Statement
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Madam President,
Honorable Heads of State and Government,
Distinguishes Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of the Government of the Lao PDR, I would like to congratulate the Government and people of Mexico for hosting this important conference and thank them for the warm welcome and gracious hospitality extended to us in this beautiful city of Cancun. May I also take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam President, on your assumption of the Presidency and your efforts in building up a broad and inclusive process leading to the COP16. Our appreciation also goes to the UNFCCC secretariat.

We have all come to Cancun with a great sense of urgency due to the fact that Climate Change is real and it affects all of us without distinction and in particular the billions of people in the developing world whose survival depends on rivers, land and seas and the truth is, we are running out of time until the end of the first commitment of the Kyoto Protocol in 2012. Climate Change has the very real potential to undermine all of our efforts to improve the livelihoods of our people, including the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals. It also threatens to aggravate poverty and burden marginalized and vulnerable groups, particularly women and children, with additional hardship. Thus, actions and actions now are needed before it is too late to save the planet.

There is a dire need for all of us at this COP16 to overcome existing divergences and find an acceptable for all parties compromise towards a common platform of effective measures to address climate change and global warming in the interest of a safer world for humankind. In this context, a clear long-term vision and responsible international action at all levels are of utmost urgency. To achieve this objective, there is no other option, but for all of us, ideally, to agree on a legally binding framework based on the objectives and principles of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Bali Road Map engaging all parties in a transparent and inclusive process. On this note, the Lao PDR associates itself with the statements made by Yemen on behalf of the Group of G-77 and China and by Lesotho on behalf of the LDCs urging the Annex I countries to fulfill their commitments in providing financial support for developing countries, the LDCs in particular, for the implementation of mitigation and adaptation actions, including capacity building and development and transfer of clean technologies as well as in setting up at the soonest a new fair global climate fund as promised in the Copenhagen Accord.

Madam President,

May I take this opportunity to inform you that in response to the diverse challenges of Climate Change that we are facing, the Government of Lao PDR has approved its National Strategy on Climate Change with the vision "to secure a future where Laos is capable of mitigating and adapting to changing climatic conditions in a way that promotes sustainable economic development, reduces poverty, protects public health and safety, enhances the quality of Lao PDR's natural environment and advances the quality of life for all Lao people'.

This strategy has recognized the high vulnerability of the Lao PDR to Climate Change, the anticipated adverse environmental and socio-economic consequences, especially to the poor and the most vulnerable and also the need for strengthening the capacity to adapt to climate change and its impacts.

While on adaptation the focus will be on making the key sectors including agriculture, water resources and forestry more climate resilient, enhancing knowledge and awareness on climate change, enforcing the conservation of National Protected Areas, building reliable early warning systems and addressing drought and flood risk management on the other hand, mitigation will address three priorities:

Firstly, the sustainable management of land and forestry resources with emphasis on achieving the ambitious target of 70% forestry coverage of the national territory by 2020;

Secondly, the sustainable development of our abundant hydropower potential and other forms of renewable energy and

Thirdly, the improvement of energy efficiency and energy saving in industry, buildings and transport. In addition we are also strengthening our capacities to implement and promote CDM projects and to prepare for implementation of the REDD-plus.

In this respect, the Lao PDR calls for the establishment of an internationally legally-binding mechanism for REDD-plus under the Convention, acknowledging that forests are indispensable natural remedies for mitigating greenhouse gases and reducing the impact of climate change.

As a least developed country, Lao PDR is faced with many challenges on our way towards addressing the challenges of climate change and low carbon sustainable development. Our policy and institutional framework further needs to be strengthened along with our human resource capacity. Last but not least, we need knowledge of best practices from other countries, as well as the advanced technologies and financing to translate our plans into action.

Madam President,

At this important juncture, let me take this opportunity again to call for the further strengthening of international cooperation under the shared vision for long-term cooperative action and the principle of *"common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities"*.

After Copenhagen, the world is still watching us with hope. Let us join our wisdom and political will coupled with high responsibility to overcome matters of divergence and

concentrate on issues of common interest for planet earth to reach a legally binding agreement that lives up to the expectations placed on us by the people of the world, particularly the poor and disadvantaged.

In conclusion, I wish to reaffirm the strong commitment of the Lao PDR in working closely with all countries to realize the ultimate goal of the Convention. I wish to emphasize again to all parties the urgency of making a historic breakthrough at this COP16 to pave the way for a successful COP17 in Durban next year.

Thank You.