



Press Release

18 March 2006 – For Immediate Release

Members of the public are invited for a FREE showing of *Mona Lisa Smile* on 22 March in Lao with French subtitles at 7:00pm as part of the *MDG Movie Nights*.

One of the key goals that need to be met for achieving all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is the MDG 3, “Promote Gender Equality”. In Lao PDR there have been several achievements to celebrate. The country has one of the highest representations of women in parliament in Southeast Asia, and the government has subscribed to the Beijing Platform for Action and other gender related conventions. Also the National Socio-Economic Development Plan 2006-2010 (NSED) has mainstreamed gender through its strategic priority sectors. Despite these positive developments, continued efforts need to be made for example in areas of promoting girls and boys equal access to schooling, sex-disaggregated data collection and incorporation of this information into policy planning.

MDG Movie Nights are being held to focus attention on the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000. After each movie the discussion will focus on *MDG 3: Promote Gender Equality*. The movie selected to spotlight this Goal is “*Mona Lisa Smile*.”

The movie begins in 1953 during US President Dwight Eisenhower's first year in the White House. It takes place over a single year at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, one of the exclusive universities for women on the East Coast of the United States. Progressive 31-year-old Katherine Wilson (Julia Roberts) comes from the lower-middle-class world of California to teach art history at this university. Her aim is 'to make a difference' at a place she thinks of as a finishing school for upper-class girls. After a stumbling beginning when she's mocked by her smart, condescending pupils, she begins to challenge them, forcing them to ask questions about art that direct them towards interrogating the condition of their own lives. The film shows us that whatever we do, our characters and lives are shaped for better and worse by the pressures and ethos of the times we grow up in.

The movie nights are FREE and open to the general public. Sponsored by the United Nations Country Team, these movie nights promise to be an entertaining way to spend an evening.

All showings will begin promptly at 7:00 pm. The movies will be shown at the CCCL, Avenue Lane Xang, Vientiane. Tél: (856 21) 215 764.

For more information: please contact Ms. Yasmin Forbes or Ms. Soukphaphone Thongsavanh at the Public Information Office

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