



Mr Xaykham Ounmixay (second left) co-chairs the meeting to mark the 13th Anniversary of International Anti-Corruption Day in Vientiane on Friday.

# Authorities mark International Anti-Corruption Day

## Times Reporters

The State Inspection and Anti-Corruption Authority in cooperation with National University of Laos and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime marked the 13th Anniversary of International Anti-Corruption Day last Friday.

The ceremony took place at the National University of Laos and was attended by Vice President of the Government Inspection Authority and the Anti-Corruption Organisation Mr Xaykham Ounmixay, Vice President of the State Inspection and Anti-Corruption Authority Mr Vilayvanh Boutdakham, Acting President of National University of Laos, Prof. Dr Somsy Gnophanxay, and representative of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Laos Mr Erlend Falch, along with officials, lecturers and students.

During the meeting participants listened to a review of anti-corruption operations of agencies over the past year and their work for the year ahead. Attendees were also given an explanation about the anti-corruption law.

According to a report presented at the 3rd Congress

of the Inspection Committee of the Party Central Committee held in Vientiane recently, more than 4,807 billion kip has been lost to corruption over the past five years and 734 targets were found involved, a top anti-corruption body reported.

Vice Chairman of the Inspection Committee, Sinai Mienglavanh told the congress that more than 887 billion kip of the money lost to corruption has been recovered.

More than 303.1 million cubic metres of timber were found logged and sold illegally over the past five years, Mr Sinai told the participants as he delivered the report.

Over the same period, some 1,806 cadres of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party have been disciplined as they violated the Party's statutes and state laws in various cases. Of those, a total of 1,007 cadres were expelled from Party membership.

In addition, the committee has received 3,640 petitions including 2,719 petitions that have been resolved. Most of the petitions were related to land disputes, business disputes, and dissatisfaction over court verdicts.

Meanwhile, Mr Erlend Falch said the seminar aimed to bring together people from

all walks of life in the fight against corruption, serving as a global call for action and raising awareness about the importance of countries ratifying the UN Convention against Corruption, which Lao PDR ratified in 2009.

"Fighting corruption is a global concern because corruption is found in both rich and poor countries, and evidence shows that it hurts poor people disproportionately," he said.

"Corruption is the single greatest obstacle to economic and social development around the world. Every year US\$1 trillion is paid in bribes while an estimated US\$2.6 trillion is stolen annually through corruption, a sum equivalent to more than five percent of the global GDP. In developing countries, according to the UNDP, funds lost to corruption are estimated at 10 times the amount of official development assistance" he said.

"But corruption does not just steal money from where it is needed the most, it leads to weak governance, which in turn can fuel organised criminal networks and promote crimes such as human trafficking, arms and migrant smuggling, counterfeiting and the trade in endangered species" he noted.