

Feature on: UNDP supported Second National Communication (SNC) Project on Climate Change

Source: Vientiane Times, Friday 20 Feb, 2009

Environmentalists draft plan to address climate change

The start of the Second National Communication (SNC) project on climate change was the main topic of discussion at a Water Resource and Environment (WREA) meeting yesterday.

The meeting, supported by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Environment Facility, brought together 35 officials from relevant state departments. The meeting aimed to prepare the first draft of the SNC, which is required under Lao commitments following the country's accession to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1995. The ultimate goal is to develop a comprehensive national climate change strategy.

Head of the International Environment Division of the WREA, Mr Khampadith Khamounheuang said climate change was affecting people's living conditions around the world, especially in developing countries.

Mr Khampadith expressed his hope that the meeting would improve the draft report and successfully draw up the second SNC, building on the First National Communication which was produced in 2000.

Nations were facing natural disasters and were seriously threatened by continual melting ice at the north and south poles, which resulted in rising sea levels. If the international community did not work seriously to reverse climate change, some countries may soon be inundated by rising seas. Such threats represented a challenge to the international community and a call to act, by learning to protect the environment and nurture the planet, Mr Khampadith said.

Although Laos is a developing country, the government has drawn up laws and policies to encourage people to preserve the environment. Those involved in development projects must ensure they use natural resources in a sustainable manner.

Environmental and natural resource conservation expansion policies are planned for Laos. One example is the target of 70 percent forest coverage of total land area by 2020. Such policies will help reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions, as well as destruction of the ozone layer, which contributes to global warming. They would also help protect water resources and catchment areas.

Mr Khampadith said the WREA was preparing a draft SNC on climate change to introduce working plans that would address the issue in cooperation with the agriculture and forestry, energy, public health, and urban development sectors.

The SNC will focus on important topics such as climate change assessment at the national level. In addition, a survey of greenhouse gas emissions sources in the energy, agriculture, land use, industry and waste management sectors is considered of prime importance in the drafting phase.

Mr Khampadith said there was much important work to be done for Laos to fulfill its international obligations. "Assessment of risk areas is required to adjust to the changing situation. Education on environmental conservation regulations to mitigate the effects of

climate change is also needed. Strategy formation and working together to change attitudes towards the environment in fighting climate change is another major requirement.”

Ounkham Pimmata
Vientiane Times reporter

Note:

For more information on the Second National Communication (SNC) Project on Climate Change, contact Mr Vichit Sayavongkhamdy in the UNDP Environment Unit, UN House, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Email: Vichit.sayavongkhamdy@undp.org

Tel: 021 267777