



# *Lao People's Democratic Republic*

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Speech  
by  
H.E. Pany Yathotou  
President of the National Assembly of the Lao PDR  
At the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Speakers of  
Parliament  
New York, United States of America  
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(Please check against delivery)

- Your Excellency Saber Chowdhury, President of Inter-Parliamentary Union,
- Speakers of Inter-Parliamentary Union Member Parliaments,
- Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,
- Distinguished Parliamentarians,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honour, on behalf of the National Assembly of Lao PDR, to attend the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Speakers of Parliament here today. Our World Conference of Speakers of Parliament is a very significant forum, which is held every 5 years bringing together Speakers of Parliament from over one hundred countries across the world for an opportunity to meet and discuss about peace, democracy and development in order to build our world into a world that the people want.

For over a hundred years, the IPU has played an important role in contributing to the promotion of mutual understanding, solidarity among nations, and peace and security across the world. In the period particularly after the Second World War, the IPU has worked alongside the United Nations in the promotion of peace and in addressing various international issues through the adoption of relevant Resolutions for implementation.

This forum therefore, provides an opportunity for IPU member parliaments to play an important role in moving forward the implementation of these resolutions at the national level and at the same time in sharing important national issues with the world.

President,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Alongside the tireless efforts of various stakeholders and parties over the past years, the issue of war and peace continues to be a major challenge in our world today. Some regions continue to face challenges of war either in the form of a civil war or war between nations, which have had a major impact on the lives and properties of innocent civilians.

At the same time however, democracy has been continuously promoted in each country in various forms, but the overall goal reflects the aspiration of the people in building a world of peace, cooperation and sustainable development, a world where the people enjoy well-being in all areas of life. In reality, the people in some regions of the world are still facing challenges such as war, poverty, and natural disasters, among others. Nevertheless, the global community has made its efforts to work together to find ways to constructively solve the problems. Particularly, in 2000 the United Nations adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and we have spent 15 years implementing these goals with considerable success, as reflected in the continuous reduction in poverty, large increase in enrolment of children in schools, significant decrease in infant mortality rate, increased number of people with access to clean water, investment in the combat against and prevention of malaria, HIV/AIDs and tuberculosis, which has so far saved millions of lives.

In Lao PDR, the implementation of the MDGs has been successful in many areas particularly the number of poor households has declined to 6.59% of all households, 98% of children of school age have access to primary education, the number of deaths of infants under one year old has reduced to 46.5 per 1,000 live births, and the number of people infected with HIV/AIDs and cases of malaria remain at a low level and are on track to achieve the targets. Moreover, significant progress has been made in mainstreaming gender issues in all areas of work, with strong commitment from the grass-roots level to the central level to promote women's role in decision-making process in political, economic and socio-cultural areas. Nonetheless, challenges remain and efforts are required to continue to deal with these challenges particularly through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which will be adopted by world leaders very soon. The Lao PDR will continue to ensure necessary strategies, policies and mechanisms including development of periodic socio-economic development plans that are aimed at attaining the MDGs as set out by the United Nations by 2015 toward achieving the national goal of graduating from the Least Developed Country status by 2020.

President,

In the spirit of enhancing people's democracy by the people and for the people, the Lao PDR will establish local councils at the provincial level in early 2016. This will mark a new milestone in the delegation of power to local authorities therefore further promoting and deepening people's participation in all areas. Moreover, efforts will be made to increase the number of female parliamentarians toward 30% or over, enhance parliamentary oversight capacity and local councils as representatives of the people to ensure the protection of rights and benefits of the people in all areas of life. In addition, strengthened cooperation and exchange of experience and lessons learned among parliaments in the region is of great importance to enhance capacity and ensure more effectiveness in implementing the representative function of parliaments.

Finally, I wish to extend my best wishes to all distinguished parliamentarians and delegates at this Meeting good health, happiness and I also wish this Meeting great success.

Thank you.