



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC TO UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by
H.E.Mr. Alounkeo KITTIKHOUN, Ambassador,
Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR to the United Nations
at the Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues
New York, May 17, 2005

Mr. Chairman,

It is a privilege for me to take the floor, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, before this Permanent Forum on Indigenous issues. Let me first seize this opportunity to wish you and other members of the Bureau every success in your endeavours.

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation would like to address item 3, goal 1 of the Millenium Development Goals: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger. The Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) is a small least developed and landlocked country in South East Asia with a population of over 5.6 million and annual growth rate of 2.8 percent. Since 1975, the Lao multi-ethnic people have enjoyed independence and freedom and have become the true rulers of the country. Presently, the Lao PDR is home to 49 Lao ethnic groups, from four ethno-linguistic families with distinct cultures and attitudes. Equal before the law, all ethnic groups live in harmony with each other.

Mr. Chairman,

The Lao PDR's long term development goal is to achieve sustained equitable economic growth and social development, while safeguarding the country's social, cultural, economic and political identity. The foundation for reaching this goal has been laid down during the past years of peace and development in the country by: a) moving consistently towards a market-oriented economy; b) building-up the needed infrastructure throughout the country and c) improving the well-being of the people through greater food security, extension of social services and environment conservation, while enhancing the spiritual and cultural life of the Lao multi-ethnic population.

To this end, and in conformity with the Millennium Development Goals, the Lao Government is actively implementing its National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) or known as a localized PRSP with an ultimate goal to bring the country out of least developed status by the year 2020.

To attain the objective of NGPES, the Government of the Lao PDR has outlined the following strategic priorities:

- Maintain an appropriate level of economic growth for the medium and long term, taking into consideration demographic trends.
- Enhance human resource development through improved and extended training and health systems.
- Develop and modernize social and economic infrastructure.
- Facilitate access to electricity for people in all areas and regions of the country.
- Promote industries utilizing domestic natural resources, promote small and medium sized enterprises and the production of handicrafts.
- Develop and promote all economic sectors, particularly the private sector, including foreign direct investment.
- Enhance market linkages and trade facilitation.
- Strengthen existing legal and regulatory frameworks.
- Create favorable conditions and mechanisms for improving financial institutions and further capital market development.
- Promote economic cooperation with all partners and countries.

Besides, the Lao Government also attaches great importance to the two poverty related programmes such as opium poppy eradication and the clearing of the unexploded ordnance (UXO Lao), which still affects the lives of the multi-ethnic Lao people.

In implementing the said strategy, there are major challenges to be overcome such as integrating national development priorities, providing sufficient resources, improving government structure, reducing inequality in society, sustaining the natural environment, ensuring broader popular participation and greater application of ICT. It is our sincere hope that the international community would lend a helping hand to the Lao Government and people in our efforts to realize our development objectives that would benefit all the Lao ethnic groups.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, let me conclude my remark by wishing you all good health and happiness.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman,