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**Remarks by Ms Sonam Yangchen Rana,
UN Resident Coordinator**

**World Population Day
23 July 2010, ICTC, Vientiane**

*Your Excellency Dr. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong, Vice Minister, Ministry of
Planning and Investment,
Ms, Mieko Yabuta, UNFPA Representative,
Excellencies,
Representatives of Government,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am delighted to be here with you today to mark the World Population Day.

On behalf of the UN system, Let me join H.E Dr. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong and Ms Mieko Yabuta, Head of UNFPA – an organization that has been championing the urgency and importance of population issues – in welcoming you all to this important event.

The World Population Day was instituted in 1989, after the world population grew larger than five billion. Now, more than twenty years later, the global population is expected to reach 7 billion by year 2011.

Since the emergence of human kind, it took almost two thousand years to reach a population of 5 billion, and now, it has taken us some twenty years to add another 2 billion. Thinking of the fast pace of growth, it is easy to understand the tremendous pressure placed on demand for food, housing, water and sanitation, among other things, by the rapidly growing population.

This year's theme for the World Population Day, "Everyone Counts," is a timely reminder for us all of the importance of accurate data on population. Governments need to be able to gather information and analyze population trends in order to generate the political will to address current and future needs, and develop and implement policies and strategies to respond to such needs.

In Lao PDR, the population is expected to reach more than 6 million by 2015. With accurate and quality data on population from Census and other surveys, the Government will be able to plan ahead for the future generations. This is particularly important in 2010 as the Government is finalizing its 7th National Socio Economic Development Plan which aims at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and exiting the Least Developed Country status by 2020.

Better information and data can help make better decisions. As noted by H.E Dr. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong, Vice Minister of MPI, the Government of Lao PDR is committed to improve its data collection, analysis and use to guide the

Government's efforts to achieve sustainable and equitable development in Lao PDR.

The UN family in Lao PDR acknowledges these efforts, and we will continue to support the Government and line ministries. We are convinced that joining forces, strengthening and nurturing our relationship, is the only way to achieve the Government's 7th National Socio Economic Development Plan and the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and to sustainably improve people's lives in Lao PDR.