

Round Table Implementation Meeting 2014 Speaking points of the Swiss Delegation (by Liliane Ortega)

Session 2 Progress of the implementation of the actions points from the 11th RTM in 2013.

MDG implementation- addressing off-track targets and acceleration measures

Intervention about off-track MDGs: MDG1 and MDG 9.

MDG 1 Poverty and hunger.

Linkage between Food Security and Land management

“On the issue of land management, several excellent remarks have already been made by the previous speaker. Switzerland entirely supports the comments and recommendations made by H.E. the Ambassador of Germany.

I will not repeat them, of course, but as there is in Lao PDR an high risk of increased food insecurity if agriculture land continues to be attributed to investors, let me make a reference and a suggestion which can be useful regarding the linkage between access to land and food security in the context of the up-coming National Land Policy.

Lao PDR is Party to the **Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** since 2007. The **Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights** includes the **Right to Food, also known as Right to Adequate Food.**

In the text of the Voluntary Guidelines to support the progressive realization of the Right to Food in the context of national food security, it is said that (quote) *States Parties should respect existing access to adequate food by not taking any measures that result in preventing such access, and should protect the right of everyone to adequate food by taking steps so that **enterprises** and individuals do not deprive individuals of their access to adequate food.* (end of quote). This can obviously be related to the companies investing on land which involuntarily may cause a deprivation of land access to rural communities.

The Text of the voluntary guidelines also says: (quote) *States Parties shouldproactively engage in activities intended to strengthen people’s access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure their livelihood, including food security.* (end of quote)

On the particular aspect of **access to land**, this text also says: (quote) *States should take measures to promote and protect the security of land tenure, especially with respect to women, poor and disadvantaged segments of society.* (end of quote)

→Taking into account the commitment of the GoL regarding reducing children malnutrition, and also the important focus on Food security in the revised Agriculture Strategy, we have no doubt about the intention of the GoL to respect and fulfil the Right to Food. And as the process of the elaboration of the National Land policy is still on-going, it could be adequate to request the Special Rapporteur to the Right to Food to make a visit in Lao PDR in order to get her view and recommendations on this particular aspect. – I say “her” because the newly appointed Special Rapporteur to the Right to Food is a lady, Mrs Hilal Elver.

Regarding the pending needs in MDG 1, in particular in child malnutrition, Switzerland will keep assisting the efforts to reduce child malnutrition in uplands through effective partnerships and field actions.

MDG 9 Unexploded Ordnance (UXO)

Related to Evidence-based survey:

- Switzerland welcomes the Government's plan to adopt **evidence-based survey methodology**. This will allow more unexploded ordnances (UXOs) to be destroyed and it represents a **positive outcome for rural people** living with the risk of UXO. We also know that evidence-based survey will generate information that can quantify the scope of the UXO problem in Laos, and significantly improve the **prioritization** of UXO clearance activities.
- Switzerland believes that the adoption of this efficient, effective and strategic methodology will help **restore donor confidence in the sector**. We therefore encourage the GoL to approve and adopt evidence-based survey as soon as possible.
- **Question: When will the GoL plan to amend its targets for UXO clearance to reflect the adoption of evidence-based survey?**

Related to Civil Society Funding Facility (CSFF)

- We are concerned about the time taken to establish the Civil Society Funding Facility. The Facility is proposed as a 3rd funding window to the UXO Trust Fund, to promote the involvement of both Lao and international Civil Society Organisations in the UXO sector.
- In October 2013, Switzerland earmarked funds for NGOs to conduct survey activities and develop survey methodologies. More than 12 months later, this funding window is not yet activated, and a policy and management mechanism is yet to be agreed. To date, a lack of clarity in both policy and process persists, as points agreed more than a year ago reappear for re-negotiation.
- **Question: How soon will the agreement on the content of the Civil Society Funding Facility be approved?**

Session 2 Progress of the implementation of the actions points from the 11th RTM in 2013. The progress of implementation of governance framework for achieving the NSEDP/MDGs

Intervention about Public Service Improvement and Sam Sang and People's Participation

Related to Sam Sang (Three Build Directive)

- In the presentation of the Vice Minister of Ministry of Home Affairs, we heard that lessons learnt from the two first years of the pilot will be drawn and some adjustments will be made. However, Switzerland would welcome some clarification on the overall implementation strategy for the expansion of the Sam Sang.

Related to the upcoming Decree on Ethnic Affairs

- Switzerland welcomes the recent initiative of the Ministry of Home Affairs to draft a **new Decree on Ethnic Affairs**, which should help providing policy advices to relevant stakeholders in formulating **strategies and measures to promote equality** and solidarity between all ethnic groups in Lao PDR. Switzerland is interested to provide **technical and financial support** in this process.

Switzerland will be happy to provide support to MoHa if requested.

Civil Society – (INGOs and NPAs)

- Switzerland would like to commend the GoL for the organization of the **INGO Forum** on 28.10.2014, to review the implementation and contributions from INGOs. We are happy to see that the **INGOs are increasingly recognized**, even by high-level GoL representatives, and valued for their important role in the development of the country.
- Switzerland would like to encourage the GoL to promote **further alliances and partnerships between INGOs and NPAs** for increased capacity building in all development sectors.
- I also want to support the proposal made by the representative of France about the establishment of a 3rd Sub-Sector Working group on **People's participation**, with possible co-chairing of the National assembly under the Governance Sector Working Group.
- In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that the participation of civil society in development, both in debates and implementation, is a key element. Last week, on request of NERI, we had the excellent opportunity to describe the Swiss development experience in front of many important government stakeholders. We provided many examples highlighting that an empowered society is creative and productive.