



**Executive Board of the  
United Nations Development  
Programme, the United Nations  
Population Fund and the United  
Nations Office for Project Services**

Distr.: General  
18 July 2011

Original: English

**Second regular session 2011**

6 to 9 September 2011, New York

Item 7 of the provisional agenda

**UNFPA – Country programmes and related matters**

**UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND**

**Final country programme document for the Lao People's Democratic Republic**

Proposed indicative UNFPA assistance: \$22.5 million: \$9 million from regular resources and \$13.5 million through co-financing modalities and/or other, including regular, resources

Programme period: Four years (2012-2015)

Cycle of assistance: Fifth

Category per decision 2007/42: A

Proposed indicative assistance by core programme area (in millions of \$):

	Regular resources	Other	Total
Reproductive health and rights	5.8	10.0	15.8
Population and development	2.0	3.0	5.0
Gender equality	0.2	0.5	0.7
Programme coordination and assistance	1.0	-	1.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9.0</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>22.5</b>

## **I. Situation analysis**

1. The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a mountainous, landlocked, sparsely populated country of 5.6 million people. Seventy-seven per cent of the population lives in rural areas, which are characterized by poor infrastructure and subsistence farming.

2. The population is growing at an annual rate of 2.1 per cent, and the population structure is changing. The total fertility rate (4.5 children per woman) ranges from 2.3 in Vientiane, the capital city, to 6.4 in the remote rural province of Huaphan. Due to a decline in fertility and in the dependency ratio, the percentage of the population that is of working age is expected to increase for at least the next 30 years. To benefit from this demographic dividend, the country must increase investments in developing its human capital.

3. The Government has developed comprehensive policies and action plans on population issues, but implementation and the monitoring of progress have been slow. The Government has strengthened its capacity for data collection. However, data analysis, and the use of disaggregated data in the planning and monitoring of national, sectoral and provincial development plans, are limited.

4. Although the Government has developed policies and laws to promote women's rights, gender disparities persist. In its 2009 report, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women observed that national mechanisms for the advancement of women's rights should be strengthened. The report also called attention to violence against women and girls, and the limited forms of redress available.

5. The country has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the region (405 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births). It is unlikely to reach Millennium Development Goal 5, which seeks to improve maternal health, by 2015. Access to health services is limited, and the utilization of reproductive health services is low. The modern contraceptive prevalence rate among married women is 35 per cent, with disparities ranging from 12.6 per cent to 57.2 per cent. The unmet need for family planning is high (27.3 per cent). Only 35 per cent of pregnant women report receiving at least one antenatal check-up. Trained personnel attend only 20 per cent of deliveries, and the percentage of institutional deliveries is low (12.5 per cent).

6. More than 50 per cent of the population is under the age of 20. Poor sexual and reproductive health contributes to a large proportion of the burden of disease among young people. The adolescent fertility rate is high, at 110 births per 1,000 women.

7. HIV prevalence is 0.2 per cent, with females aged 15-29 accounting for 61 per cent of reported cases of HIV. Data indicate that vulnerability to HIV infection peaks in the early to mid-twenties. Sexually transmitted infection rates are reportedly high among both female sex workers and men in high-risk groups, especially among those in both groups who are younger than 25. Access to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health information and services is limited, especially for unmarried young people.

## **II. Past cooperation and lessons learned**

8. Achievements of the fourth country programme, 2007-2011, included support for: (a) the analysis of population data for the

seventh national socio-economic development plan; (b) the analysis and dissemination of national and provincial data from the 2005 Lao reproductive health survey; (c) dialogue at the policy level on gender issues, including gender-based violence; and (d) harmonization and consensus-building, in order to develop an integrated package of maternal, neonatal and child health services, aligned with the Vientiane Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

9. Other programme achievements included: (a) technical support to implement national strategies and plans, including the re-introduction of midwifery as part of a comprehensive skilled birth attendance plan; (b) technical support to advocate the policy on the free, assisted delivery services for women in the lowest wealth quintile; and (c) coordination efforts by UNFPA on population dynamics, which created a forum to highlight emerging youth issues at the policy level.

