



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE LAO PEOPLE'S
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Statement

By

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**United Nations General Assembly High-Level
Meeting on HIV and AIDS**

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Check Against Delivery

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Delegation of the Lao PDR, I would like to commend the United Nations for the convening this High-level Meeting on HIV and AIDS, which is of great significance for global fight against HIV and AIDS.

Throughout 30 years of common endeavour in combating HIV and AIDS, significant and visible achievements have been recorded. Today, we have seen more integration of preventing and controlling communicable and non communicable diseases while identity and specificity of individual approach remains.

In 2006, our country - the Lao PDR reiterated its determination before the UN General Assembly to establish a strong National HIV Response aiming at universal access to a comprehensive prevention, treatment, care and support programme. Since then, every two years, my Country has reported to the UN General Assembly on progress made in scaling up the response.

Some of the key milestones have been the establishment of a multi-sectoral coordination body, the National Committee for the Control of AIDS and the design of a new National Strategic and Action plan on HIV/AIDS/STI 2011-2015.

To monitor possible emerging epidemics, our HIV surveillance system has been progressively strengthened. Our prevention programme has become more comprehensive through the launch of a 100% Condom initiative and our national treatment programme has now 5 operational centres across the country.

The endorsement by the National Assembly of an HIV Law and the integration of our programme into regional initiatives within the Greater Mekong Sub-region on HIV and AIDS in aspects related to HIV and infrastructure, migration, drugs and human trafficking is yet another positive achievement.

We are thankful to the Global Fund for the financial support, which had helped to enhance the capacity building in 5 grant operations that had been successful, thus maintaining our country as a low affected country. We are also grateful for the financial and the technical assistance provided by the Joint UN Team on AIDS, the bilateral development partners and the INGOs.

Although the Lao PDR had made considerable progress in responding to HIV, constraints and challenges remain. Being at the heart of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) with rapid national development and surrounded by 5 fast growing neighbours, the virus continues to impose social and economic threats to the Lao PDR as it keeps spreading in specific segments of the population where transmission is especially prevalent. Our estimation and projection indicates an incident of some 1000 new infections every year and while progress has been made in reducing prevalence among Sex Workers, there are hotspots of continued high prevalence in some locations. New data indicates that Men having Sex with Men epidemics are on the rise in our main cities and emerging epidemics have been found in People who inject drugs.

This suggests that efforts to combat the spread of HIV have to be further strengthened both in terms of coverage and quality of services as well as sustainability. We see 2011 as a critical moment for our National HIV response and inspired by the new UNAIDS Vision "Getting to Zero" we are committed to realize the new strategies designed to minimise the impact of HIV and AIDS on social and economic development in the Lao PDR. We support the Declaration of our High Level Meeting on HIV and AIDS.

Thank you.