STATEMENT BY
Mr. Kanya Khammoungkhoun, Representative of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic
At The 68th Session of the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly
On Agenda Item 108: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; and Agenda Item 109:
International Drug Control.

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Mr. Chairman,

It is an honour for me to address this august assembly on behalf of the Lao Government in relation to the ponderous issues of "Crime prevention and Criminal Justice"; and "International Drug Control" that the Lao Government takes particularly to heart.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite collective efforts and cooperation among member states and relevant stakeholders in preventing and combating crimes and drug control, transnational organized crime and drug problem continues to constitute a great challenge for world peace and the security of an individual and societies on a daily basis. It has been manifested in more sophisticated and complex forms and for many reasons. Among other things, poverty and social disparity is often a root cause of various criminal activities, including trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. In this context, my delegation appreciate the deliberation in this year General Assembly High-level Meeting on the Appraisal of the Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons.

Mr. Chairman,

Due to geographical location, the Lao PDR is considered not only a country of origin but also a transit route and destination for trafficking in persons. Therefore, the Lao Government spares no efforts in tackling such heinous crime by adopting numbers of measure and guidance.

The National Supervisory Committee on anti-trafficking was set up to guide the implementation of the National Plan of Action on Anti-Trafficking. Preventing and combating trafficking in persons was also set as one of the national priority development agenda within the current National Socio-economic Development Plan. Law enforcement and victims assistance is also under special attention of concerned authorities at all levels.
At regional level, the Lao Government attaches great importance to enhancing cooperation with neighboring countries and relevant international agencies in combating trans-organized crimes. The Lao PDR is actively participating and contributing to the coordination of regional mechanisms and the implementation of regional frameworks and the Regional Plan of Action to combat trafficking in persons. In September this year, the Lao PDR was trusted to host the 9th ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crimes (AMMTC) in Vientiane with the fruitful and comprehensive outcome, which further has strengthened the resolve to fight against these crimes.

Mr. Chairman,

In relation to drug issue, it is no doubt that drug abuse and drug trafficking has an enormous impact on development and poverty eradication, and in turn, poverty and underdevelopment could also lead poor people to drug trafficking and other related crimes. This vicious circle of drug and poverty must be cut off at once.

Poor community and poor nations are often prone to being affected by drug problem and that would even exacerbate the situation when crimes and social disorder come into play. For this reason, the international community should intensify their cooperation and support to the most affected countries in addressing the root cause of the problem in a more systematic and sustainable manner. The international community should take a shared responsibility to address this issue in a more balanced approach to supply and demand reduction strategies that will allow us to defeat the gravity of illicit drug and drug related crimes. Objectives and guidance set out in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation Towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem adopted at the High-level segment of Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2009 is more than relevant.

Mr. Chairman,

The most immediate cause for the increased poppy cultivation in the Lao PDR over the past few years is obviously poverty, which is still prevalent in remote and mountainous area of the country where road is inaccessible in rainy season. The insufficient and unsustainable alternative occupation often leads to the resumption of poppy cultivation, which hampered the efforts by the Government to achieve the set target of eliminating poppy cultivation by 2013. Despite this challenge, the Lao Government continues to intensify its effort to wipe out poppy cultivation by putting in place special monitoring and urgent measures to ensure that there is no escalation of opium production. At the same time, the Lao Government strongly believes that elimination of opium cultivation should coincide with poverty eradication and sustainable development, therefore, sincere regional and international cooperation and assistance would effectively help the Lao Government to have an effective and lasting solution in the long run. In this regard, my delegation would like to appreciate our development partners, donor countries, UNODC, as well as other agencies for their valuable supports and assistant rendered to my country. The Lao government reaffirms its strong commitment to continue working with international community in solving drug problem and tackling transnational crime to assure sustainable development and the wellbeing of its people.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman