The government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) fully supports the efforts of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in cooperation with the United Nations (UN), and the World Trade Organization (WTO), to insure the protection and viability of intellectual property. The many controversies worldwide concerning the application of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is of immediate and direct concern to the Lao PDR. The Lao PDR is continuing its efforts to strengthen and modernize its Department of Industrial Property, Standardization and Metrology which safeguards intellectual property within the Lao PDR. The effective protection of intellectual property is recognized as essential for Lao PDR's transition to a market based economy. We believe that reaching consensus with the majority of States on the issue of IPR is of paramount importance to the socio-economic development and promotion of foreign investment in developing countries. The Lao PDR is reforming its laws so that it will be able to meet its current and future obligations as a party to the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), the WTO, and the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property.

1. **Patent Protection and Access to Pharmaceuticals:**
   The Lao PDR fully supports the protection of medical research and drug manufacturers and understands the issues of compulsory licensing and parallel importation that provoke international tensions. We see the issues of sustainable economic development and good governance as being of primary importance in addressing many of the areas of disagreement. The Lao PDR also believes that internal social and political tensions, the inabilities of current social and physical infrastructures and restrictive or regressive foreign economic policies create barriers which impede access to affordable medical treatment and life saving medicines. The Lao PDR endorses the policies of good governance and sound economic development to combat these impediments.

2. **Contemporary Challenges of International Intellectual Property Laws and Practices:**
   The Lao PDR is working diligently to insure adequate protection for originators of intellectual property by modernizing its Office of Intellectual Property and conducting seminars to educate the general population. We are also upgrading our technical capabilities to be compatible with WIPO and the IP departments of other ASEAN states. In addition to joining WIPO and the Paris Convention, we are working towards the necessary requirements for accession to the 1979 Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the 1961 Rome Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations and the 1989 Washington Treaty on Intellectual Property in Respect of Integrated Circuits. These challenges are seen as positive steps in the Lao PDR's involvement in the international community and for the stimulation of economic growth and technical advancement.

3. **Traditional Knowledge and Folklore Protection:**
The Lao PDR recognizes the broad range of issues that affect Traditional Knowledge (TK) and Folklore Protection (FP). As a country rich in cultural heritage and biodiversity, these issues are of particular interest to us. We completely support the work of the Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore to protect the IP peculiar to any State or peoples and look forward to being an active participant in the upcoming Fourth Session in Geneva. With the complexities of current international business and the growing amount of shared research, the issue of protecting TK is made more difficult and more important. The Lao PDR fully supports WIPO's efforts to promote an IP culture and the development of fair and balanced international IP laws. The Lao PDR stands behind the agreements and conclusions reached at the Second Session of the International Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore held in Geneva in 2001. The Lao PDR sees great opportunity in its heritage and natural resources to be a contributor to the harmonious tapestry of international citizenship and seeks the ability to share its richness for the benefit of all.
I. Promoting Stability throughout the Region

Various steps have been taken to promote stability throughout the region encompassing the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Since its ASEAN in July 1997, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic has sought to promote stability throughout the region by actively participating in a variety of discussions. The Second Informal ASEAN Summit meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (1997), witnessed Lao PDR endorsement of the ASEAN Vision 2020. ASEAN Vision 2020 sets the agenda for ASEAN to be a concert of Southeast Asian nations, outward looking, and living in peace, stability and prosperity, bonded together in partnership in dynamic development and in a community of caring societies by the year 2020. One step to be taken in order to realize this goal is that ASEAN member states must adhere to the protocol of the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (1995), which was ratified by the Prime Minister of Laos Khamtay Siphandone, in order to peacefully exist in a stable environment free of nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The 6th ASEAN Summit saw a direct mechanism for implementation of the ASEAN Vision 2020 goals in the Hanoi Plan of Action (HPA), the first in a series of plans of action building up to the realization of the goals of the ASEAN Vision 2020. The 7th ASEAN Summit (2001) adopted the 2001 ASEAN Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism. ASEAN leaders view terrorism as a profound threat to international peace and security and a direct challenge to the attainment of peace, progress and prosperity of ASEAN and the realization of ASEAN Vision 2020.

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic actively endorses numerous ASEAN regional agreements and initiatives. The 8th ASEAN Summit (2002) approached external security threats to it’s member states, specifically expansionist intentions of the People’s Republic of China in the South China Sea regarding the Spratly Islands. During the 8th ASEAN Summit meeting in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Somsavat Lengsavad ratified the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. All participating delegations recognized the priority to exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability including, among others, refraining from inhabiting the presently uninhabited islands and to handle their differences in a constructive manner. Furthermore, Laos actively engages several mutual ASEAN member states, such as Burma, Singapore, and Vietnam in bilateral dialogue in order to ensure regional stability and good neighborhood.

With the goals of the ASEAN Vision 2020 in mind, Laos believes that continued economic advancement is essential in promoting stability throughout the region. Laos acknowledges that terrorism and ethnic conflict exist in various forms, such as secessionist movements, fundamental religious fanaticism, and discrimination against ethnic minorities. With the broader goals of the ASEAN Vision 2020 in consideration, Laos promotes a modern and competitive small and medium enterprises (SME) sector in ASEAN, which will contribute to the industrial development and efficiency of the region. In addition, Laos favors enhancing food security and international competitiveness of food, agricultural and forest products, to make ASEAN a leading producer of these products.

II. Public Health and Disease Surveillance

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has implemented a variety of approaches in order to strengthen the public health care infrastructures of member states and to combat and eradicate devastating diseases throughout the region. In an attempt to contain and eliminate the highly communicable disease tuberculosis within the ASEAN region, Laos actively supported the Stop TB Initiative of 1998. In recollection of the UN Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted at the 26th Special Session of the General Assembly in June 2001 that secured a global commitment to enhanced coordination and intensification of national, regional and international efforts to combat HIV/AIDS in a comprehensive manner; the Lao People’s Democratic Republic (Lao PDR) endorsed the 7th ASEAN Summit Declaration on HIV/AIDS (2001) in Brunei Darussalam. Laos actively participated in the ASEAN Leaders Meeting on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Bangkok on April 29, 2003, where ASEAN member states worked collectively to ensure that ASEAN became SARS-free. In addition, the Special ASEAN +3 Health
The Lao PDR affirms the importance of regional educational initiatives in order to mitigate many of the regional disease epidemics. Through multi-sectoral collaboration and partnerships at the national and regional levels, Laos will confirm that epidemics can be prevented, halted and reversed with strong leadership and intervention. Laos encourages various NGOs, such as the WHO and the Red Cross to elevate their level of commitment in the region in order to foster a greater environment of public health and welfare and to prevent a future number of incalculable fatalities.

III. The Refugee Crisis on Thailand’s Borders

The Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Myanmar both border the Kingdom of Thailand, and have previously experienced internal tension, which has led to external movement of our citizens into Thailand. Migrants from Laos make up the third largest refugee group in Thailand today, behind only Myanmar and Cambodia. Laos traditionally prefers these refugees to be repatriated to their country of origin. Similarly, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) of the Union of Myanmar requests their expatriates to return to their territorial homelands within the boundaries of their country. Furthermore, the Kingdom of Thailand who is not a signatory of the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees wishes these refugees to repatriate to their countries of origin, in order to provide further employment to displaced Thai workers who have returned to the countryside, causing a recent shift in population. Based on its humanitarian policy proclaimed in 1977, the Lao Government clearly stated that it would welcome all Lao refugees who wish to return home and voluntarily. A program for voluntary repatriation of Lao refugees from Thailand under the auspices of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) began its operation in 1980. To this day under this program, more than 27,000 have gone back to the homeland voluntarily and under conditions of safety and dignity. The Lao Government has done its utmost to help reintegrate returnees into the national community.

The Lao PDR takes an active interest in alleviating the refugee crisis on Thailand’s borders. The Lao PDR emphasizes the traditional principles of peace, independence, democracy, unity and prosperity. Furthermore, the Lao PDR’s current policy of voluntary repatriation acknowledges the interests of all parties involved. Moreover, the Lao PDR government fully recognizes the necessity for refugees to return to a homeland where culturally distinct human rights practices are fundamentally observed under the accordance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Laos emphatically acknowledges the 1955 Bandung Declaration on Human Rights, which states that there are indeed no rights in this world without corresponding obligations, and therefore clearly recognizes that the most respectful right is the right to living in an independent, peaceful nation where individuals are provided with full human potential development, equal before the law, and given mutual respects. Laos profoundly believes that there is no place for political considerations or maneuvers in dealing with purely humanitarian issues like the problem of refugees.

Laos supports the UNHCR's in efforts to mitigate the tensions between various displaced peoples around the borders of the Kingdom of Thailand and their respective countries of origin. The Lao PDR sees the necessity for these border issues to be dealt with in a diplomatic manner in order to prevent further conflict from escalating in the ASEAN region. Furthermore, Laos would recommend the implementation of enhanced suggestive dialogue on the matter within the regional setting of the ASEAN Leadership Forum in order to fully realize the goals of the ASEAN Vision 2020. Moreover, Laos would prefer to endorse a proposal with a humanitarian approach to easing the situation on all parties involved in accord with the firm belief of the government of the Lao PDR that only through a truly humanitarian approach, can this complex issue of refugees be handled in an effective fashion.
The government of the Lao People’s Democratic Republic would like to begin by saying that only when governments give clear signals that they are willing to respect the rights of children and are willing to back this up with action can the rhetoric of protection of children’s rights be fully believed.

I. Combating Illegal Adoption and Child Trafficking

With regard to the growing international problems of child trafficking and illegal adoption, the Lao PDR wishes to express that it has always been opposed to trafficking in children and illegal adoption.

Accordingly, the Lao PDR can not solve the problem without assistance from the international community and world-wide cooperation. However, the Lao PDR, with a large percentage of its population living in poverty, is an easy victim of traffickers who use lies to deceive the poor about better opportunities in other nations. Poor families wishing to provide a better life for their children are especially vulnerable to these tactics.

In response, the Lao PDR has made significant efforts to reduce this problem domestically and abroad. The Lao PDR is striving to improve protection for children despite extraordinary resource constraints by collaborating with international organizations. The Government has improved several child-related laws that protect the rights of the child. The Lao PDR has enacted these laws in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child - to which the Lao PDR became party to in 1991. In addition, the Lao PDR has produced awareness programs aimed at educating the public about the dangers of traffickers and the detrimental effects of illegal adoption, and how to better protect children from them. The Lao PDR’s cooperation with international organizations such as ILO, IPEC, IOM and other UN agencies shows that it is serious about achieving tangible results and eliminating these terrible problems.

Despite these efforts, illegal adoption and child trafficking continue today. The Lao PDR believes that these problems can only be eliminated by addressing their root cause, poverty. Therefore, the Lao PDR would like to appeal to the international community, especially developed countries, for assistance in poverty alleviation. The Lao PDR hopes that these countries and international organizations will continue to support and to assist less developed countries in their efforts to ensure that children around the world have a normal and a happy childhood and that they grow into well-adjusted, productive adults rather than suffering at the hands of traffickers.

The Lao PDR stands ready to cooperate with the international community in protecting and caring for its children, and is committed to doing everything it can to attain these goals.

II. The Improvement of Birth and Prenatal Care Practices

According to the CRC, it is a child’s right to have every chance to survive and thrive. Yet, tragically, the early childhood years tend to receive the least attention and lowest investment from governments. Every year, some 132 million infants around the world struggle to survive the transition from defenseless newborns to happy, active three-year-olds. Every year, countless numbers of children are deprived of the love, care, health care, nutrition and protection that they need not only to survive, but to grow, develop and learn.

Moreover, about four million infants die in their first month of life and 11 million die before their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable causes such as malaria, diarrhea and measles. Today, 110 million children are not in school. Each year tens of million more are left with
physical and/or mental disabilities or learning impairments because they and their care givers lack the essentials needed for young children to survive their first years of life.

The Lao PDR believes that excellent prenatal care is one essential feature to giving children the best start in life. Poor nutrition and ill health on the part of a mother can lead to low birth weight in her children, putting them at much greater risk of developmental delay, malnutrition, disease and death. Poor health and nutrition also multiply the risk that women will die of complications related to pregnancy or childbirth. For that reason, the Lao PDR strongly supports the establishment of a Commission for Mothers and Children at the grass root level as a follow-up mechanism for the implementation of the 1990 Wold Summit for Children’s objectives. With the assistance of UNICEF, the Lao PDR has established the Lao Women’s Union on the Early Childhood and Family Development Project. This vital training is a village-based community initiative which provides excellent prenatal care. Mothers are also taught about health and nutrition, parenting, the value of play and child-to-child activities. This training is a core feature of many other similar national programs.

