



**Official inauguration of the United Nations House and
Launch of the MDG Progress Report**

Vientiane, 11 April 2009



**Statement by
H.E Dr. Thongloun SISOULITH, Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR
at the Opening Ceremony of the UN House and
Launching of the National Report on Millennium Development Goals
Vientiane, April 11, 2009**

*H.E Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations
Mrs. UN Resident Coordinator,
Ministers and Vice-Ministers
Members of Diplomatic Corps and Representatives of International Organizations
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Today I have the great pleasure to, jointly with the United Nations system, inaugurate the new UN House in Vientiane. This Ceremony is of great significance as it is held in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary-General. It is also being organized at a time when the Lao multi-ethnic people are contemplating the national socio-economic development plan with a view to achieving national development objectives including the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, this event coincides with an auspicious occasion, as the Lao people across the country are preparing to celebrate Lao New Year, as inherited from Lao ancient traditions.

Distinguished guests,

The Lao PDR and the United Nations have enjoyed long standing cooperation. Since 1955, when it became a member of the United Nations, Laos has seen the important role played by the United Nations in the development in the country. During the struggle for national independence and sovereignty, the United Nations contributed to restoring reconciliation and peace in Laos. After the proclamation of the Lao PDR in 1975, the role of the United Nations in the Lao PDR has further been enhanced, particularly in the area of socio-economic development and poverty reduction. Over the course of almost six decades, this Lao-UN cooperation has gradually expanded to many areas that are priorities for the national development strategy of the Lao PDR such as education, health, agriculture, capacity building, infrastructure development and rural development as well as addressing poverty of communities, human development, and management of the environment and natural resources. UN assistance has increased annually and today it amounts to more than US\$50 million per annum. This assistance, which is an

unconditional grant, has greatly contributed to national socio-economic development. In this regard, on behalf of the Lao Government and the Lao multi-ethnic people, I would like to express our sincere appreciation to the UN country team for their continued support and productive assistance.

In order to signify this cooperation and assistance by the United Nations as well as to further enhance future cooperation, the Lao Government has built this office premises for the United Nations, which started in 2005 and was completed in 2007. The decision by the Lao Government to construct this office premises is a clear testimony to its desire and commitment to expand cooperation with the United Nations. Moreover, it reflects the importance that the Lao Government attaches to the role of the UN system in the process of national socio-economic development in the Lao PDR. This opening ceremony indicates not only the beginning of realizing the ONE UN policy, but it also marks a turning point in cooperation between the Lao PDR and the United Nations system. Furthermore, the presence of UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has reinforced the commitment of the United Nations towards strengthening the UN assistance and support to the Lao people.

Distinguished guests,

We are now at the mid-term towards reaching the MDGs. The international community is in the process of reviewing the progress toward the MDGs. The Lao Government attaches great importance to the implementation of MDGs, thus, it has incorporated all MDGs into its national socio-economic development plan. Today, together with the UN country team, we have completed the national report on the MDGs in the Lao PDR. This report is the second national review, which takes stock of the progress in the implementation process, and identifies and analyses constraints and challenges in achieving each MDG. In addition, this report also provides recommendations and proposes measures to overcoming obstacles and challenges that the Lao government and its people are encountering with a view to attaining all these goals by 2015. In this regard, I feel privileged and honored to launch the MDGs Report together with the UN Secretary General.

Distinguished guests,

On this auspicious occasion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to H.E Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations for his presence at this ceremony. I would also like to extend my appreciation to all the guests for sparing their time to be with us today. On the occasion of the coming Lao New Year, May I wish you all the best of health and great success in fulfilling your noble duties.

Thank you.