

## **12th High-Level Round Table Meeting Takes Place in Vientiane**



The government and its development partners have endorsed a new ten-year framework for development cooperation in Laos with the “Vientiane Partnership Declaration” signed yesterday.

The endorsement signing of the declaration took place at the 12th High-level Round Table Meeting held in the capital.

**Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong ( *standing, third left* ), UNDP Administrator Helen Clark ( *third right* ) and other officials from Laos and UNDP witness the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Saleumxay Kommasith and UN Resident Coordinator Ms Kaarina Immonen signing the “Vientiane Partnership Declaration”.**

The declaration would help ensure that all funds, efforts and knowledge for development bring about the maximum possible impact, to 2025 and beyond, according to a press release distributed at the meeting.

The declaration aims to maximize the use of Official Development Assistance, which makes up less than 7 percent of the country's Gross National Income, and to align it fully with government development priorities, while also boosting domestic income for development.

The declaration includes commitments to enhance local development planning, build an inclusive financial sector and develop knowledge sharing networks, including the transfer of new, clean and green technologies.

At yesterday's Round Table Meeting, 300 delegates from the government, donors and developing countries, the United Nations agencies, business and civil society organisations were working to lay the foundations for action in implementing the Eighth Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (Eighth Plan), which aims to boost economic, human and environmental benefits simultaneously.

In his opening remarks to the meeting, Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong made mention about the country having made considerable efforts to reduce poverty and laid strong foundations to graduate from least developed country status by 2020.

He also spoke about the country taking steps to implement the Eighth Plan.

“In the years to come, we will focus all our efforts on the implementation of the Eighth Plan to 2020. We will determine clear measures, in a clear action plan, to achieve development in the economic, socio-cultural and environmental spheres,” Prime Minister Thongsing said.

In his speech, Mr Thongsing, representing the government, reaffirmed the government as a reliable partner in managing the implementation of Official Development Assistance in an effective and transparent way that would help bring about sustainable development, reaching the people who are the real beneficiaries.

Speaking at the meeting opening ceremony, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme Ms Helen Clark said, “I’m delighted to see that the Sustainable Development Goals are being included in Laos’ Eighth National Socio-Economic Development Plan.” She noted the 17 global goals, saying they aim to tackle problems that affect us all, poverty and inequality and injustice, and climate change by 2030.

“These goals are part of the broadest, most ambitious agenda for people, planet and prosperity in history, and that is exactly why partnerships are so important,” she said. “Without new partnerships, new sources of funds and new technology, we won’t meet these vital targets. In this way, the implementation of the Vientiane Partnership Declaration will be key for Laos,” Ms Clark cited.

UNDP Chief Helen Clark also said that the UN was committed to supporting Laos to lead in translating the goals to country-level realities in Asia.

During her stay in Laos, Helen Clark paid a courtesy visit to President Choummaly Sayasone at the Presidential Office on Thursday.

President Choummaly highly valued Ms Clark’s attendance at the round table meeting and her official visit to Laos, which he said contributed to deepening the cooperative relations between Laos and the UNDP.

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