Another essential element that the Lao PDR is committed to is access to integrated, family focused, health and social services based in the community. Nevertheless, like other least developed countries, the Lao PDR faces financial challenges. At present, the Lao PDR has drawn up a social-economic development plan which aims to reduce the infant mortality rate, under-five mortality rate, maternal mortality rate and malnutrition by 2020. The Lao PDR stand ready to cooperate with the international community in the protection and nurturing of children and will do its utmost to achieve the objectives of the World Summit for Children as well as the 2002 UN Special Session on Children. It appeals to the developed countries and the international organizations to continue to render support and assistance to the least developed countries in their efforts to ensure that children around the world survive and thrive with access to adequate health care.

III. The Role of Children on Local and National Decision-Making

Under the CRC Article 12 states that children’s views are given weight and should inform decisions made about them, and Article 13 guarantees children the freedom of expression. Many social policies have failed children because they were based on the view that adults know best and act in children’s best interests. These failures are due to the refusal to listen to the voice of children themselves. State parties to the CRC need to consider the voice of children when they make decisions that concern those children. Children’s voices need to be heard because they are the ones who suffer from sexual exploitation, abuse, neglect, violence and recruitment as child soldiers. The Lao PDR strongly believes in the rights of a child, accordingly, the Lao PDR ratified the CRC in 1991. Following the ratification, the Lao PDR set up the National Commission for Mothers and Children to oversee child-related affairs of education, well-being and protection. The Lao PDR is committed to incorporation legal rights for Lao children in line with the provisions of the CRC. The Lao PDR has improved and enacted several child-related laws that govern the exercising of the rights of the child and protect and care for children.

The Lao PDR believes that the best way to promote children’s rights is through education. Therefore, the Lao PDR strives to provide a quality basic education for all children. Unfortunately, in the rural areas of the country only 40 percent of the children are officially enrolled in primary school. With the assistance of UNICEF and many NGOs, the Lao PDR had been focusing on poverty alleviation and immediately improving children’s access to basic education. Furthermore, the Lao PDR is supporting any UNICEF proposals raising awareness and training responsible individuals and governments to ensure that the legitimate participation of children becomes a constant element of political, cultural and socio-economic debate. The Lao PDR is also working closely with regional organizations to promote children’s participation in regional policy discussions such as the 5th East Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Children in Beijing and the activities leading up to it, as well as other international forums such as the UN
Special Session on Children. The Lao PDR calls on the international community to work together in promoting children’s rights and to listen to young people’s voices because they are the future of the world.
Country: Laos
Committee: Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People
Delegate: Michael Harris, Keith Hansen, Wichita State University

The Laos People’s Democratic Republic (PDR) worked diligently to assert its independence from unjust colonialism, using forward thinking philosophies to combat occupation of a sovereign nation from foreign invaders. Within the world community, much progress has been made during the last 50 years to deal with the problem of occupation of a country by force. Unfortunately, the world community has yet to act decisively on behalf of the Palestinian people in face of the nearly century of occupation by Jewish settlers as a result of the 1917 Balfour Declaration by the British Government. It is time for the international community to bring to a peaceful end to the divisiveness that has led to the most recent intifada by the Palestinians, and military action against civilians by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Regional cooperation is necessary to reduce tensions stemming from the conflict, and the United Nations can lead the way towards this goal. As we move towards a more global world, it is imperative that the United Nations act now to prevent another 87 years of violence and bloodshed.

Securing a Healthy Living Environment
As the global population expands, the demand for resources increases and it becomes difficult to maintain a healthy living environment capable of sustaining itself. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit have addressed specifically the dire straits in which we have pushed the fragile global eco-system. Increases in population have led to migration to areas lacking adequate resources and infrastructure to promote growth and development. This has contributed to the stripping of natural resources such as forests and polluting of water systems. In Palestine, Israeli occupation has led to a situation that puts the health and safety of Palestinian settlers forced from their rightful homes into a near crisis situation.

