

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



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

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Intervention by

H. E. Mr. Chansy Phosikham

Minister of Finance of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

at the High-Level Segment of the 13th Session

of the Commission on Sustainable Development

(CSD-13) on "Turning Political Commitments into Action"

New York, 21 April 2005

Mr. Chairman,

Having heard comments made by previous speakers, we are of the view that our current deliberations should contribute toward speeding up the implementation of the commitments contained in Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, particularly in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlement. The decisions we are going to adopt at this session should serve as practical approaches to addressing these cross-cutting issues at the national, sub-regional, regional, and global levels.

In the Lao PDR, our Government is making every effort to implement its National Growth and Poverty Eradication Strategy (NGPES) or localized Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, with an emphasis on the issues of water and sanitation. This includes the development of necessary infrastructure to ensure greater access of the population, specially rural, to clean water and sanitation, thus improving the quality of their lives. Between 1990-2002, the proportion of the population with access to a safe source of water increased from 28 to 58 percent, and the population with access to improved sanitation from 11 to 42 per cent. For the year 2004, the coverage of clean water supply has improved up to 65 percent.

With the assistance from the international community, our Government has developed sound water and sanitation policies, strategies, investment plans and regulations to ensure sector sustainability and growth. In 1996, the Government introduced a Law on Water and Water Resources, presented a National Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Strategy in 1997 and established the Water Supply Authority (WASA) in 1999. It also enacted a Law on Hygiene, Disease Prevention and Health Promotion in 2001.

In an effort to meet the Government's objective of providing 80 percent of the population with access to safe water by 2015, attention has been paid to increasing coverage with priority given to the poorest, least accessible and vulnerable regions. This involves delivery of sustainable services through community participation, cost-sharing and the decentralization of planning and implementation processes.

Although human settlement has not been a major problem in Laos, the Government has started to formulate a long-term strategy and policies on land use, housing, urban services, infrastructure development and environmental protection in order to accommodate the future expansion of the urban areas.

Despite difficulties and challenges facing us as a landlocked and least developed country, we will do our utmost to continue implementing our international commitments, including those on these complex and cross-cutting issues. Yet, our efforts could not be successful unless sufficient institutional and human capacity are ensured to implement the NGPES toward meeting those commitments, including the MDGs. So, increased development assistance should be forthcoming to enable us to meet our investment requirements in order to ensure adequate rural water supplies, effective operation and maintenance of the existing water supply systems and the establishment of a national water sector monitoring system... In this connection, we earnestly look forward to continued support and assistance from the donor community.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.