



High level meeting on nutrition 23rd – 24th November 2009 Brussels, Belgium  
Presentation by H.E. Dr. Bounthavy Sisouphanthong on the example of Lao PDR

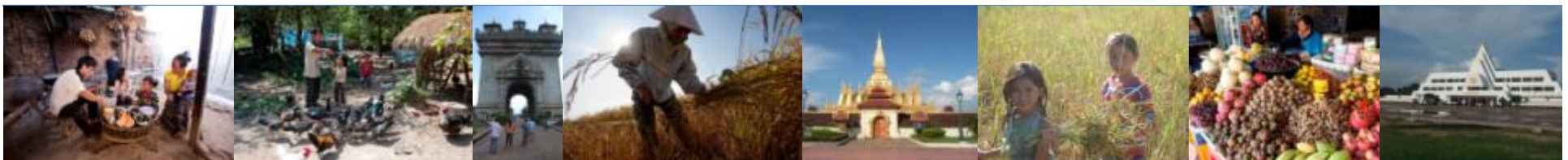


# Lao PDR

*Successful examples of national nutrition  
policies, programmes and governance  
mechanisms*

Dr Bounthavy Sisouphanthong

Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment

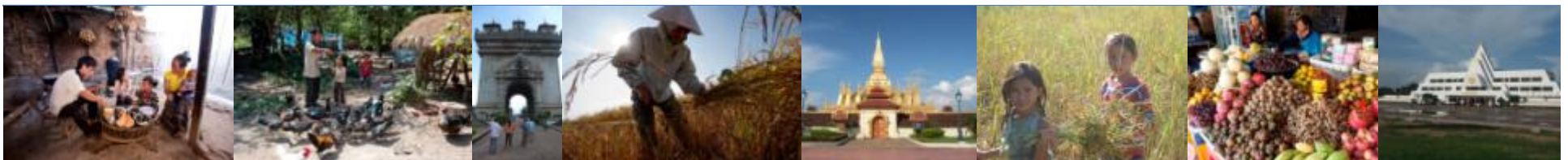




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- Lao PDR has achieved strong economic growth in the past 10 years
- Lao PDR continues to work towards an ambitious set of economic and social development goals in order **to exit the Least Developed Country status by 2020.**

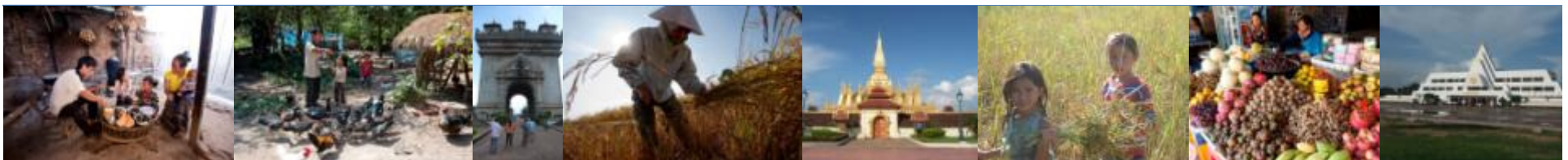
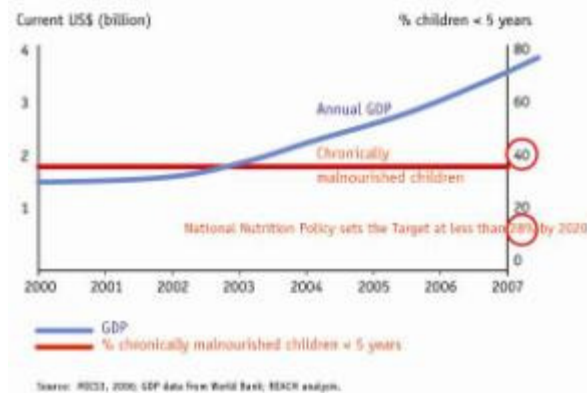




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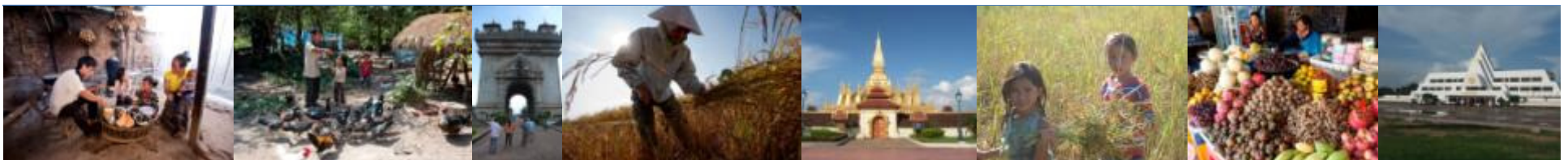


- Poverty reduction efforts alone are insufficient to address the problem of malnutrition.
- Despite strong economic growth, child malnutrition rates have remained unchanged over the past decade.
- In 2006, **37%** of children under-five were underweight for their age, and over **40%** of children under-five were stunted for their age.