Since the 1967 illegal Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, the natural resources in the territories have been threatened and abused by Israeli incursions and settlements. The security situation within Israel has led its leadership to justify policies that limit Palestinian access to resources necessary for living a normal healthy life. Specifically Israel has taken control of the limited water resources in the region by controlling both mountain and coastal aquifers. It was recently reported that at the current time, Israeli access to freshwater dwarfs Palestinian access by a 7:1 ratio. Israel has also controlled Palestinian access to the ever important River Jordan at its West Bank.

Along with access to fresh water resources being limited, the Palestinian people have also been forced with a growing environmental pollution problem as a result of a lack of waste disposal and sewage system. Palestinian refugee camps lack the funding for water distribution and disposal systems. The mounting pollution in these camps has led to increases in disease and illness. Also contributing to this sickness has been
irresponsible contamination of the few natural resources by Israeli pollution and waste. Currently the Israelis have failed to recognize the consequences of damaging the environment, and have continued their established practice of dumping industrial waste and heavy metal directly into the fresh water systems that feed the Palestinians settlements. The Israeli government must act more effectively to ensure that businesses and those under their rule respect the fundamental right of all people to live in a healthy living environment free from pollution and waste. Laos supports United Nations efforts to ensure that a healthy living environment is maintained in refugee camps and throughout the territories.

Social and Economic Concerns in the Settlements
Since the 1967 occupation of Palestine, the Israeli goal has been to control all territory between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea. To accomplish this task, Israel has used military force to physically move the rightful inhabitants of these lands into camps. GA Resolution 3236 (22 Nov, 1974) explicitly states that Palestinians have “the right to self-determination without external interference and the right to national independence and sovereignty.” The Israelis have thwarted this right, and their military continues to set up road blocks and checkpoints that limit Palestinian travel, impose curfews to limit movement, and have engaged in a military policy that accepts the use of force against civilians without discretion or oversight. The lack of mobility caused by these restrictions has made it increasingly difficult for Palestinians to reach their places of employment, transport water and waste resources properly, and has directly caused the environmental emergency that we as an international community must now address.

Implementation of the Road Map to Peace
Laos recognizes the basic rights of all people born free to this world. Respecting this view, it is time for the United Nations to continue efforts to find a resolution to the Palestine conflict. The timeline for the implementation of the road map for peace has, unfortunately, not been met. Soon the International Court of Justice will issue their advisory opinion regarding the legality of the “separation wall”, and the General Assembly will be able act decisively with regards to holding Israel accountable or their violations of repeated GA resolutions that have called for their immediate withdraw of troops from the occupied areas. Laos supports all UN efforts to broker peace in the region, and end the needless cycle of violence that has plagued the middleeast.

Article 49 of the fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to which Israel is a party states “the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.” Unfortunately for the Palestinians, Israel has categorically failed to abide by international law and customs, and has continues its policy of increased occupation. This occupation is the cause of the humanitarian concerns which the Laos PDR urges the international community to address. Before we can truly become a global community, we have to act with an international commitment liberate the Palestinian people. And provide every person born free on this Earth a standard of living that we would all be willing to accept for ourselves.
With such issues as the Protection of Priceless Works of Art, the Dismantling of International Terrorist Networks, and Combating Illicit Transactions and Crimes of Information Technology, Laos is proud to be a part of the 2004 Interpol General Assembly. Each of these issues affects Laos in a unique way, from tourism to industry to development. Laos, being a Member State of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as well as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), has a vested interest in these topics, and wishes to see them all addressed in a way that would benefit not only Laos, but all developing countries.

I. Protection of Priceless Works of Art

Art surrounds us all in our everyday lives, and enriches cultures with tangible and real objects that allow countries and civilizations a connection with their history. The protection of ancient artifacts is of extreme importance to countries within ASEAN, as many of these countries garner a large amount of revenue from tourism and the visiting of these artifacts and ancient sites. The larceny and destruction of these sites is detrimental not only to the volatile economies of countries is Southeast Asia, but also to their cultural heritage and Laos firmly condemns the illegal transportation, sale, or destruction of antiquities. Laos wishes to express its interest in expanding upon Object ID, the database that aids in the identification of art and artifacts. Laos feels that in order to properly secure artifacts in their proper States, national registries should be established and maintained by duly appointed ministers of culture as well as by Interpol. In addition, preventative measures should be taken to avoid the larceny of these works, such as increased security measures in museums, and the safekeeping of the most sacred valuables in State-run institutions such as national museums in lieu of private and less secure museums and galleries. Furthermore, Laos would like to see more training programs for art dealers and collectors, cultural heritage organizations, law enforcement agencies, customs agencies, appraisers, and insurance industry personnel in identifying stolen art, and mandates demanding the return of these items to their rightful owners in their land of origin.

