



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

**The State and Challenges
in Achieving Food Security in the Lao PDR**

Statement by the Head of the Delegation
From the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic,
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Presented at the High-Level Conference on World Food Security
and the Challenge of Climate Change and Bioenergy
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**Excellency Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Ban Kim-Moon, Secretary General of the United Nations
Excellencies,
Honorable Jacques Diouf, Director General of FAO
Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen**

First of all, on behalf of the Lao Delegation, allow me to present my sincere congratulations and our sincere appreciation to FAO for organizing this very important high-level conference, held at a time when economic and social turbulences are threatening food security on a worldwide scale and especially in the developing nations. These negative developments are at present considered as major challenges for the developing world to realize agreed common targets to addressing secure food supply for all and eliminate poverty as it was set in the World Food Summit Plan of Actions and the Millennium Development Goals.

In the Lao PDR and for over two decades, thanks to the continued strong support provided by our Government and aid assistance from our development partners to the development of our agriculture sector, the Lao Agriculture Sector, generally speaking, is still in the possibility to record a steady and continuous growth since the country has achieved basic self-sufficiency in rice production in year 2000. This is a commendable achievement, taking into consideration that the country is under permanent threats in occurrence of natural disasters. The achievements made is due to a large extent to the benefits derived from significant and continued investments made in the past in expanding the area of irrigated rice agriculture; strong government support to develop grassroots' extension systems directly responsive to raising productivity; especially in terms of provision of inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, small credit and new farming techniques and the continued policy support that brought about the active and collective contribution from the other economic and social sectors to assist in the development and the commercialization of the agriculture sector. Being part of ASEAN and the on-going dynamic regional economic integration, especially in terms of transboundary contract-farming arrangements, very favorable conditions have been created in the last decade to develop the country's agriculture economy. The increased demand in a few key agriculture produce in the region has been a catalyst for the Lao PDR to boost significantly its agriculture production, especially in the case of rice, maize, sugar cane, coffee, vegetables, cattle, rubber and a few energy crops such as jatropha and cassava.

The agriculture sector remains the greatest contributor to the Government's food production and poverty reduction targets. Our rice production target for year 2010 is 3,3 million tons or about 500kgs per head

per year. In order to achieve the above mentioned targets, we have formulated short and long-term development policies and strategies to support concrete implementation of needed interventions within the frame of our national plans. However, the World economic crisis that we all are affected from is also beginning to have negative impacts to our agriculture sector, especially in terms of supply of key imported inputs, namely fuel and fertilizers. However, rice price has remained relatively stable up until now which is due to the fact that Laos is still predominantly a subsistence agriculture-based economy and that Laos is self-sufficient in rice for almost a decade. It is also important for our government to work closely with our development partners in order to win continued support needed to help achieve set production targets. To realize long-term sustainable food production and viable generation of bio-energy, Laos initiated programs to clearly delineating specific agricultural zones, in order to allow for the possibility of balancing investments in food and bio-energy crops. We are also working closely with our neighbors and development partners in realizing our forestry strategy that was laid down until Year 2020, our policy is sustainable use of our resources with a strong participation from local communities to co-manage existing forest resources. We believe that for Lao PDR this is one of the most appropriate strategy to address climate change.

**Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates**

Development experiences of over the past two decades in ASEAN and in our own country shows that developing countries have true ability and capacity to increase agricultural productivity by many folds but we need to join forces and institute more viable partnership schemes and mechanism among developed, developing nations and international institutions to assist each other in a more coordinated manner, ensuring consistency and continuity in established partnership programs. We are hopeful that the Accra Conference and the other related international gatherings to be held during this year would bring about the needed immediate and mid-term support that developing countries have been seeking for since long, especially in terms of giving full ownership and leadership in planning and managing coordinated aid programs for the benefits of their own people and their own future and also in terms of more viable trade regime. May I take this opportunity to present once again my best wishes to distinguished delegates and a very fruitful and productive meeting, especially in terms of agreeing on a common development agenda within the frame of actions plans of this Summit Declaration that would hopefully be of real substance and help to achieving secure food supply in real terms in the developing world.

THANK YOU