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**Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the
International Criminal Court**

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General debate

**Statement by
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Lao People' Democratic Republic

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Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all, I would like to join the previous speakers in congratulating you on the election to the presidency of this Assembly.

I am pleased and honored to share information on the efforts of the Government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic towards the Study of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Although Lao PDR has not yet acceded to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), the Lao government agencies attach great importance to the Study of the Rome Statute and have closely followed the activities of the ICC.

The grave crimes stipulated in the Statute are undesirable for the international community as well as the Lao PDR. It is therefore convinced that there is a need for wide international cooperation to combat and prevent these crimes.

In the Lao PDR, series of activities have been carried out during the last few years. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of Treaties and Law), as a focal point, started studying and gradually following the evolvement of the ICC. It has also organized seminars and workshops for relevant authorities at both the central and provincial levels to share information and raise awareness of the ICC, as well as translated the Rome Statute of the ICC into the national language, published it and widely distributed.

In November 2001, under financial support of Forum Asia, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized the first ever national workshop on the ICC. Based on the results of this workshop, the Government decided to set up an Inter-Agency Working Group on the Rome Statute. This Working Group consists of representatives of the most concerned ministries and institutions such as Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Justice, Office of the People's Supreme Court, Office of the People's Supreme Prosecutor, National Assembly etc. The main task and responsibility assigned to this Working Group is to study the Rome Statute and make recommendations regarding the advantages and possibilities of becoming a member of the ICC, as well as recommendations on possible amendments to the existing laws of the Lao PDR if needed.

In early 2005, under financial support of the European Union, three workshops relating to the introduction, legislation and implementation of the Rome Statute

were conducted, and in November last year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Department of Treaties and Law) in cooperation with the Delegation of the European Commission to the Lao PDR organized the workshop on the ICC to enhance knowledge and understanding of government officers on legal frameworks of the Rome Statute, as well as implications in a domestic context.

Despite these efforts, the Lao government agencies have found that knowledge on legal frameworks or judicial regime of the ICC, including its jurisdiction are still not very familiarized to the Lao legal society. Therefore, it needs some more times to continue deeply studying, further enhancing knowledge and understanding of the officers at all levels on the Rome Statute of the ICC. Besides, provisions on the domestic Court's jurisdiction over these crimes are still to be added into the national legislation.

At this occasion, may I express thanks and appreciation to the States Parties, especially the EU for their valuable support provided to our country for the organization of all related activities so far, and our Lao agencies hope to receive further support and technical assistance in this respect.

Thank you very much.