II. The Dismantling of International Terrorist Networks

The United Nations is essential in the coordination of the worldwide struggle against terrorism. Through Interpol, Laos wishes to combat terrorism, restore business confidence, and alleviate the detrimental impact of terrorist attacks on ASEAN countries. Combating terrorism comes at a cost for Laos and other Interpol Member States, but one that all should be willing to bear. Terrorism affects citizens of countries in Southeast Asia who already have innumerable worries. This attack on our psychological well being only further fosters doubt about the future and impedes proper development. Laos would
like to see increased national sovereignty in dealing with terrorist, as the land upon which terrorism occurs should be the land upon which consequences should be brought forth. Although Laos is willing to cooperate with Interpol in the search and apprehension of international criminals, we also feel that these criminals should be held accountable inside national courts as well as the International Criminal Courts. Laos will cooperate in International Law Enforcement Training, the apprehension of suspects, and financial criminal investigations such that facilities exist. Laos would also wish to express our interest in further developing and training a police force to better deal with international issues such as terrorism. Laos supports resolution AGN/54/RES/1 and urges other Member States to do their part in its implementation.

III. Combating Illicit Transactions and Crimes of Information Technology

The digital divide is far too real for Laos in this domain. Laos has a limited budget that does not include expenditures for the expansion of the technological field. Laos would request further official development assistance in this area in the form of grants and loans from the World Bank and the International Telecommunications Union and technical assistance from Interpol in order to create a strong network that is modernized to withstand and combat illicit transactions in IT. Necessary security programs such as firewalls and intrusion detection systems would be greatly appreciated in Laos and are absolutely essential in the development of a State-directed network. Laos depends on the maturation of Information Technologies for the future of the country, and other countries share Laos’ strong need to be involved in globalization for the good of our economies, our culture, and the prosperity that we would like to enjoy in the very near future.
Country: Laos  
Committee: G.A. Third  
Delegates: Ngulwe Alfani, Rickey Studyvin, Wichita State University

The issues before the G.A. Third Committee are important challenges facing the world today. Laos favors a multilateral approach to humanitarian issues over unilateral actions taken by any country to try and solve these problems. Laos stands united with the rest of the world in defending and protecting the well being of all people so that common social and humanitarian issues can be given adequate attention. Laos is committed to the human rights principles outlined in Article 55 of the UN charter and encourages other countries to reaffirm their pledge to this article. Laos respects human rights based on economic, cultural and social equality, but also recognizes that the rights of the individual do not outweigh what is good for the community. To further these ideas, we look forward to cooperating with all member states in the third committee so that the humanitarian issues the world faces today can be solved.

I. Implications of the Struggle Against Terrorism on Human Rights
Terrorist activities show a despicable disregard for the very rights that every individual is entitled to. The threat of terrorism and terrorist activities committed by rouge nations or individual actors requires the commitment of all countries, no matter their level of development, to combat forcefully and efficiently. Laos is cooperating with the Association of South East Asian Nations and the United Nations to combat terrorism by enhancing regional cooperation and coordination among relevant national agencies. Laos joined other ASEAN states and China in adopting a joint Declaration on Cooperation in the field of Non-Traditional Security Issues in November 2002. This Declaration aims to support more information sharing and joint research on non-traditional security issues. Laos is also working closely with other ASEAN members to include a measure in the Declaration on Joint Action to Counter Terrorism that intensifies the efforts to collectively and individually suppress all activities of terrorism. The struggle against terrorism seems complicated because not only does it take the lives of innocent civilians but can also violate the human rights of the accused. The respect and integrity of the person accused must be upheld. As a signatory of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, Laos is working to preserve domestically and abroad the rights of all citizens. The adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights demonstrates the determination of humankind to route out the scourges of war and all forms of oppression. More specifically, Articles 5 through 11 of the Declaration deal with equal protection before the law. Laos is committed to respecting international norms of human rights and democratic freedom of all people worldwide.

