

**Statement by H.E.Mr Somsavat Lengsavad,  
Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao PDR,  
Head of Delegation of the Lao PDR  
At the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development  
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 21 January 2012**

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Madam President,  
Excellencies Heads of State and Government,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of the Lao PDR, I would like to congratulate Her Excellency Dilma Rousseff, President of Brazil on her election as President of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. I am confident that under her able Presidency, the Summit will be crowned with a brilliant success. In this regard, I would also like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government and the people of Brazil for the excellent arrangements made for the Summit as well as for the warm hospitality extended to our delegation during our participation in the Summit.

Madam President,

Twenty years ago, the world summit was held in this beautiful city of Rio where the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21 on Sustainable Development were adopted. It has been noted that over the past two decades, we have been able to attain a number of key results namely the establishment of coordinating mechanism and the enactment of international legal frameworks serving as a basis for implementation and others. Nevertheless, many areas continue to encounter daunting challenges namely the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development remains virtually inefficient due to the impact arising from crisis in different fields: economy, finance, energy, natural disaster and others. As a result, many set-forth goals have yet to be fulfilled. Twenty percent of the world population or approximately 1 billion people are living below the world-defined poverty line, public healthcare services remain largely limited prompting widespread diseases in many places, and the environment continues

to suffer from the impact of irresponsible development practice. All of these have become a major obstacle for the developing nations, in particular the most vulnerable economies such as the least developed countries, the landlocked developing countries and small island states in fulfilling their respective national development goals as well as the Millennium Development Goals.

Therefore, we earnestly hope that our Summit will focus on the discussion and conclusion of a unanimous decision on adopting concrete measures and action plan in addressing and overcoming present and future challenges before us. This aims to bring about tangible benefit to our planet, especially to the poor people worldwide.

Madam President,

In the last two decades, the Government of the Lao PDR has diligently implemented the provisions contained in the Rio Declaration by incorporating different goals of Agenda 21 into its own sustainable development agenda. The Government has also set up coordinating mechanism and environmental management at the macro level as well as laid down legal framework, policies and long term strategies with a view to reaching national sustainable development goals. In this spirit, the Government has mainstreamed environmental conservation work into its immediate and long-term national socio-economic development plan, and in particular into each five year socio-economic development plan aimed at enhancing untapped potential of the country's natural resources namely agricultural land, hydropower, mining and others. The most prominent achievement that has been made in the implementation of policies and measures in the context of the management of sustainable natural resource utilization to reinforce the national economy's foundation that is based on environmental conservation as well as on social and environmental impact mitigation include, among others, the promotion of clean and organic agriculture, the use of water energy in the Mekong tributaries in order to build hydropower dams. In this regard, the World Bank has identified the Nam Theun 2 hydropower plant in the Lao PDR as a role model for clean and renewable energy development across the world. Following that success and by drawing best practices from many countries, the Lao Government is now planning to develop a run-off hydropower scheme along the Mekong mainstream by hiring world renowned consultant companies to conduct the feasibility study of the project.

Furthermore, in implementing the policy on sustainable development with green growth and low carbon emission- oriented approach, the Lao Government has set the benchmark of expanding forest cover area of 65% by 2015 and 70% by 2020 while paying due attention to climate change adaptation measures through embracing key environment preventive measures in conjunction with lasting environment and natural resource protection, conservation and rehabilitation that strongly amplifies the country's development based on the three pillars namely: economic development in proportion with social development and sustainable environment protection.

Through this sound policy on sustainable development, the Lao PDR has been able to gradually achieve its socio-economic development goals such as: sustained and stable national economic growth over the past two decades with an average growth rate of more than 7 % per year, the average per capita income has steadily increased over the years and the life of the Lao people has been gradually improved thus providing favorable conditions for us to reach the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and laying down necessary physical infrastructure to free our nation from the least developed country status by 2020.

Madam President,

Although the Lao PDR has made some progress in the context of sustainable development, we recognize that our country, as a landlocked developing nation and like other fellow landlocked developing countries, is still facing specific problems and special challenges on its own. The remoteness from global market and high transit-transport cost remain a key impediment for sustainable development of those countries. Such problem has increasingly worsened when those countries have been directly affected by different crisis in the financial and social sectors, natural disaster, climate change and others. Therefore, I would like to call upon the international community to attach importance and pay attention to assisting the landlocked developing countries by focusing on implementing the Almaty Plan of Action as well as by taking an active participation in the review of the 10 year implementation of the Plan of Action that will be held in 2014.

Madam President,

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The Lao PDR reaffirms its strong commitment to further collaborating with the world community in implementing the provisions contained in the document “ The Future We Want “ and the program for further implementation of “ Agenda 21” in order to achieve sustainable development and poverty eradication. I believe that only through serious manifestation of collective partnership, mutual assistance and shared commitment would enable our world to attain its lofty goals as mentioned above.

Thank you.