Child-safe tourism on the agenda during Asia-Europe meetings

Bounfaeng Phaymanvong

Volunteer groups recently inspired delegates of the Asia-Europe People’s Forum (AEPF), guests and travellers to give more consideration to child tourism.

Some 20 volunteers from the National University of Laos (NUOL) recently received a one-day training course on volunteerism, child protection, child abuse, and child sexual exploitation.

They were sent out on the street to greet AEPF delegates, guests and visitors with key messages on child-safe travel tips.

“I’m very proud to be a part of this programme because it teaches me to be patient and have the flexibility to work with children and adults as well as to improve my communication skills,” said an NUOL volunteer, Ms Duangmany Niyomsen.

The AEPF was held from October 16-19 while the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit will be held during the same period. Both gatherings will bring up to 48 heads of state and government and over 600 journalists to Laos.

“Visit Laos Year” The Lao government, Department of Marketing of the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, and the Anti-Human Trafficking Department of the Ministry of Public Security used the opportunity to build a team with the NUOL, UN agencies, international governments and non-profit partners to promote child safe tourism practices throughout the AEPF and ASEM Summit.

The objective of this campaign is to promote child safe tourism practices in Laos among tourists and ASEM delegates with key messages, including how to promote child safety while travelling, how to respond when encountering signs of exploitation, and promoting awareness of child protection in tourism among AEPF/ASEM delegates and journalists from overseas.

As part of this educational campaign, customs and border control officials will distribute informational materials at Wattay International Airport and the Luang Namtha Bridge in Vientiane to all international arrivals.

In addition, the government of Laos and its partners will continue their efforts to address these risk factors through various development strategies. “Child safe tourism” is a major focus for the government in developing its Law on Tourism.

Laos to clamp down on sexual exploitation of children

Times Reporters

The Ministry of Justice is preparing a legal framework concerning offences relating to the sexual exploitation of children.

A workshop to discuss the issue took place at Thalad, Vientiane, earlier this week, organised by the Ministry of Justice and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and supported by the AUS-funded Project Childhood.

A main objective of the workshop, which was the fourth of its kind in Laos in recent months, was to finalise UNODC’s legal report on Laos regarding the sexual exploitation of children by travelling child sex offenders.

Discussions concluded with concrete recommendations, in particular, the agreement to review Lao legislation on the subject in 2013 and 2014.

During the workshop, the Ministry of Justice set out its plan of action to strengthen the legislative framework regarding the sexual exploitation of children by travelling child sex offenders.

A volunteer gives a leaflet on child-safe tourism to a delegate from Thailand during the Asia-Europe People’s Forum in Vientiane last week.

Sub-committee resolves to improve media performance for ASEM

Somxay Sengdara

The sub-committee on information, culture and hotels held a meeting on Tuesday to strengthen media preparedness for the upcoming Asia-Europe Meeting Summit.

Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism, President of the Lao Journalists’ Association and Chairman of the sub-committee, Prof. Dr Bosengkham Vongdara, led the meeting at the ministry.

“All media organisations should work hard to fulfill their responsibilities during the upcoming event,” he said.

The gathering discussed the media coverage plan for the summit based on lessons learnt from similar events held in the past, namely the Seventh Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Agreement and the Ninth Asia-Europe People’s Forum.

Sub-committee officials, who come from various media organisations, discussed the information they faced during the past two events such as entering the conference venue, the issuing of press passes, live TV and radio airtime and publishing event-specific newsletters.

Prof. Dr Bosengkham Vongdara speaks at the meeting.

Prof. Dr Bosengkham Vongdara praised the joint efforts of print media organisations in promoting the event, press releases and related documents during the ASEF meetings.

However, he called on media personnel, especially editors, to shoulder more responsibility for avoiding mistakes.

“Editors should keep working until they are positive everything is correct and the layout is completed and sent to the printing house,” he said.

He also advised reporters covering the event to visit the meeting venue and media centre in advance so they are familiar with the location and can identify any potential problems, especially those that might affect photographers.

He called on the officials involved not to hesitate to contact him at any time in the event of a problem.

Even though some aspects of past performance were deficient, Prof. Dr Bosengkham was confident that media personnel and all officials involved in the sub-committee will do their best at the summit.

