



# Lao People's Democratic Republic

---

---

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Anouparb VONGNORKEO

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic  
to the United Nations

At the Operational Activities for Development Segment 2020

New York, 19 May 2020

**Mr. Chair,**

My delegation aligns itself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Guyana, Malawi, and Kazakhstan on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, LDCs and LLDCs respectively.

**Mr. Chair,**

During this extremely challenging time of COVID-19 pandemic which is still unfolding in many countries, the United Nations Development System (UNDS) has never been more instrumental in order to provide necessary support to the developing countries, especially the groups of countries in special situations. This unprecedented global health crisis poses a major test for the new reinvigorated UNDS in the field and effective functioning of the new RC system. Nevertheless, it offers a unique opportunity for the UNDS to demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of the reform. In this same vein, it is more crucial than ever for the UN Country Team (UNCT) and various UN entities to come together and deliver as One.

At a time when the world is turning to the United Nations as a long-standing trusted partner, my delegation deeply appreciates the leadership and efforts made thus far by the Secretary General and other Heads of UN Agencies to collectively respond to this human crisis through various initiatives including United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, Global Humanitarian Response Plan Covid-19, COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund of WHO, WHO's Contingency Fund for Emergencies, a United Nations Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, as well as a significant collaborative endeavor to develop and deliver a COVID-19 vaccine within 12 months as well as other funds and mechanisms to complement these efforts.

At country level, my delegation highly appreciates that the World Health Organization, in close collaboration with RC and the UNCT, is leading the way in reinforcing the capacity of the Lao PDR's healthcare facilities' preparedness and response at both provincial and central levels. Under the coordination of the UN

Resident Coordinator, the full range of UNCT and UN development assets are being mobilized including the formulation and submission of two proposals for the COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund, which will significantly support the Lao Government's medium and long-term effort in coping with public health emergency response, especially the inevitable social-economic consequences caused by the pandemic. In this connection, my delegation highly values the repositioning of the UN Development System to delivery as One across different agencies, which aims to strengthen the coherence of the work of UNCT and capitalize on the resources available and contributions in the best interest of the people and ensure better alignment with the national development priorities and needs. In this light, the Lao PDR underscores the importance of national ownership and leadership in all matters pertaining to the repositioning of the UNDS, particularly the effective and timely reporting from the RC and UNCT to the host Governments. We further underline the importance of persevering the cooperation of the UNDS with each of the Programme Countries, taking into account the particular needs of countries in special situations. At a time when the Lao PDR is doing its utmost to cushion the impacts resulted by the COVID-19 pandemic and simultaneously working towards a smooth graduation from LDC status as well as safeguarding the achievements made across all the SDGs, we remain committed to supporting the efforts to move forward with the remaining mandates of the repositioning of the UN Development System.

**Being categorized as LDC and LLDC, the Lao PDR is facing similar challenges with other vulnerable countries during this time of uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the already narrow and weak economic structure, fragile health systems with limited coverage of social protection systems coupled with limited financial and other resources, LDCs are most likely to suffer the severe consequences of the projected global economic slowdown in the form of commodity price shocks, loss of exports, investment and remittances, and unemployment along with a rapid plummet in tourism, with long-term ripple effects in our economies. In addition, loss of market predictability and decreased investor confidence will also affect the much needed flow of FDI as well as investment from domestic sources.**

In this connection, my delegation is of the view that in order to maintain the momentum towards sustainable development and achieve 2030 agenda as well as hard-earned achievements in poverty eradication made during the past decades, we must ensure that the UNDS has sufficient necessary resources to support national governments to suppress the pandemic of the COVID-19 as quickly as possible including to mitigate the socio-economic impacts, provide policy options and technical advice on their remaining priorities namely poverty eradication, universal health coverage, addressing multiple deprivations in people's lives, climate change and maintaining sustainable economic growth and strengthening national capacities, bearing in mind the different development levels and priorities on the ground.

**Mr. Chair,**

We welcome with appreciation, the tireless effort by the Secretary-General and his team on the UNDS repositioning, especially in addressing the funding needs of the UNDS and its development activities. However, we are concerned on the imbalance between core and non-core funding as well as the continuing decline of the contribution to the core funding. If this trend persists, it will have an adverse effect on the performance of the UN development agencies and development of the programme countries.

More importantly, it is essential to ensure sustained, predictable and sufficient funding for the strengthened RC system to be fully functioning and deliver tangible outcomes on the ground while recognizing the need to address a high funding gap as identified in the Country Programme Documents and proposals. Given limited capacity and resources available in those most vulnerable countries, RC and UNCT should further enhance their effort and collaboration among themselves and with government agencies and

development partners so as to help providing timely and pragmatic support and assistance in particular at this time of crisis.

Let me conclude, Mr. Chair, by reaffirming the crucial role of United Nations Development System in the national development effort, and expressing our sincere thanks to development partners, UN agencies, **international organizations, including the international financial institutions and other stakeholders** for their continued support and assistance rendered to the Lao PDR, particular during this time of public health crisis, as well as their strong commitments to poverty eradication and SDGs localization in the country. My Government will continue to count on the absolute determination of the UNDS to help win the battle against COVID-19 and offer a pathway to restore and accelerate progress towards the SDGs and help country build back better.

I thank you.