



***Opening Remarks by Mr. Leik Boonwaat UNRC a.i.  
At Development Partner Consultations on 7th NSEDP  
14 May 2010***

***Your Excellency Dr. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong, Vice Minister MPI,  
Excellencies Ambassadors,  
Distinguished Participants, Friends***

Good morning to everyone! Let me join Dr. Bounthavy in welcoming and thanking all of you for coming to participate in this morning's important consultation on the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) 2011-15.

Let me also take this opportunity on behalf of Development Partners to both thank and commend the Government of Lao PDR, and especially Dr. Bounthavy, for providing Development Partners with this important opportunity to offer our perspectives on the 7th NSEDP.

As the meeting of Development Partners highlighted last Tuesday, our ultimate objective is to help the Government of Lao PDR finalize a truly effective NSEDP needed to achieve the country's priority national development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Achievement of the MDGs would also greatly advance the country towards graduation from LDC status by 2020.

As already highlighted by Dr. Bounthavy, the 7th NSEDP will also be the centre piece for the upcoming Round Table Meeting on 27 October this year, and will serve as the common framework for government, development partners and all other stakeholders in the mobilization and coordination of resources needed to achieve the country's development goals.

As Development Partners, we acknowledge the challenge in preparing the new NSEDP especially given the large number and variety of stakeholders at the central and provincial levels that the Government has been consulting.

We appreciate and commend more openness in the efforts made by the Government in this consultation process, especially in providing copies of the most relevant sections of the draft NSEDP in English as they have become available. This increased openness and opportunity for participation very much reflects the increasingly close and trusting partnership between the Government of Lao PDR and its Development Partners.

As was much appreciated, the Lao language version of the full draft NSEDP was shared with Development Partners last week. So hopefully some of you

with the assistance of your Lao staff have been able to review at least those sections most relevant to your respective organizations.

In any case, we understand that the consultation process will continue after this meeting today. Moreover, as indicated by Dr. Bounthavy, for those Development Partners who may need more time to review the document before offering suggestions, there is also an opportunity to provide these in writing by 20th May.

As also indicated by Dr. Bounthavy, yesterday morning I had the opportunity to brief him on the very fruitful discussion we had at UN House with Development Partners this past Tuesday, and the many valuable comments, perspectives and suggestions offered. I was also able to provide Dr. Bounthavy with a copy of the points that form the written summary of our meeting sent around to Development Partners yesterday.

My understanding from Dr. Bounthavy is that many suggestions by Development Partners have already been taken into account in the full document, but could be better highlighted in the Executive Summary.

In that case, while the Government is aware of some of the remaining gaps and related issues in the current draft, it has proven quite challenging to include them in the NSEDP in a practical, realistic and achievable manner.

So I understand that the Government would be especially grateful to learn more from Development Partners on how to practically and realistically include such suggestions in the new NSEDP, and on how to more practically the Government can realistically achieve the related objectives given the country's available and limited resources.

To briefly summarize our consultations this past Tuesday, Development Partners fully respect and support the Government-led process in the formulation of the NSEDP. Development Partners also commend the Government for the clear integration of most of the MDGs and related targets in the seventh NSEDP.

At the same time, Development Partners felt that there was still a valuable opportunity to further integrate into the NSEDP the various sector plans which would further strengthen the NSEDP and help achieve the government's various sector goals.

I think Development Partners also felt that more coverage of the poverty analysis including food poverty would better enable Development Partners to mobilize needed resources from their respective Headquarters and capitals.

There was also wide support among Development Partners for further highlighting the importance of effective governance for deepening the quality of growth and development in Lao PDR, especially transparency and accountability, as well as further support to civil society.



While Development Partners fully appreciate the importance and value of Foreign Direct Investment in the country's growth and development, increased focus on the quality of FDI being mobilized will be essential to ensure that Lao people and the country fully benefit and that the country's valuable environmental assets are safeguarded.

Development Partners also commend the Government's target of issuing one million land titles over the next five years, as this will be essential to safeguarding land and home for most Lao families who still live and work in rural areas. At the same time, questions remain about available resources for implementing such titling as well as ensuring that titling fees are poverty sensitive.

Development Partners would also be grateful if a number of other issues critical to the well-being of Lao people could also be better highlighted in the Executive Summary including nutrition and food security, gender, HIV/AIDS, UXO, climate change and disaster management.

In general, Development Partners would be most grateful to learn more about implementation measures, the summary financial framework underpinning the new NSEDP, as well as the monitoring and evaluation framework.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With these brief words, I wish everyone a successful consultation.

Thank you again, and I now pass the floor back over to the Chair, His Excellency Dr. Bounthavy.