



LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC



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

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**Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Aloukéo KITTIKHOUN
Permanent Representative of the Lao PDR
Chairman of the Group
of Landlocked Developing Countries
on the Report of the Secretary-General
“In larger freedom: towards development, security
and human rights for all” at the 59th Session
of the General Assembly**

New York, 7 April 2005

Mr. President,

Let me thank you, once again, for giving me the floor on behalf of the 31-member Group of Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). We support the way you conduct the current consultations, which we trust, will be maintained throughout the High-Level Plenary process. We are confident that under your competent guidance, our preparatory work for the High-Level event will be brought to a successful outcome.

We also like to thank the Secretary-General for the great efforts he has exerted in making the comprehensive report available for our deliberations in a timely manner. We believe a number of analyses and recommendations outlined in the report would provide an important input to the substantive preparation for the High-Level event.

Mr. President,

We are happy to learn from this Report that over the past two decades global extreme poverty has been reduced dramatically and that hundreds of millions of men, women and children the world over have been able to get rid of it and begin to enjoy improved access to food, health care, education and housing. Yet, we can not feel free from concern that today more than a billion people still live on less than a dollar a day,

every year 11 million children die before their fifth birthday and 3 million people are killed by AIDS, to cite just a few.

We are of the view that the situation could be possibly reversed and the MDGs reached if only multilateral cooperation were to be enhanced, great dynamism and political will shown and development embraced by all states as the top priority on the international agenda.

Mr. President,

It's gratifying for us to see particularly MDG No. 8 being dealt with in the report. This goal is regarded by our Group as the most essential aspect for achieving MDGs. Unfortunately, the targets under goal 8 are not fully covered by the report. In other words, no matter how inclusive it is, the report fails to fully address the special needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, the most vulnerable of all, as the goal itself calls for.

In our view, the global partnership for development should not only be confined to some commitments of Monterey Consensus. Conversely, it should be addressed in a broader and more comprehensive manner. According to resolution 58/291, the High-Level Plenary is mandated not only to undertake a comprehensive review of the progress made in the achievement of the MDGs, including the internationally agreed development goals, but also of the outcomes and commitments of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields as well as the global partnership required for their achievement.

Needless to say, one of the crucial dimensions of the global partnership for development is to address the special needs of least developed countries (LDCs), landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS). These three vulnerable groups of countries constitute almost half of the UN membership and represent the poorest segment of the international community. These countries are lagging far behind in the international development mainstreams because of specific structural and geographical challenges that constrain their capacities for development. The international community has made tremendous efforts to identify their special development needs. The UN General Assembly has an annual agenda item on these countries. It has convened conferences to identify their special development needs and agree upon international support measures to address these problems. Due to their vulnerabilities, these countries are in very difficult and special situations compared to the rest of the world. That is why there are three distinct programmes of action designed to suit their respective special situations. Therefore, the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals should be closely linked to the international efforts aimed at implementing the Brussels Programme of Action for LDCs, Almaty Programme of Action for LLDCs, and Mauritius Programme of Action for SIDS. We strongly believe that the successful implementation of these commitments will, no doubt, significantly contribute to the attainment of the MDGs and other internationally agreed development goals.

Mr. President,

Allow me now to elaborate a bit more on landlocked developing countries, in my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Landlocked Developing Countries. The Almaty Programme of Action and recent UN General Assembly resolutions recognized that lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from international major markets, prohibitive transit transport costs, heavy dependence on transit services and conditions of transit neighbors, smallness of their markets are the main developmental constraints for landlocked developing countries. The Almaty Programme of Action offered specific actions in five priorities, including infrastructure development and maintenance, transit policy framework and international trade and trade facilitation in order to secure access for landlocked developing countries to and from the sea by all means of transport without any hindrance, reduce trade transaction costs to improve competitiveness, address problems related to delay and loss along transit routes, etc. The Almaty Programme of Action also called on the international community to extend necessary financial and technical assistance to both landlocked and transit developing countries to ensure the full and effective implementation of those priorities. The implementation of these specific measures should serve as the basis for addressing the special needs of landlocked developing countries.

We are pleased to see that there is a mention about the need to build trade competitiveness for LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS through the implementation of their national Millennium Development Goals strategies with an emphasis on investments in agricultural productivity, trade-related infrastructure and competitive export industries. The importance of regional infrastructure and policy cooperation for supporting economic development, particularly for LLDCs and SIDS, is also stressed. However, having reviewed the report in its entirety we regret to say that the issue of landlocked developing countries remains in need of special emphasis and completeness.

Mr. President,

In the implementation of MDG No. 8: addressing the special needs of LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS, a specific set of measures and indicators should be applied to quantify the progress. No question that the millennium development goals will not be achievable unless the urgent needs of the three most vulnerable groups of countries, which comprise almost half of the international community are met. Consequently, special attention of international assistance should be focused on these vulnerable groups if the MDGs are to be attained by 2015.

The United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) has been given an important mandate by the General Assembly to monitor the integrated and coordinated follow-up to the implementation of aforementioned programmes of action. Therefore this Office should be actively involved in and duly contribute to the MDGs review process in the interest of these three vulnerable groups.

Its primary task should be to establish linkages between MDGs and commitments of those programmes of action and indicative ways and means of achieving them.

Mr. President,

Let me also touch upon the issue of market access to which our Group attaches great importance. We welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation "to ask developed countries to commit themselves, this year, to complete the Doha round of trade negotiations not later than 2006, and as a first step to give immediate duty-free and quota-free market access to all exports from Least Developed Countries".

As you are aware, no less critical is market access for LLDCs to address their special development needs and overcome the impediments of geography that prevent them from being competitive in the global trading system and integrating into the global economy. The Almaty Programme of Action, the São Paulo Consensus and UNGA resolutions have all recognized the need for the WTO trade negotiations to give particular attention to products of special interest of LLDCs. Of particular importance, resolution A/59/486/Add.2 of 22 December 2004 called for the Doha Work Programme to consider including LLDCs as small and vulnerable economies under the category of "Small Economies". In this regard, we request that this specific and urgent need of LLDCs be taken into due attention and consideration.

Against this backdrop, I would like to invite you, Mr. President, to undertake necessary measures to ensure that the special needs of the most vulnerable segment of the international community be fully addressed during the High-Level Event on the MDGs and in the outcome deriving from this summit gathering in September as called for in resolution A/59/486/Add.2.

We rest assured that the on-going consultations, including on the issue of global socio-economic development will contribute to turning the Report into a complete set of recommendations to the High-Level Plenary 2005. The Group of LLDCs stands ready to make every contribution possible to this process to advance its legitimate cause of poverty eradication and sustainable development.

I thank you, Mr. President.