



Lao PDR

Joint Press Release
For immediate release

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The European Commission and UNDP work together to enhance Lao PDR's participation in the international legal system

The Delegation of the European Commission and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) entered into an important new partnership today in support of the development of international law in the Lao PDR.

Mr. Henry Prankerd, Chargé d'Affaires of the Delegation of the European Commission to Lao PDR, and Mrs. Sonam Yangchen Rana, UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative, exchanged signed copies of their financial agreement under which the Commission will contribute 500,000 Euros (US\$ 724,000) towards the International Law Project Phase III - 'Accelerated Capacity Development for the Lao PDR in International Law'.

The ceremony was held in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the presence of His Excellency Mr. Phongsavath Boupha, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The project has a total budget of US\$ 3,825,000 over 4 years from 2009-2012. Its main objective is to lay the foundations of a sustainable national capacity programme, consistent with the Vientiane Declaration, to assist the Lao PDR in its increasing engagement with the international legal process.

Speaking at the ceremony, Chargé d'Affaires Henry Prankerd said: "We are very pleased to work with UNDP and the Government to strengthen the rule of law and to help Lao PDR function as a fully-fledged member of international and regional communities"

The focus of the Project is to develop capacity for the immediate and long term needs of the Lao PDR by providing specialist training for personnel in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, strengthening the capacity of institutions that provide training infrastructure in international law, providing training to the Judiciary, Line Ministries, law enforcement agencies and CSOs in monitoring international law application and awareness, and strengthening the capacity of the National Assembly in the adoption and implementation of treaties.

Direct beneficiaries of the training and improved capacities of institutions will include more than 500 law students, up to 300 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Line Ministries staff, 28 interns working in Lao missions overseas, participants in international treaties conferences and UN Sessions, and participants of

EC Delegation to Lao PDR, Sihom Commerce Center Building, Luang Prabang Road, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

P.O. Box: 9325; Tel: ++ 856 21 241134; Fax: ++ 856 21 241137 / 241125

Email: DELEGATION-LAOS@ec.europa.eu www.dellao.ec.europa.eu

United Nations in Lao PDR, Lane Xang Ave, Vientiane, Lao PDR. Tel: (856-21) 267777 Fax: (856-21) 264939 / 267799

Email: infolao@undp.org Web: www.undplao.org

International law forums organized by the Project and around 300 judges who will receive training. Women's organizations will also benefit directly from gender specific seminars and workshops, and provincial and district authorities will benefit from community awareness programmes.

According to Mr. Phongsavath Boupha, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, "We, the Lao Government, regard the contribution of the European Commission to the International Law Project as invaluable assistance to the country and the Lao people. We are committed to making the most effective use of the funds, in line with the Vientiane Declaration, to maximize the benefits for the country and the people as a whole".

Speaking at the ceremony, the UNDP Resident Representative Sonam Yangchen Rana concluded "I am confident that this contribution is an important indicator of the success of the ongoing partnership between the European Commission, UNDP and the Government of Lao PDR."

For more information please contact:

Anousa Kounnavong, Press & Information Officer, Delegation of the European Commission to Lao PDR,
Tel: 021 241134 Email: Anousa.KOUNNAVONG@ec.europa.eu

Janet Pontin, Head of UNDP Public Information Unit,
Tel: 021 267 777 ext: 715 Email: janet.pontin@undp.org

Mr. Phoukhong Sisoulath, Project Manager, International Law Project
Tel: 020 752 2862 Email: khong64willows@hotmail.com

EC Delegation to Lao PDR, Sihom Commerce Center Building, Luang Prabang Road, Vientiane, Lao PDR.
P.O. Box: 9325; Tel: ++ 856 21 241134; Fax: ++ 856 21 241137 / 241125
Email: DELEGATION-LAOS@ec.europa.eu www.dellao.ec.europa.eu

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