10. Evaluation findings and lessons learned from the programme indicate the need to: (a) promote evidence-based advocacy and programming through improved coordination among programme components; (b) focus on building the national capacity in the area of population and development; (c) strengthen national institutions for research and training in population and statistics; and (d) build the capacity of staff and national institutions to undertake gender analysis in planning and policy formulation.

11. Additional lessons learned included the need to: (a) support national efforts to address gender-based violence; (b) sustain high-level technical support and partnerships to implement the maternal, neonatal and child health services package, the skilled birth

attendance plan and other national initiatives; and (c) address the sexual and reproductive health needs of vulnerable youth populations outside the capital.

### III. Proposed programme

12. The fifth country programme will cover the period 2012-2015, in order to align it with the national planning cycle and the priorities of the national socio-economic development plan, 2011-2015.

#### *Reproductive health and rights component*

13. Three outputs of the reproductive health and rights component will contribute to the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) outcome for equitable health and social welfare services.

14. Output 1: The Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions at the central level are better able to improve the coverage and quality of sexual and reproductive health information and services. The programme will: (a) support the development of an integrated logistics management system for the health sector; (b) address the unmet need for family planning by improving the contraceptive mix and supporting public-private partnerships; (c) support the human resource development plan, specifically for midwifery and for integrating HIV, adolescent sexual and reproductive health, gender-based violence and reproductive health in emergency situations into relevant curricula; (d) support research on reproductive health morbidity; (e) strengthen emergency obstetric care; (f) support an effective health-sector response to gender-based violence; and (g) improve national referral and reporting mechanisms among the areas of adolescent sexual and reproductive health, sexually

transmitted infections and HIV, maternal and child health and family planning.

15. Output 2: Individuals, families and communities in priority areas have access to an integrated package of services on maternal, neonatal and child health. The programme will support the implementation of the national integrated maternal, neonatal and child health services strategy in selected geographical areas. It will give priority to the most remote and vulnerable populations by: (a) expanding the scope and coverage of community-based family planning services, in line with the integrated maternal, neonatal and child health services package; (b) training health-care providers; (c) empowering and mobilizing communities, including through data collection; (d) developing integrated information, education and communication materials; and (e) supporting partnerships for resource mobilization, joint planning and the implementation of district and provincial health plans for the integrated package of maternal, neonatal and child health services.

16. Output 3: Young people who are vulnerable and most at risk in priority urban areas have increased participation in and access to youth-friendly, gender-sensitive and socially inclusive sexual and reproductive health information and services. Support will focus on: (a) increasing the institutional capacity to develop, revise and deliver integrated life skills-based sexual and reproductive health education in the formal school curricula; (b) promoting the participation of young people in behaviour change communication strategies and in the planning and delivery of services; (c) strengthening the institutional and technical capacity to deliver youth-friendly services that reach young people who are most at risk; and (d) utilizing diverse

channels to reach vulnerable young people, including through civil society organizations.

#### *Population and development component*

17. The three outputs of this component will contribute to the UNDAF outcome for equitable and sustainable growth and for protection of rights and greater participation in transparent decision-making.

18. Output 1: The Ministry of Planning and Investment, as well as sectors and provinces, are better able to develop, implement and monitor plans and policies based on up-to-date data and analysis. The programme will: (a) support the implementation of the strategy for developing a national statistical system, 2010-2020, in coordination with other development partners; (b) support the in-depth analysis of data and the dissemination of findings of the 2011 Lao social indicator survey in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); (c) coordinate the 2015 population census and provide technical support to make the process and data collection gender-sensitive; and (d) help to build the capacity of national, sectoral and provincial planning departments to utilize the results of data analysis and research findings for policy development, planning, monitoring and coordination.

19. Output 2: National training and research institutions are better able to contribute to the analysis of demographic changes and social development. The programme will support national institutions in order to strengthen their capacity to: (a) deliver in-service and pre-service curricula on population and social development; and (b) conduct and disseminate quantitative and qualitative research and in-depth analyses on population

dynamics, gender, health and emerging population issues.