II. Follow-up to the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action (2001)
Laos already includes provisions in its constitution to protect its citizens against discrimination. Article 22 reads, “Lao citizens, irrespective of their sex, social status, level of education, faith and ethnicity are equal before the law.” Laos attended the World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related
intolerance in 2001. Laos urges other states within the international community to support actions combating racism and racial discrimination in all forms. Laos reiterates its call upon the international community to contribute fully to the effective implementation of policies and Programme of Action 2001 which include respecting the International and Regional standards against racism and related intolerance, and adhering to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. As a signatory to the Durban Declaration and a state that voted in favor of the follow up to the Racism Conference, Laos urges those countries that voted against the Declaration to join other signatories in their commitment to all aspects of democracy and equal rights without regard to race.

III. Social and Humanitarian Situation in Post-War Iraq
Laos is deeply disappointed that the standoff in Iraq, a sovereign UN member state, could not be solved diplomatically. We stand by our conviction that the United Nations is the only global organization capable of effectively solving the social and humanitarian situation in Iraq and would like to see UN agencies return to Iraq as soon as possible to address the urgent humanitarian needs of the Iraqi people. Laos would like to see sovereignty returned to the Iraqi people as soon as possible and is looking forward to seeing the final report of the current UN mission to Iraq to see if direct elections can be held before the Coalition authority’s mandate expires on July 1, 2004. Laos would also like a larger number of multilateral forces to provide continued security for UN relief workers and overall security until the Iraqi Civil Police Force is fully operational and able to take over security on a large scale.
Country: Laos People Democratic Republic  
Committee: GA Plenary  
Delegates: Dung Mac and Chetan Gubbi, Wichita State University

I. International Migration and Development

Laos believes international migration to be an increasingly significant issue concerning global development. The interstate and intrastate movement of people can have both positive and negative effects upon countries' development. Laos deeply appreciates the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESWA), International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Labor Organization (ILO), Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in cooperation with various NGOs to address the issue of international migration and development. However, Laos recognizes the UNHCR as the leading actor on the issue.

Laos views its people as its greatest asset. For this reason, Laos has made human resource development (HRD) one of the country's top priorities. HRD covers a wide range of concerns that include providing employment and social security, promoting health and education, developing science and technology, and professionalizing public administration and civil service.

International migration can be beneficial to the sending and receiving countries' development; remittances have played a tremendous role in improving the economic development of the sending countries. However, it can also have disastrous consequences, often resulting in violations of human rights, increased human trafficking, as well as decreased labor force and loss of educated people (the "brain drain") for the sending country. Laos believes international migration should be addressed in regional forums since the migratory movement of people has strong regional impacts. There is a need for a regional survey on migration to formulate better policies. Laos believes the UN should create a mechanism to coordinate actions by the regional forums and global community.

Though poor people are unlikely to migrate legally because of the required expenses, such people can be vulnerable to exploitation and the dangers of human trafficking. It's been estimated up to 2 million women and children are subject to human trafficking globally with around 225,000 from South-East Asia. Human trafficking is internationally recognized as a grave phenomenon, especially to developing countries such as Laos. A sizable portion of Laos' population is living in poverty and an easy victim of traffickers who deceive the poor about better opportunities abroad.

Human trafficking can only be truly eliminated by addressing its root causes, particularly poverty and the desire for work and a better life. For this reason, Laos supports the establishment of a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication, which should benefit first and foremost the poorest and the most vulnerable in the global society. Furthermore, Laos is seriously concerned about the decline of ODA and urges all development partners to honor their commitment by increasing ODA to the agreed level of 0.7%.