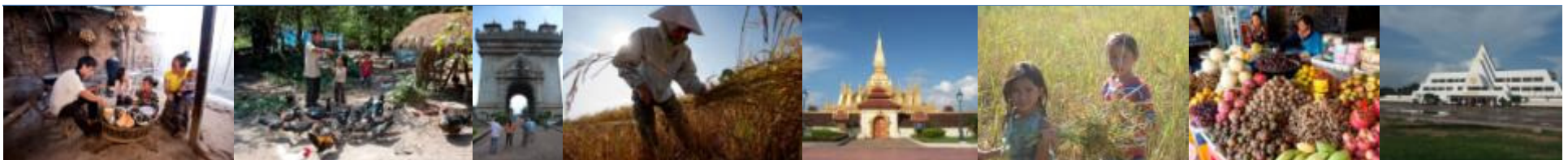


- The Government of Lao PDR recognizes that the economic and social consequences of malnutrition are severe.
- Tackling malnutrition underlies the potential achievement of various Millennium Development Goals and the country's socio-economic development goals.
- Eradicating hunger and malnutrition is central to the Government's commitment to better the lives of all Lao peoples, and more importantly to effectively realize the human right to food for all.





- The Government of Lao PDR is aware that malnutrition can only be dealt with in a multidimensional manner.
- It is a challenge that has to be tackled with a cultural, economic, as well as social lens.
- It is important to keep in mind not only food and food production, but markets and market development, behavioural change as well as public health and education aspects.
- This is also why it is of crucial importance to include nutrition in an integrated, mainstreamed manner in long term plans throughout different sectors.

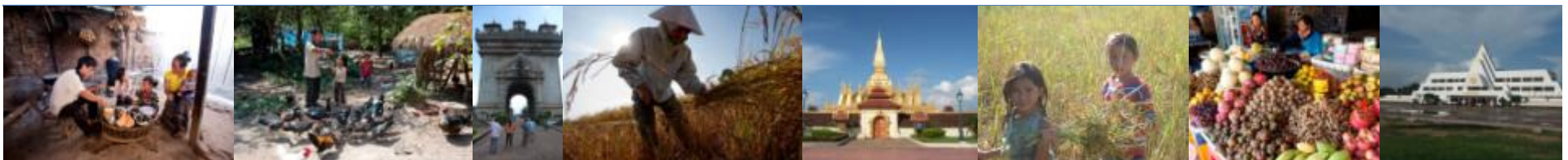




- Last week the Lao delegation at the World Summit on Food Security in Rome stated that it is important to invest in farmers:

*Investing in farmers means making sure that they have secured land tenure, fair contracts, access to information and technology, improved access to safe and indigenous-food based nutrition, as well as to improve the reach of health-, education-, and extension services at a time of climate change.*

- Agricultural biodiversity should be considered a crucial resource for food security and adequate nutrition.

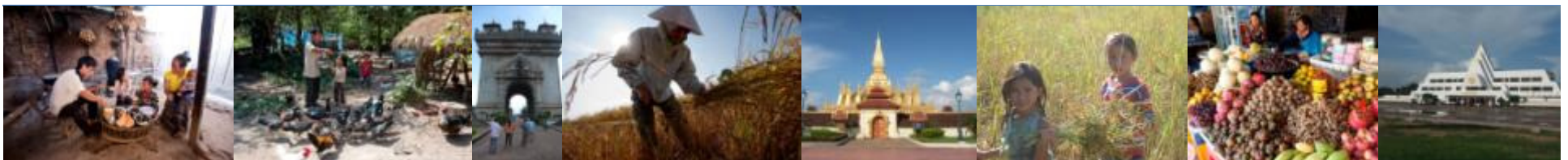




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- Indigenous sources of food – aquatic animals, insects, wild fruit and vegetables – have the potential to supply for better nutrition in rural areas that are hardest hit by malnutrition
- It is also important to acknowledge the new “junk-food-based malnutrition” in urban areas.

