

**Press Release**

23 October 2009

Climate Change – the challenge for our times – is the theme at the celebration of United Nations Day 2009 at UN House, Vientiane

Vientiane, 23 October 2009

The UN Country Team in Lao PDR hosted a ceremony at UN House in Vientiane on 23 October celebrating the 64th anniversary of the United Nations and 54 years of UN-Lao cooperation. The opening address to the audience of government members, the diplomatic community and development partners was given by Her Excellency Mrs. Pany Yathotou, Vice-President of the National Assembly.

When Ms. Sonam Yangchen Rana, United Nations Resident Coordinator, made her speech, she emphasised that the theme of this year's UN Day – Climate Change – is a challenge that is inextricably linked with achieving the MDGs and creating a better life for everyone in Lao PDR.

“At this difficult time for the country,” she said, “with communities in the south suffering from the impact of floods caused by tropical storms, it is a timely reminder that such extreme weather events are likely to happen more often as the climate changes.”

She stressed the challenges that must be addressed to achieve the MDGs in Lao PDR: actions stepped up to reduce inequity, hunger and malnutrition and maternal mortality; to close the gender gap in education and increase school completion rates; to halt the rapid loss of environmental resources; and to ensure rural areas have access to safe water and improved sanitation.

“Climate change looms larger every day.” said UN Secretary-General Mr Ban Ki-moon in his global video message for UN Day 2009 that was shown at the event “we share one planet, one home. As people, as nations, as a species, we sink or swim together.”

The UN Country Team in Lao PDR is working to raise awareness of the issues surrounding climate change and how they will affect everyone. It is developing capacities to mitigate carbon emissions through sustainable development paths, and to supporting the Lao delegation to actively participate in the upcoming global climate change negotiations in Copenhagen.

The ceremony ended with Ms Yangchen Rana presenting prizes to the winning student delegation at the United Nations Security Council Simulation held on Thursday October 22 and a dance by the Peaun Mit Performance Troupe.

Notes:

The United Nations Country Team in the Lao People's Democratic Republic is committed to supporting the efforts of the Government to improve the life of all citizens, especially those most vulnerable. We shall continue to work closely with the Government and all development

partners for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Our collective endeavour is to assist the people of Lao PDR to achieve progress and better standards of living for all.

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