II. Establishment of Nuclear-Free Zones

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT, 1968) has in its provisions the right of countries to establish specified zones free of nuclear weapons. After the NPT entered into force in 1970, a majority of the world's nations have acted to establish Nuclear-Weapons-Free Zones (NWFZs). The Treaty of Tlatelolco (1967), Treaty of Rarotonga (1985), and Treaty of Bangkok (1995) established NWFZs in Latin American, the South Pacific, and Southeast Asia, respectively. The Treaty of Pelindaba (1996), allowing Africa to be an NWFZ, has not entered into force yet. More recently, the NWFZ treaty in Central Asian (CANWFZ) (2002) is under negotiation and not opened for signature. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT, 1996) is a global treaty banning all nuclear testing. However, the Treaty has not entered into force yet. By the establishment of these treaties and numerous related treaties, the global community has expressed its opposition to nuclear weapons, their development, manufacture and testing.

Laos denounces the development of nuclear weapons. Laos strongly believes the doctrine of nuclear deterrence, which holds that nuclear weapons ensure national security, is no longer applicable in the global society. The stockpiling of nuclear weapons only leads to potential world destruction. Laos also recognized that under the NPT, only the five permanent members of the Security Council (P5) are Nuclear Weapon States (NWS). Though there have been efforts to reduce their nuclear arsenal, collectively, the P5 still have a large quantity of nuclear warheads. Laos urges the P5 to hasten dismantling of nuclear weapons. The total security of NWFZs can only be attained when nuclear weapons are completely eliminated. Laos perceives the CTBT to be an important instrument, vital for the achievement of nuclear disarmament.
While we are encouraged by the ratification of the CTBT by numerous Member States including three of the NWS, we call upon other Member States who have not done so to follow suit so as to ensure the entry into force of the treaty.

Recognizing the importance of NWFZs as an indispensable contribution to reaching the goal of comprehensive nuclear disarmament, Laos has been pro-active in the ASEAN efforts toward furthering the effectiveness of the Bangkok Treaty. The Treaty includes a legally binding Protocol for the P5 to sign and ratify. It calls upon NWS to recognize and respect the rights of treaty states-parties. Laos is deeply touched by the People's Republic of China readiness to accede to the Protocol and we hope this would serve as an incentive for similar actions by the remaining NWS.

III. Financing for Development
Lao PDR with its continued implementation of New Economic Mechanism (NEM) initiated in 1986 is making a progress towards economic development. NEM was introduced as a step towards decentralization, through market oriented reforms and increased participation of all stakeholders (regional, provincial and villages) in developmental activities. With close to 83% of its employed persons depending on subsistence agriculture for their survival, agriculture continues to be a mainstay in country’s economy. With such an ethnically diverse population and lower percentages of educated adult population, Lao’s is highly dependent on natural resources for economic and social development. And with the recent Southeast Asian crisis in 1997, Lao’s economy is continuing to depend on Official Development Assistance for its revival. Lao PDR with assistance from member states of United Nations is implementing better financial management strategies to prevent any such events from occurring in the future.

Lao PDR’s overarching goal is to quit the status of LDC and eradicate mass poverty by the year 2020. The Lao’s government plans to achieve this through a harmonious triangular mutually reinforcing approach, which focuses on simultaneous economic growth with social and cultural development and conservation of natural resources. Structural transformation, capacity building and people centered sustainable development are the major areas of focus with national development efforts. In this regard National Poverty Reduction Strategy papers (NPRS) are being prepared by Lao’s government focused on fighting poverty. It has also placed greater emphasis on a Governance and Public Administration Reform (GPAR) as it considers governance as a key inter sectoral element to achieve economic growth.

Lao PDR is working closely with UN country team inclusive of UNDAF, UNDP and several other UN agencies in implementing Millennium Development Goals and National Development Goals. Development in Laos is greatly influenced by co-operation between the regional countries and countries in the ASEAN. Lao’s has applied for a membership with W.T.O to gain improved accessibility to global markets for its agricultural products and exports.

Lao PDR recognizes the efforts by UN agencies and ODA and technological assistance from developed countries as highly instrumental in its social and economic growth. Lao’s believes the co-operation and assistance from capable countries towards capacity and institutional building as a key to long term development. Laos believes development of Information and Communication technology as a vital tool for developing countries to facilitate the government’s efforts for human resource development. Lao’s feels that developed countries opening their agricultural markets, as a valuable support towards sustainable development of agriculture dependant developing economies like it. Lao’s commends the developed countries efforts to the development of developing countries through their commitments towards the O.D.A.