



**Address by Sonam Yangchen Rana
United Nations Resident Coordinator**

**UN Day evening function
19 October 2010
Lao Plaza Hotel, Lao PDR**

Your Excellency Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

Your Excellency Madame Helen Clark, Chair of the United Nations Development Group and UNDP Administrator,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the UN Country Team in Laos, it is my pleasure to welcome you here today to participate in the UN Day celebrations in the presence of our two highly distinguished guests. The theme for this year is Youth, which is indeed highly appropriate since young people represent the future of this country.

Your Excellency Dr. Thongloun, the United Nations is indeed grateful for the trust, cooperation and partnership extended by Government in the shared struggle to eradicate poverty, promote economic growth and achieve the MDGs in this beautiful country.

Your Excellency Madame Helen Clark – you have made the UN proud as an extraordinary leader – who has championed UN values such as sustainable human development, cultural diversity and gender equality – now as the Chair of the UNDG comprising of 32 UN entities and during your highly successful tenure as three-term Prime Minister of New Zealand. Thank you for being here to celebrate the UN Day in Laos and also attend the Round Table Meeting in spite of your very busy schedule.

In this hall tonight we have partners from the full spectrum of development work in the Lao PDR – from Government, from the UN system, civil Society and private sector, from other agencies and organizations and development partners without whose valuable support our work would not be possible. Not least we wanted to be joined by young people who will entertain and lead us into a brief journey of introspection and hope.

Looking back over the past five decades of the UN in the Lao PDR as we celebrate 55 years of collaboration, a special partnership has evolved and deepened in response to many opportunities and challenges that have emerged. This partnership has shifted over time building strong trust and mutual respect for concrete results to improve the lives and welfare of the Lao people.

Tomorrow we will have in-depth discussion at the Round Table Meeting on the 7th 5-year National Socio-Economic Development Plan along with many issues surrounding the Millennium Development Goals. We will discuss how partnerships can be strengthened and development can be more equitable and sustainable.

But tonight I would like to call your attention to the future of Laos; to the young people in this country who make up more than 50 % of the population and to take to heart some of the messages that young people are trying to convey.

On this year of the "International Year of Youth", we have planned for you an evening of culture and tradition by the young people from all walks of life in the Lao PDR. We hope you will enjoy the shows!

And once again, I'd like to welcome all of you to this evening of celebration.

Thank you!