Deputy Prime Minister

and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR

at the 67th Session of the General Assembly

of the United Nations,

New York, 28 September 2012

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Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Your Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremic, on your election as President of this 67th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. It is my firm belief that with your extensive experience and constructive initiatives, Your Excellency will guide this august Assembly of the United Nations towards achieving its objectives while serving the common interests of all members. We stand ready to extend our full support and cooperation to Your Excellency in assuming your important and noble duties.

May I also take this opportunity to extend my profound congratulations to His Excellency Nassir Abdulaziz AlNasser, President of the 66th Session of UNGA for the successful conclusion of his duties.

Likewise, I would like to commend His Excellency Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, for his tireless efforts deployed in leading the United Nations towards meeting its obligations and achieving its objectives amidst the complex global challenges including his efforts to improve the overall working methods of the United Nations, especially the UN Secretariat in view of further enhancing its effectiveness.

Mr. President,

During the last 2 years, the international community has encountered numerous daunting and complex challenges occurred continuously in all areas whether in political and security or socio-economic field. The regional political complexity and unrest, especially in the Middle East, that have continued to prolong to date, seemed unlikely to be resolved any time soon. In addition, the global economic and financial crisis that hit all parts of the world has reached its alarming point causing great concerns for all nations even for the European Union- a major economic power.

Such crisis has challenged the capacity and credibility of the existing global governance designed by the international community to address daunting global challenges. This is a clear indication that our joint efforts and action have not yet yielded tangible outcomes. The negotiation on climate change has shown no progress although the Kyoto Protocol is expiring this year 2012; the efforts to formulate an international instrument to govern arms trade and prevent illegal trading, which had started some years ago have also failed; and the commitment by the developed countries to help the most vulnerable groups of countries namely the LDCs, LLDCs, and SIDS has been low.

In light of the current situation, it is more crucial than ever that the United Nations - the only universal organization, which has the most membership in the world and the most reliable structure to deal with crisis, should be strengthened with a view to increasing its effectiveness in addressing the important global issues. To this end, all member States shall strive to extend their full support and cooperation to the revitalization of the United Nations, strike a balance between the national and international interests in a harmonious manner in order to timely and effectively address these enormous global challenges.

Mr. President,

In the current context, regional organizations have played an increasingly important role in addressing the global issues. For that matter, more countries in the world have attached greater importance to ASEAN and the ever expanding ASEAN-initiated frameworks of cooperation. ASEAN is entering a crucial stage in implementing the commitment of the ASEAN Leaders to establish an ASEAN Community comprising 3 pillars, namely: political- security community, economic community and social-cultural community by 2015. By utilizing its own resources combined with external support, especially from its dialogue partners, it is my firm belief that ASEAN will be able to realize its ultimate goal of turning ASEAN into a community that is politically stable, economically integrated and socially and culturally harmonious, thus contributing to the cause of peace and prosperity in the region and the world at large.

Mr. President,

As a member of the international community, the Lao PDR has exerted its utmost efforts in fulfilling its international obligations by continuing to pursue the policy of cooperation with all countries the world over based on the principles of equality, mutual benefit, respect for national independence, sovereignty, and non-interference in each other's internal affairs thus creating international environment conducive for national development. During the past year, despite numerous challenges, the Lao PDR has continued to endure political stability and social order. The national economy has grown gradually at an average of 8% annually, foreign direct investment has increased by more than 30%, and the poverty reduction target set in the 5-Year Plan has been met, thus gradually improving the livelihood of the Lao people. All this has laid a solid foundation for attaining the MDGs by 2015 and created conditions conducive for the country to graduate from Least Developed Country status by 2020.

Despite the said achievements, the Lao PDR continues to face numerous challenges and constraints. In addition to the problems resulted from the global and regional economic crisis and impact caused by natural calamities, Un-exploded Ordinance continues to harm people's lives and poses major obstacles on national social and economic development including the attainment of the MDGs in the country. In this regard, we call upon all countries to become party to the Convention on Cluster Munitions with a view to fully banning the use of such weapon. The Lao Government is committed to realizing its national aspiration towards sustainable development and achieving the ultimate goal of graduating from the least developed status by 2020. On this occasion and on this august rostrum, the Lao PDR wishes to express its deepest appreciation and

profound gratitude to the international community for the valuable support and effective assistance extended to the Lao PDR and we do hope that such support and assistance would continue.

Mr. President,

The Lao PDR feels honored to be entrusted to host the 9th Asia-Europe Summit Meeting or ASEM 9, which will be held from 5-6 November 2012 in Vientiane, Capital of the Lao PDR. This will provide a great opportunity for the Leaders of Asia and Europe to discuss and exchange their views on global issues of mutual interests. Today, the Government of the Lao PDR has finalized all of its preparatory arrangement and is fully ready for ASEM 9 Summit. The Government and the Lao people are delighted having this great opportunity to welcome 51 high-level delegations from 49 countries and 2 Secretariats in Asia and Europe.

Mr. President,

The international community wishes to see the restoration of peace and stability in the Middle East. The conflict between Israel and Palestine will not be resolved without the full implementation of the relevant Resolutions of UN Security Council on creating the two states of Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace. The Lao PDR reaffirms its support to the membership of Palestine to the United Nations.

The economic, financial and trade embargo imposed on the Republic of Cuba has long caused considerable hardship on the livelihood of the Cuban people. Such embargo must be unconditionally and immediately lifted.

Mr. President,

The Landlocked Developing Countries are one of the most vulnerable groups among members of the United Nations due to their geographical locations. Their special challenges and major development obstacles are resulted from the great distance from world markets and high transit transport costs, which impede their national sustainable development efforts. Each year, these Landlocked Countries bear a heavy financial burden in their efforts to improve their transit transport infrastructure network so as to ensure that their export products, which constitute a crucial part in their national income can gain better access to the world markets. These problems would be compounded when their national economies are affected by other crises such as financial, social, natural disasters, climate change, among others. In addition, 50% of the LLDCs are also LDCs. Therefore, I urge that the international community increases greater attention and provide assistance to this vulnerable group of countries through the full implementation of the Almaty Program of Action as well as active participation in the 10-Year Review of the implementation of Almaty Program of Action to be held in 2014.

Mr. President,

The Lao PDR reiterates once again its firm commitment and determination to continue working closely with the international community to build a peaceful world under a just and more democratic new order, based on cooperation with all countries in tackling the various global challenges facing us. I am convinced that only through firm determination we would be able to achieve the immediate and long-term development objectives and ensure that the world is secured, peaceful and prosperous.

Thank You.