Deputy Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism Mr Savanhkhone Razmouy, responsible for information affairs and a member of the sub-committee, also attended the discussion.

He again called on all media personnel to make a positive contribution to raising Laos’ image through this important international event.

Vientiane students learn what it means to live green

Ousphim Phimnatt

Lao Ford Motor Company and the Ministry of Education and Sports launched a Green Schools Project in Vientiane yesterday to promote environmental awareness and create more green spaces for schools.

The project will give 10 schools, which need equipment and information to enable them to plant trees and set up an organic vegetable patch, which children and staff can work on together.

In the coming months, the schools will be paid visits by staff members. On December 14, four of the 10 schools will be awarded prizes for their efforts.

The school in first place will receive US$40,000, second place will receive US$20,000 and third place will get US$2,000.

The project will involve schools from all of the city’s districts and aims to promote sustainable living to children and staff alike.

The Green Schools Project was funded to support the government’s policy on green living in schools, as well as helping disadvantaged children.

The project aims to teach children to respect and value the environment through promoting sustainable living choices.

Marketing Manager of Lao Ford Motor Company, Mr Chakaphon Malabudid, said the company had donated 160 million kip to Laos for environmental conservation, 120 million kip of which was used for conservation projects being run by various organisations including the Green Schools Fund.

Mr Chakaphon said he hoped the schools involved in the competition would encourage their students to embrace the green spaces in their school.

Mr Chakaphon Malabudid explains the rules of the Green Schools Project.

Times Reporters

The Ministry of Justice is preparing a legal framework concerning offences relating to the sexual exploitation of children.

A workshop to discuss the issue took place at Thalad, Vientiane, earlier this week, organised by the Ministry of Justice and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and supported by the AUS-funded Project Childhood.

A main objective of the workshop, which was the fourth of its kind in Laos in recent months, was to finalise UNODC’s legal report on Laos regarding the sexual exploitation of children by travelling child sex offenders.

Discussions concluded with concrete recommendations, in particular, the agreement to review Lao legislation on the subject in 2013 and 2014.

During the workshop, the Ministry of Justice set out its plan of action to strengthen the legislative framework regarding the sexual exploitation of children by travelling child sex offenders.

A discussion, chaired by Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Justice, Mr Vilath Phetvoun, brought together law enforcement officials, justice officials, prosecutors, police officers, judges and other relevant officials to discuss and review the draft to tighten Laos’ child protection laws.

Also attending the workshop were representatives from 21 government organisations, UNODC, and World Vision.

Those involved in tackling the issue hope that by making the law more comprehensive, law enforcement officials will be able to better combat the sexual exploitation of children in tourism ensure that laws meet international standards.

World of opportunity awaits...

As part of the Green Schools Project, Lao Ford Motor Company, with the support of the Ministry of Education and Sports, launched a competition to promote the use of bicycles among students.

The project aims to teach children to respect and value the environment through promoting sustainable living choices.

Marketing Manager of Lao Ford Motor Company, Mr Chakaphon Malabudid, said the company had donated 160 million kip to Laos for environmental conservation, 120 million kip of which was used for conservation projects being run by various organisations including the Green Schools Fund.

Mr Chakaphon said he hoped the schools involved in the competition would encourage their students to embrace the green spaces in their school.

We at Vientiane Times would like to inform our subscribers that we now offer newspaper boxes for use in homes and offices. The boxes, each of which is equipped with a lock and key, help protect your paper from inclement weather. Those interested in obtaining a box should contact the Vientiane Times office or call us at:

Tel: 216364, 252629, 217593; Fax: 216365

FROM PAGE 1

18.4 percent for agricultural goods and 10 percent for industrial products members which are within WTO limits. Laos has also opened up 79 service sub-sectors out of a total 160 sectors.

Attention Vientiane Times subscribers

We at Vientiane Times would like to inform our subscribers that we now offer newspaper boxes for use in homes and offices. The boxes, each of which is equipped with a lock and key, help protect your paper from inclement weather. Those interested in obtaining a box should contact the Vientiane Times office or call us at:

Tel: 216364, 252629, 217593; Fax: 216365