



Lao People's Democratic Republic

Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

**Statement by the Head of the Delegation
From the Lao Peoples' Democratic Republic,
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Deputy Minister for Agriculture and Forestry
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry**

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**Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, allow me to express my sincere congratulations to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons to this 38th session of the FAO conference on their election. On behalf of the Lao delegation, allow me also to present my greetings and warm wishes to all distinguished heads and delegates from FAO member countries. My warmest congratulation also to our new FAO members: South Sudan and our ASEAN brothers, Brunei and Singapore.

It is a great honor for me to attend the 38th session of the FAO conference. I would like to join the other distinguished delegations to sincerely thank FAO for the excellent arrangements made for the conference and the warm hospitality extended to our Lao delegation.

As we all know, the two greatest challenges that the world faces today are: 1) food security and nutrition and 2) climate change. Both challenges require urgent, innovative, practical and holistic responses. Tackling hunger and food insecurity in the world, Asia and the Pacific Region and especially in Lao PDR requires a widely shared vision, clear strategies and investment priorities as well as good coordination and cooperation among all stakeholders including government institutions, local communities, private businesses, academe and international agencies.

As food security is a complex, multidimensional and multisectoral issue, the need for a wider and comprehensive engagement of all sectors based on sustainable partnership is crucial. In this context, the Lao Government through the support of FAO will soon undertake a comprehensive revision formulation of its National Food and Nutrition Security Strategy which will include a governance framework on food and nutrition security that engenders full

participation of the concerned stakeholders, builds on what already exists and ensures that existing resources are used most effectively while focusing additional resources in prioritized areas where they will have the most impact. By refocusing our strategy, we are hopeful to realize a more balanced diet and nutrition for our population across the country by 2015.

The Government of Lao PDR believes that to achieve sustainable agricultural development and ensuring food and nutritional security we need to continue to assist our farming communities; we need to invest in farmers. This means to continue to providing them with an enabling policy and legal environment ensuring fair and transparent property rights, security of land tenure and access to common property resources. It also means providing good infrastructure, expanding access to modern technologies and enhanced connectivity to markets to become more productive in a sustainable manner and empowered to deal with various risks and uncertainties.

Within this strategic framework, the Lao Government continues to support farmers through easy access to agricultural inputs, dissemination of new farming and post-harvest technologies through our extension system, and substantial investments in achieving a more diverse and better Mix of food systems. These efforts are further supported by the programmes to address the challenge of climate change, conserving and wisely using our diverse genetic resources and building strong cooperatives and farmers' organizations. We believe these measures will make the Lao agriculture sector more productive to ensure the availability of sufficient quantities and quality of food to meet the nutritional needs of our people. Moreover, our focus on mixed farming system should enable us to minimize the risks from natural disasters, price volatility, market failures and the loss of agro-biodiversity through monoculture plantations and thereby build the farming system's resilience to ensure sustainable livelihoods to our farmers.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thanks to the continued strong support provided by our development partners and in particular FAO, the Lao Agriculture Sector, generally speaking, has recorded a steady growth and since the year 2000 the country has achieved self-sufficiency in rice production. The Government of Lao PDR highly appreciates the invaluable policy and technical support FAO is providing to agricultural development and food security in my country. It is also assisting our country to forge stronger intra- and inter-sectoral and cross-border technical and economic cooperation.

We are hopeful that outcomes of this Conference will further strengthen FAO to effectively carry out its mandate and core functions towards achieving the Strategic Objectives contributing to eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in the world. In this regard, I have the honour to convey to this Conference the full support of the Government of Lao PDR to the Programme of Work and Budget 2014-2015 and the Medium Term Plan 2014-2017 proposed by the Director General. We have noted that over the last two decades FAO's budgetary resources declined in real terms while the world faced new food crises and the effects of climate change in agriculture. Despite the financial difficulties the world is facing today, I believe, my fellow delegates will agree that FAO deserves the modest increase in resources the Director General has asked for so that it can continue to provide its much-needed support to the agriculture sector in developing countries.

Finally our delegation would like to thank FAO for its continued active role in Lao PDR in helping us in eradicating hunger and malnutrition and realizing the targets set in the World Food Summit Plan of Actions and the Millennium Development Goals.

Once again I extend my best wishes to the Chair, Vice-Chairs and all delegates.

“Thank you”