20. Output 3: The National Assembly is better able to provide advocacy, oversight, legislation and representation on population, reproductive health and gender issues. UNFPA will work with the Lao Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, the women's caucus and relevant committees to enhance their capacity for advocacy, oversight, legislation and representation on population, reproductive health and gender issues.

#### *Gender equality component*

21. The output of this component will contribute to the UNDAF outcome for gender equality and increased participation and representation of women.

22. Output 1: Institutions at central and subnational levels are better able to promote gender equality and follow up on the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. The programme will further strengthen the capacity of the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women and selected sectoral and provincial commissions to advocate, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the action plan of the national strategy for the advancement of women, 2011-1015. Advocacy efforts with the National Assembly, the Government and communities will focus on women's rights, reproductive rights, gender-based violence and the participation of women in decision-making.

#### **IV. Programme management, monitoring and evaluation**

23. UNFPA and the Government will implement, monitor and evaluate the programme within the context of the UNDAF. UNFPA will work with other United Nations organizations and development partners to provide assistance through the existing health sector-wide coordination mechanism and support the development of a programme-based approach in other areas, such as gender and statistics. UNFPA and the Government will monitor the programme using data from relevant quantitative and qualitative studies and routine data collected through existing national systems. The programme will use *LaoInfo* as a monitoring tool.

24. The UNFPA country office in the Lao People's Democratic Republic consists of a representative, a deputy representative and operations staff. UNFPA will support programme and administrative support posts based on country programme requirements. The Asia and the Pacific regional office in Bangkok, Thailand, will assist the country office in identifying technical resources and provide quality assurance.

**RESULTS AND RESOURCES FRAMEWORK FOR LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC**

<b>National priority:</b> human development <b>UNDAF outcome:</b> by 2015, the people in the Lao People's Democratic Republic benefit from equitable, promotive, curative and rehabilitative health services				
<b>Programme component</b>	<b>Country programme outcomes, indicators, baselines and targets</b>	<b>Country programme outputs, indicators, baselines and targets</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Indicative resources by programme component</b>
Reproductive health and rights	<p><b>Outcome:</b> By 2015, people in the Lao People's Democratic Republic will benefit from equitable, promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative health services</p> <p><b>Outcome indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of women who desire to delay or prevent pregnancy and are not currently using any contraceptive method</li> <li>• % of births attended by trained health workers (excluding traditional birth attendants)</li> <li>• % of health-service data disaggregated by sex, age and ethnicity</li> </ul>	<p><b>Output 1:</b> The Ministry of Health and other relevant institutions at the central level are better able to improve the coverage and quality of sexual and reproductive health information and services</p> <p><b>Output indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of fixed-site service delivery points at the primary care level with availability of family planning commodities and at least five life-saving maternal and reproductive health drugs</li> <li>• Number of accredited midwives produced annually</li> </ul> <p><b>Output 2:</b> Individuals, families and communities in priority areas have access to an integrated package of services on maternal, neonatal and child health</p> <p><b>Output indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of couples using modern methods of contraception in target areas</li> <li>• % of births occurring in a health facility</li> </ul> <p><b>Output 3:</b> Young people who are vulnerable and most at risk in priority urban areas have increased participation in and access to youth-friendly, gender-sensitive and socially inclusive sexual and reproductive health information and services</p> <p><b>Output indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of young people aged 15-24 in target areas who received adolescent sexual and reproductive health life-skills education</li> <li>• % of target areas with at least two youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health service delivery points</li> <li>• % of young people aged 15-24 in target areas who accessed youth-friendly services</li> <li>• % of young people aged 15-24 who can both correctly identify ways to prevent the sexual transmission of HIV and who reject major misconceptions about HIV transmission</li> </ul>	<p>Ministry of Health; National Institute of Public Health</p> <p>University of Health Sciences</p> <p>Japan International Cooperation Agency; Luxembourg bilateral programme with the Lao People's Democratic Republic; UNICEF; World Health Organization</p>	<p>\$15.8 million (\$5.8 million from regular resources and \$10 million from other resources)</p>

