

# PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Development Programme

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## **UNDP working in partnership to reduce poverty**

In a joint annual and final review meeting, held at the Lao Plaza hotel on 16 February in Vientiane, stakeholders and partners discussed the outcomes of two joint, UNDP-supported projects regarding civil society development in the Lao PDR: Enhancing Government and Civil Society Organisation Partnership for Poverty Reduction, and Khoun Community Radio for Development. The meeting was a forum to coalesce the many positive results and lessons learned from the two projects, which have been running for the past four years.

One aim of the projects has been to strengthen partnerships between the Government and social organizations. Another aim, equally important, has been to increase people's access to information, and through this, to increase people's ability to take decisions about their own development. "In order to build a strong link between legislation and the grassroots level, the process has to be supported from both ends simultaneously", said Dirk Wagener on behalf of the UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Sonam Yangchen Rana in his opening speech.

2009 witnessed major achievements in the legal framework regarding civil society. Due to positive changes in legislation, the Government of the Lao PDR will in the near future have several new potential development partners to work with in reaching the Millennium Development Goals.

Through the Khoun Community Radio, people have been directly involved in the production and dissemination of relevant information for their own communities. "Our evidence shows that information shared in the channels of Khoun Community Radio has had a clear development impact in the communities," noted Dirk Wagener. "For example, more and more families have brought their children to be vaccinated".

In the future, the two projects will be brought under one programme umbrella, in order to increase aid effectiveness. The focus of the new programme, running from 2010 to 2013, is partnership building. The programme aims at greater people's participation in and contribution to policy, local development and nation building.

Address: Lane Xang Avenue, P.O. Box 345, Vientiane, Lao PDR  
Tel: (856-21) 267 777 Fax: (856-21) 267 799, 264 939  
[www.undplao.org](http://www.undplao.org)

**Notes for editors:**

For more information please contact Janet Pontin at the UNDP Public Information Unit  
Tel: (021) 267 777 ext: 715, Email: [janet.pontin@undp.org](mailto:janet.pontin@undp.org)

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