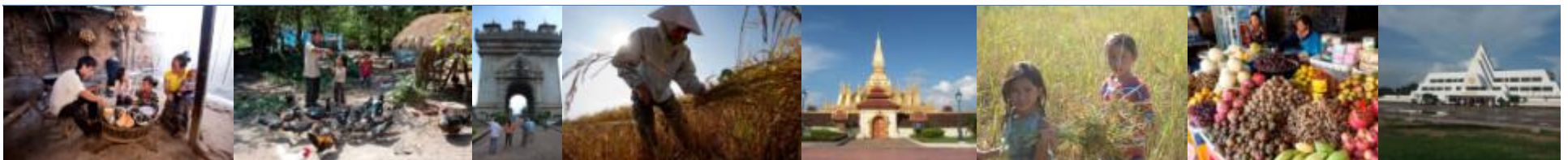




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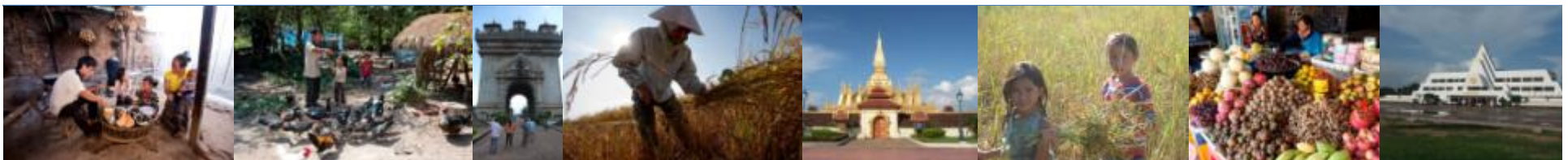


- The Government established a **National Nutrition Policy** in December 2008, which has been followed by the development of a **National Nutrition Strategy and a National Plan of Action**, completed just last month.



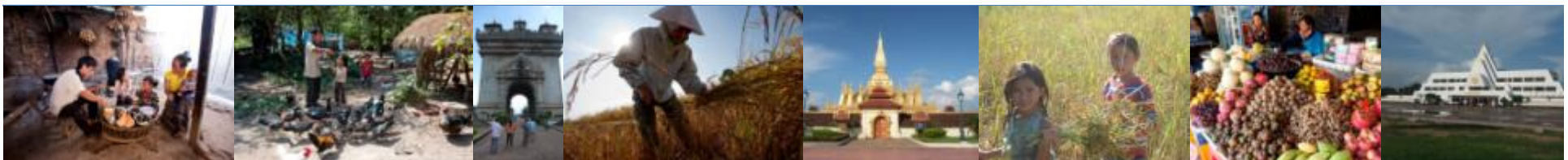


- Taken that malnutrition is a complex, multi-dimensional and multi-sectoral issue, a wider, comprehensive engagement of all sectors is imperative.
- The National Nutrition Policy lays out a holistic framework that links health, food security, education, transport and infrastructure, natural resource management and other sectors.
- The policy names **15** different Ministries and Ministry Equivalent Organizations as responsible for the implementation of the policy.



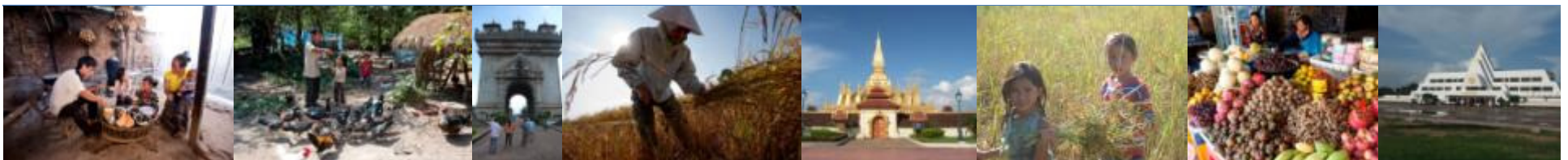


- Progress has been made at a national level in several key areas related to nutrition, such as exclusive breastfeeding, salt iodization, Vitamin A and iron supplementation, deworming, and malaria control.
- While many donors and other international partners support nutrition activities, these efforts are highly fragmented and usually at small scale.
- At present, very few initiatives to improve food security are explicitly linked to nutritional goals.





- One of the key concerns is to effectively link the public health and food security dimensions of nutrition, not only at the policy level but **at the operational level** , in particular at a local level.
- Sustainable outcomes cannot be achieved without bringing together **public health and food security as the cornerstones to improving nutrition.**
- One of the challenges is the limited capacity in nutrition and food security at both national and local levels.

