

**STATEMENT BY**  
**H.E. Mr. Somsavat LENGSAVAD, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
**Head of Delegation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic**  
**At the World Summit On Sustainable Development**  
**Johannesburg, 2 September 2002**

Mr. President,

The World Summit on Sustainable Development is of historic significance as it will determine the fate of million lives of the poor in our planet. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992, progress has been made in some areas, but much more is yet to be implemented. The state of the world's environment continues to deteriorate, inequality and poverty are on the rise. In most parts of the developing world, the situation is staggering. Efforts have been made at all fronts of sustainable development, but due to the lack of serious political will and real financial commitments from the development partners, the goals of Agenda 21 remain unattainable.

Today's Summit is a summit of implementation. It has a clear mandate of producing agreed concrete measures and means of overcoming the obstacles that hampered the implementation of Agenda 21 in the past decade. If the goals and objectives of UNCED are to be met, the measures should include specific time-bound targets in all areas, in particular the financing. The implementation should involve all stakeholders through partnership among governments, other organizations and private sector of both developed and developing countries based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Mr President,

Since the Earth Summit, the Government of the Lao PDR has set forth the policy framework with the ultimate objective of ridding the country of the status of the least developed country by the year 2020. This policy, which is consistent with the goals of Agenda 21, envisages the poverty eradication through eliminating inequality, improving the people's living standard, preserving natural resources and protecting national environment.

Over the next decades, we will continue to focus on the policy framework for sustainable development highlighted above. We also attach importance to the issue of governance and work towards the integration of the poverty-environment-biodiversity issue into our national macro-planning. We welcome the participation and contribution of all stakeholders in this implementation process.

Apart from the national effort, we are firmly committed to attaining the goals of sustainable development, in particular the objective of ASEAN's vision 2020 and the Hanoi Plan of Action based on the principles, strategies and action plans for sustainable development contained in the Rio Declaration and Agenda 21. To succeed in this endeavour, our own efforts have to be complemented with tangible support and full cooperation from the international community, such as financial assistance, technology transfer and others.

Mr. President,

It is high time for us to agree on practical ways to balance the challenge of improving the lives of all human beings while at the same time protecting the environment. At this Summit both North and South have a role to play. Let us all make sure that this World Summit offers the most vulnerable nations on earth namely, the least developed, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states, a ray of hope for their future sustainable development. This could be the dawn of a new era of partnership of the most underprivileged with the most well-endowed and privileged.

Thank You for your attention.