<p><b>National priorities:</b> (a) inclusive and sustainable growth; and (b) governance</p> <p><b>UNDAF outcomes:</b> (a) by 2015, the Government promotes equitable and sustainable growth for poor people in the Lao People's Democratic Republic; (b) by 2015, the poor and vulnerable benefit from improved delivery of public services, effective protection of their rights and greater participation in transparent decision-making; (c) by 2015, the people in the Lao Democratic People's Republic benefit from policies and programmes that promote gender equality and the participation of women in formal and informal decision-making</p>				
Population and development	<p><b>Outcome:</b> By 2015, the Government promotes equitable and sustainable growth for poor people in the Lao People's Democratic Republic</p> <p><b>Outcome indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicators in the national socio-economic development plan, which are updated annually</li> <li>Progress towards disaggregated updates on the national socio-economic development plan indicators in the annual report</li> </ul> <p><b>Outcome:</b> By 2015, the poor and vulnerable benefit from improved delivery of public services, the effective protection of their rights and greater participation in transparent decision-making</p> <p><b>Outcome indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>% of senior-level (level 5 upwards) civil servants who are women</li> <li>% of new laws and bills accompanied by technical analysis, fact-finding reports or legislative studies on the impact of such laws on the poor and vulnerable</li> </ul>	<p><b>Output 1:</b> The Ministry of Planning and Investment, as well as sectors and provinces, are better able to develop, implement and monitor plans and policies based on up-to-date data and analysis</p> <p><b>Output indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Population data sources in the strategy for the development of a national statistical system that provide data disaggregated by wealth quintiles, sex, age and ethnicity</li> <li>% of selected sectors and provinces using data disaggregated by wealth quintiles, sex, age and ethnicity in their development plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks</li> </ul> <p><b>Output 2:</b> National training and research institutions are better able to contribute to the analysis of demographic changes and social development</p> <p><b>Output indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of civil servants in planning offices who took population studies courses, by province and sector</li> <li>Number of analysis and studies published</li> </ul> <p><b>Output 3:</b> The National Assembly is better able to provide advocacy, oversight, legislation and representation on population, reproductive health and gender issues</p> <p><b>Output indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of fact-finding missions undertaken that monitor population, gender and reproductive health and rights issues</li> <li>Number of intersession workshops that include population, gender and reproductive health and rights issues in their agendas</li> </ul>	<p>Departments of: International Cooperation; Planning; and Statistics; Ministry of Health; National Economic Research Institute; National Academy of Politics and Public Administration; National Assembly; National University; Lao Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development; Lao National Commission on the Advancement of Women; women's caucus</p> <p>UNICEF; UNDP; UN-Women</p>	<p>\$5 million (\$2 million from regular resources and \$3 million from other resources)</p>
Gender equality	<p><b>Outcome:</b> By 2015, the people in the Lao Democratic People's Republic benefit from policies and programmes that promote gender equality and the participation of women in formal and informal decision-making</p> <p><b>Outcome indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of actions implemented in the national strategy for the advancement of women, 2011-2015</li> <li>Number of recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women acted upon by sector</li> </ul>	<p><b>Output 1:</b> Institutions at central and subnational levels are better able to promote gender equality and follow up on the recommendations of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women</p> <p><b>Output indicators:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Number of sectoral and provincial subcommissions for the advancement of women systematically monitoring and reporting on implementation of the national strategy for the advancement of women</li> <li>Number of advocacy campaigns and initiatives based on disaggregated data and gender analysis conducted by the Lao National Commission for the Advancement of Women</li> </ul>	<p>National Assembly; Lao National Commission on the Advancement of Women</p> <p>Oxfam Novib; UNDP; UNICEF; UN-Women</p>	<p>\$0.7 million (\$0.2 million from regular resources and \$0.5 million from other resources)</p> <p>Total for programme coordination and assistance: \$1million from regular resources</p>