Lao People’s Democratic Republic

Statement by
H.E. Madam. Phonevanh Outhavong, Deputy Minister,
Ministry of Planning and Investment,
Head of Delegation of the Lao PDR

At the Seventh Asia and Pacific Population Conference

Agenda Item 2: Review of progress made towards the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as of the PoA of the ICPD

Bangkok, 15 November 2023
- Your Excellency Chair / Vice Chair,
- Distinguished delegates,
- Ladies and gentlemen.

At the outset, I wish to congratulate the organizers for successfully holding of this the 7th Asia and Pacific Population Conference.

On behalf of the government of Lao PDR, it is my great honour to share some of the key progress we have made in implementing the ICPD POA.

In 1994, Lao PDR adopted the landmark Programme of Action (PoA) at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, which still remains a guiding document of the global, regional and national population, and sexual and reproductive health and rights frameworks.

Since the adoption of the ICPD PoA, Lao PDR has mainstreamed the PoA into our National Population Development Policy, National Social-Economic Development Plans and has made significant progress in improving live livelihood of people, increasing family planning uptake, skilled birth attendance and primary school enrollment, as well as achieving a significant decline in maternal mortality ratio, among other improvements.

Mr. Chair/Madam Vice-Chair,

On behalf of the Government of Lao PDR, I am honoured to reaffirm our continued commitment to further advance the implementation of the ICPD PoA in support of the Sustainable Development Goals to achieve zero preventable maternal deaths, zero unmet need for family planning, zero violence against women and children, and harmful practices, including child marriage.

Further to the recent National Conference on Population and Development held on 23-24 October 2023, the Government of Lao PDR with support from UNFPA and other development partners has prioritized the strategic commitments to further accelerate the implementation of the ICPD PoA and Human Capital Development in our country:

I. Harnessing the demographic dividend by:

- Developing a multi-sectoral roadmap to accelerate the implementation of the National Population and Development Policy through the integration
into the National Socio-Economic Development Plan, sectoral plans and sub-national frameworks.

- Scaling-up comprehensive sexuality education and reinvigorating the “Noi framework” and “Noi ecosystem” to empower adolescent girls and boys in partnership with regional and global development partners.

- Prioritizing and integrating population dynamics and mega-trends, such as the demographic transition, disparities, digitalization and climate change into the Mid-Term Review of the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP) for 2021-2025 and the 10th NSED (2026-2030).

- Establishing a National Coordination Committee on Population and Development.

II. Addressing climate change challenge faced by health, protection and other social sector areas by:

- Increasing investments to build a resilient health system, including life-saving sexual and reproductive health and violence against women and children response services.

- Generating robust evidence and data focusing on the social and gender dimensions of climate change, including sexual and reproductive health and violence against women and children to inform national strategies, national plans and other action plans.

- Establishing a dedicated network of actors on climate change and women’s and girls’ rights, comprising government institutions, development partners, private sector and civil society.

III. Advancing people’s health and wellbeing, including their sexual and reproductive health and rights by:

- Increasing investments in young population, family planning and mobilizing partnerships and resources for national family planning programmes through developing a comprehensive family planning strategy and costed implementation plan.

- Increasing investments in midwifery regulations, associations and education through developing a national midwifery strategy and costed-implementation plan.

- Investing in youth-friendly health services inclusive of vulnerable groups.

IV. Strengthening the population data governance system and national monitoring frameworks for socio-economic development by:
• Prioritizing and ensuring the use of the 2025 Population and Housing Census and surveys to inform the 10th NSEDP (2026-2030).

• Reinforcing the national administrative data governance system, including civil registration and vital statistics.

V. Engaging and ensuring the use of all domestic resources and actors, including the private sector and civil society, in support of:

• Ushering in new technologies, innovations and the benefits of scientific progress.

• Promoting entrepreneurship and job creation to Leave No One Behind.

As the Lao PDR will assume the ASEAN Chairmanship in 2024, the Government of Lao PDR will continue to build upon the past achievements of ASEAN community in advancing sustainable development and strengthening the ASEAN connectivity, resilience and South-South cooperation, including in the framework of the ICPD PoA and SDGs.

Once again, I would like to sincerely thank the organizers for making this milestone regional conference a reality. I would also like to express my sincerely thanks to UNFPA in close collaboration with Development partners for continues support and assistance extended to the people and the Government of Lao PDR. Together we will be stronger and will achieve our goals.

I thank you.