



Check Against Delivery

STATEMENT

by

**H.E. Ambassador Alounkeo Kittikhoun
Permanent Representative
of the Lao PDR to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group
of Landlocked Developing Countries
at the 12th Session of the United Nations
Commission on Sustainable Development**

New York, 19 April 2004

Mr. Chairman,

To begin with, the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) congratulates you on your election as chairman of CSD-12. Our felicitations Also go to other members of the Bureau on their respective election. We believe that your rich experience and high competence in multilateral diplomacy will guide this session to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Chairman,

Aligning ourselves fully with the statement made by the representative of Qatar on behalf of the G77 & China, we feel it really timely that CSD-12 has brought together here today relevant government policy-makers and sustainable development partners across the globe to assess for the first time how well the agreed goals of JPOI are being met and chart the way ahead. This is due to the fact that there are over 1 billion people worldwide lacking access to safe drinking water, nearly 1 billion people living in slums and two billion more people in need of access to adequate sanitation. Despite the challenging tasks before us, we believe that with stronger political will and greater devotion, the international community will be able to overcome all the challenges and move forward to gradually meeting the internationally agreed goals, including the MDGs.

As a vulnerable group among the developing countries, LLDCs remain committed to implementing the aforementioned goals by all means and with all out effort. Yet, our

strenuous endeavours alone are proved to be insufficient to face the tasks ahead. A helping hand should be further lent to our countries to overcome the challenges stemming from our vulnerability and reach our development goals. In this regard, we urge the international community to respond positively to the call as stipulated in the JPOI, that is to "enhance the capacities of developing countries, including the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states, to benefit from liberalized trade opportunities through international cooperation and measures aimed at improving productivity, commodity diversification and communication infrastructure development".

Mr. Chairman,

As CSD-12 also serves as the preparatory meeting for the International Meeting to review the Implementation of Barbados Programme of Action, we wish to laud the SIDS efforts in this process. We also reaffirm our strong support for their new strategy for the further implementation of BPOA to be adopted at the Meeting. It is our strong belief that the legitimate cause of SIDS for survival and sustainable development will continue to earn support from the world community at large.

Mr. Chairman,

As small and vulnerable developing economies, LLDCs continue to face big challenges. Our high transport cost (on average we spend ^{14%} ~~40%~~ of our export earnings for transport and insurance services while other developing countries spend only 7%), remoteness, isolation from major world market as well as our dependence on the transit policies of our neighbours, are making us most vulnerable. In August 2003, the world community at the ministerial level for the first time ever has adopted the Almaty Programme of Action to address the special needs of LLDCs within a new global framework for transit transport cooperation for landlocked and transit developing countries. We, the LLDCs hereby urge the international community for the full and effective implementation of the said Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Given their vulnerability, both SIDS and LLDCs deserve sympathy and support from the world community. In this spirit, we wish this august meeting every success.

Thank You, Mr. Chairman!