



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Statement by

His Excellency Mr. Thongloun SISOUKITH,

Deputy Prime Minister

and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR

at the 69th Session of the General Assembly

of the United Nations,

New York, 29 September 2014

(Please check against delivery)

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to Excellency Sam Kahamba Kutesa of the Republic of Uganda on your election as President of this 69th 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 John Ashe for the successful completion of his task as President of the 68th Session of the UNGA.

Mr. President,

We have just over 450 days for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. While many countries have made considerable achievements and would attain the MDGs, other countries like LDCs have seen slow progress and faced various challenges in achieving all goals within the set timeframe. Moreover, complex regional and international situations such as armed conflicts, political unrests, pandemics, environmental degradation, among others, have inevitably brought about more obstacles to those countries' efforts to realize the MDGs. Against this backdrop, based on the past experience, it is evident that a socio-economic development in any country would succeed only when there exist an enabling lasting and secured environment. Only in such condition, we could deploy all efforts and utilize all potentials and resources available in the country for development in the most effective and sustainable manner.

Mr. President,

Over the past 39 years of its existence after the war ended, the Lao PDR has deployed all its efforts on national development starting from the period of healing the wounds of war to the era of formulating and implementing 7 Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plans based on the renovation policy set by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party. All achievements made in each period are the results of lessons learned and through actual development activities carried out and from adapting to the specific conditions within the country and external environments. Lessons learnt from the friendly countries both near and far are of valuable assets. We, therefore, would like to express our sincere appreciations to all friendly countries for sharing knowledge and experience including both successes and failures with the small and young Lao PDR in each of the periods.

Mr. President,

The mid-term review of the implementation of the 7th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan has shown that the Lao PDR has made remarkable achievements in many areas, especially in maintaining a steady pace of economic growth, political stability and social order, thus ensuring that the Lao people of all ethnic groups can enjoy their legitimate rights and freedom and actively participate in the national development. All this has laid solid ground for the country in moving towards the realization of its ultimate goal of graduating from the least developed country status by 2020. The said achievements are made possible, not only due to the national efforts, but also the support and cooperation extended from all friendly countries, development partners, including international organizations, especially the UN system. Nevertheless, the Lao PDR has also been affected by the global financial and economic crisis in recent years, which have caused some major obstacles to the national economic development as well as the implementation of various development goals. In this regard, the Lao Government has taken timely measures to stabilize its macro-economy, aimed at promoting sustained growth in the coming years.

In addition, as a landlocked and least developed country, the Lao PDR remains vulnerable and still faces numerous challenges, especially in achieving some MDG targets, including reducing child malnutrition, ensuring gender equality in education, reducing child and maternal mortality, and minimizing the impacts of Unexploded Ordnances dropped during the war. Taking into account the importance of addressing UXO impact, the Lao PDR has adopted a localized MDG on addressing impact of UXO as its national MDG goal (MDG9). Reducing the impact caused by UXO remains a huge task and burden for the country as it hampers the national development and poverty eradication. In this light, the Lao PDR is one of the countries that initiated the process of formulating the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions. Therefore, full and effective implementation of the Oslo Convention is of great importance, which will lead to a total prohibition of all use, production and transfer of cluster munitions. In this connection, taking this opportunity we would like to convey our congratulations to Saint Kitts and Nevis, Belize and the Republic of Congo on their ratification of the Oslo Convention, which has increased the total number of signatory states to 86. We hope that other countries will also consider becoming parties to this Convention.

Mr. President,

The Lao PDR shares common concern over the escalating armed conflicts occurred in different parts of the world which has posed increasing major threats to the international community. Against this backdrop, we urge all parties concerned to

exercise their utmost restraint and refrain from taking any actions that will cause the loss of lives and property of innocent people. Only through addressing the conflicts by peaceful means, we will be able to ensure mutual trust. Resentment and hostility with one another are causes of escalating violence and the use of force, resulting in the loss of lives and property, causing pains and sufferings to the innocent people.

In the era of interdependence, cooperation and engagement are key factors for peaceful and mutually benefited co-existence. The enforcement of isolation and sanction measures imposed on any country may not bring about benefits to the international community. On contrary, it will cause losses for all and lead to increasing hostility. Likewise, the unilateral embargo on the Republic of Cuba, a sovereign State, for many decades has caused major impact on the lives of the peace-loving Cuban people. Therefore, it is now time for the embargo to be lifted.

Mr. President,

In this complex and challenging global environment, the United Nations, the only universal organization, under the leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, has made tireless efforts in seeking ways and means to address the aforesaid hot issues, promote cooperation for sustainable development, poverty eradication and maintain peace, stability and security in the world. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the UN Secretary-General for his various initiatives in addressing the issues of common concern, including the initiative to organize the Climate Summit which has just been successfully concluded. Nevertheless, amid complex and unpredictable circumstances, the United Nations needs to strengthen itself through reform of various organs so as for the UN to carry out its mandate and fulfill its obligations in a more effective manner. The international community is hoping to witness that on the occasion of marking the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations next year, more tangible progress on the UN reform will be attained.

Mr. President,

ASEAN is a regional organization that has enjoyed rapid growth and all ASEAN initiated mechanisms are bearing fruitful results. Therefore, we are convinced that ASEAN Community building in 2015 will be certainly achieved, so as to turn ASEAN into a single market and production base with increased competitiveness, and thus promoting trade and investment in the region and between ASEAN and external partners. ASEAN is now earnestly charting out ASEAN Community Post-2015 Vision, aimed at strengthening and ensuring ASEAN unity while promoting peace and security in the region and the world at large. On this note, we hope that the international community will continue to support the implementation of the ASEAN Community Post-

2015 Vision as well as the ASEAN chairmanship of the Lao PDR in 2016, after ASEAN becomes a Community.

Mr. President,

Landlocked developing countries is one of groups of countries in special situation recognized by the international community. Throughout 10 years of the implementation of the Almaty Programme of Action on addressing specific problems and special needs of LLDCs, it is noted that many objectives have not been realized, making these countries continue to face daunting challenges and marginalization in many areas. More than half of LLDCs are also least developed countries. In this context, the Second UN Conference on LLDCs to be held in November this year in Vienna, Austria is of great significance for LLDCs to conduct the 10-year review of the implementation of Almaty Programme of Action and adopt a new programme of action for the next decade. On this note, we would like to call upon all stakeholders, including transit countries and development partners to participate actively in this Conference in view of ensuring its successful outcome. Also, we call on the international community to support the implementation of the new programme of action in order to help these countries overcome their special problems and challenges and achieve the sustainable development.

Mr. President,

The year 2015 will mark the 70th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. We hope that the international community would spare no effort to build a peaceful, secure and prosperous world and also a world free of war, conflict and poverty.

Thank you.