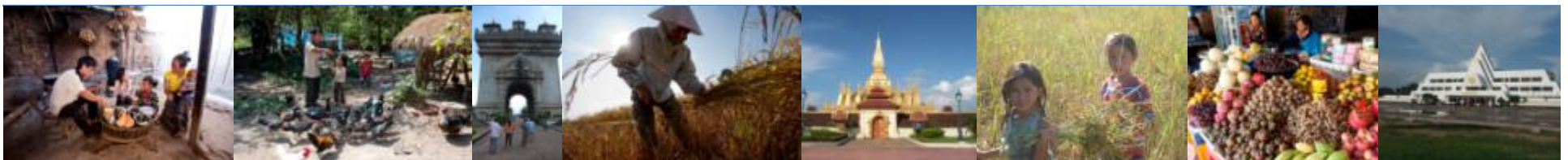




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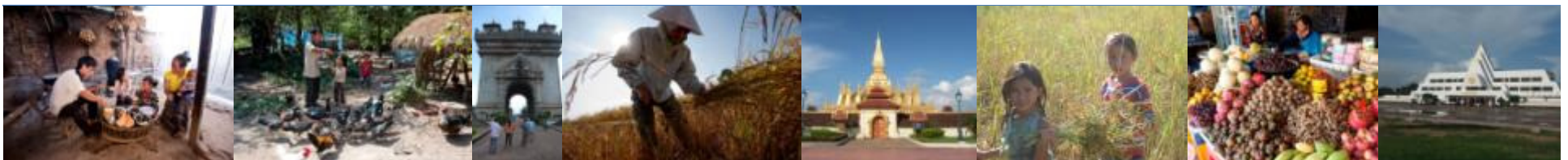


- In order to build capacity while achieving scale, effective coordination across sectors and partners is critical.
- Activities must be integrated, particularly at the local point of contact with the mother and child and their family.





- Given the current financial climate, it is imperative to ensure that existing resources are used most effectively, and to focus additional resources where they will have the most impact.
- Improving nutrition is a key opportunity area in Lao PDR for us to work together to realize the principles of aid effectiveness outlined in Paris, re-affirmed in Accra, and localised by the Government of Lao PDR and its partners in the Vientiane Declaration: *ownership, alignment, harmonization and simplification, as well as managing for results.*

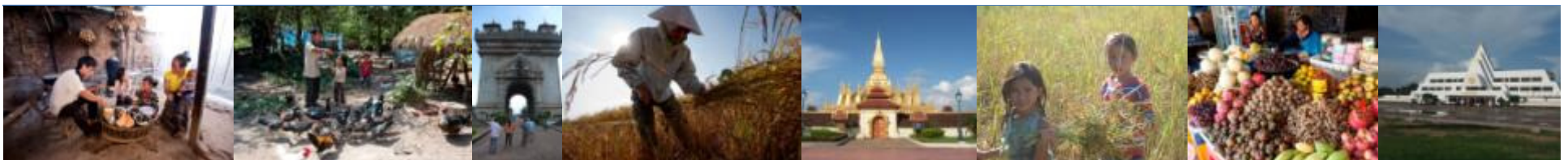




- In summary:

*The Government of Lao PDR has committed itself at the highest levels to addressing the problem of malnutrition through a coordinated, innovative, practical and holistic approach.*

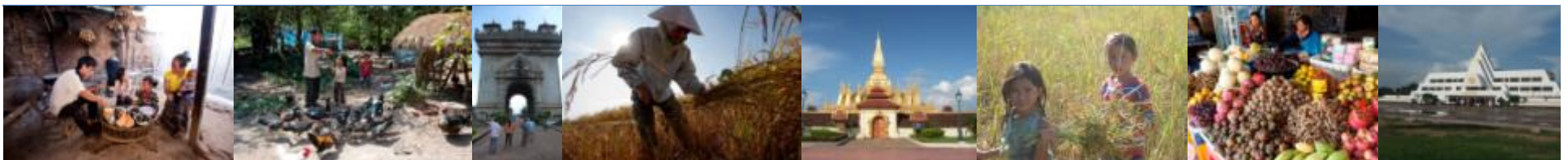
*The Government of Lao PDR strongly commits to build on what already exists, reduce the risk of destroying the institutional arrangements that have performed satisfactorily and recognize the achievements of all sectors working for food security and nutrition.*





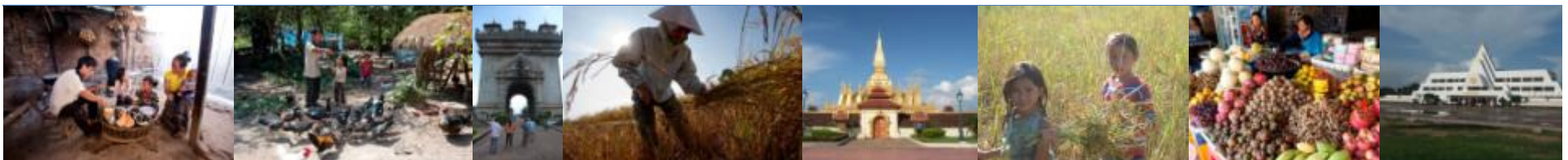
I. **The 7<sup>th</sup> National Socio-Economic Development Plan, 2011-2015,**  
is currently being drafted.

It is the key document that addresses the Government's commitment to and development plan in nutrition, stressing the immediate need to prioritize malnutrition in: disadvantaged groups, children, as well as pregnant and lactating women in the period 2011-2015.





- II. An **interim coordination task force** led by the National Science Council, based in the Prime Minister's Office, is given the task to develop a practical and workable design of a national working- and governance structure for nutrition and food security.
- III. The actions and objectives outlined in the National Plan of Action for Nutrition will be **mainstreamed** into key national policy and planning mechanisms, such as the 7th National Socio-Economic Development Plan, as well as the annual work plans at sub-national and sectoral levels.
- IV. Success depends upon **the joint efforts** to strengthen and sustain the institutional, human, and delivery capacity needed to reach the most vulnerable in an integrated manner.

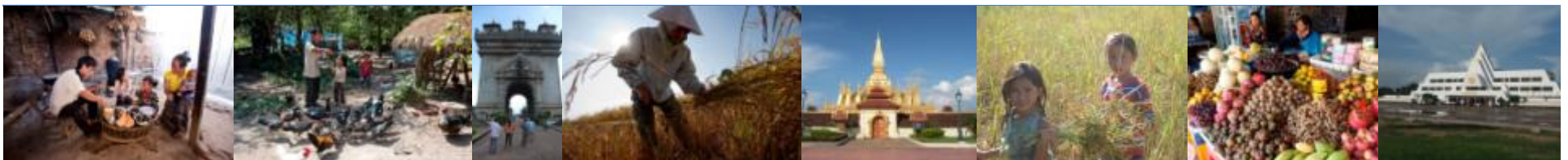




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- Development partners have come together to support the Government to develop the National Nutrition Policy, Strategy, and Plan of Action.
- The Government thanks the European Commission for its support in the policy development process.
- The UN agencies, specifically FAO, UNICEF, WHO, and WFP, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator and the facilitating work of REACH-framework, have worked closely with the Government to develop a shared knowledge base, bring partners together to improve the quality and quantity of partnerships, and build consensus on a common set of solutions and priorities.

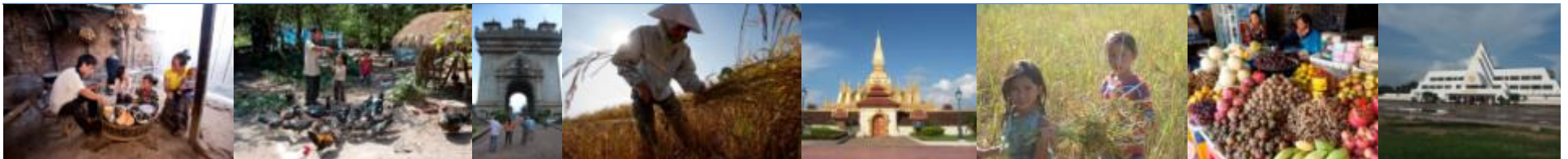




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- The Government of Lao PDR would like to urge all development partners to renew their efforts to coordinate their interventions in Lao PDR, in the spirit of the UN reform, as our government could not cope with too many individual advice or requests.

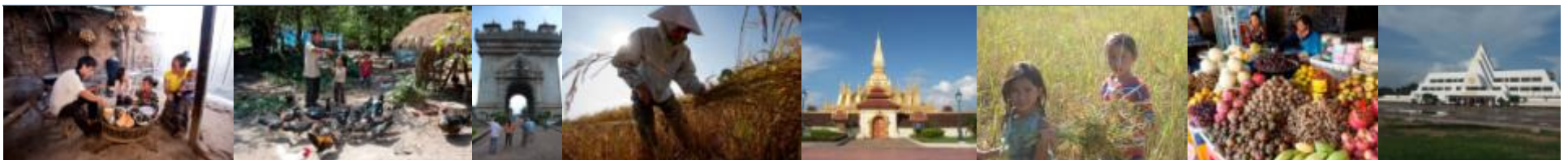




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- It will be critical to the success of our efforts for partners to align their investments and activities with the goals outlined in the National Socio-Economic Development Plan, as well as to step up their assistance to help the Government to seriously and systematically scale-up.





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- Thank you.

