

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

Bounfaeng Phaymanivong

Volunteer groups recently inspired delegates of the Asia-Europe People's Forum (AEPF), guests and travellers to give more consideration to child-safe 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 campaign because it teaches me to be patient and have the flexibility to work with different audiences as well as to improve my communication skills," said an NUOL volunteer, Ms Duangmany Niyomsin.

The AEPF was held from October 16-19 while the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit is planned for November 5-6. The summit will bring up to 48 heads of state and government and over 600 journalists to Laos. 2012 has also been dubbed "Visit Laos Year". The Lao government, Department of Tourist Marketing of the Ministry



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.

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 delegations 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 Lao-Thai Friendship 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.

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 subcommittee, 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 this month, namely the Seventh Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP7) meeting and the Ninth Asia-Europe People's Forum.

Sub-committee officials, who come from various media organisations, discussed the problems they faced during the past two events such as entering the conference venue,



Prof. Dr Bosengkham Vongdara speaks at the meeting.

the issuing of press passes, live TV and radio airtime, and publishing event-specific newsletters.

Prof. Dr Bosengkham praised the joint efforts of print media organisations in providing newsletters, press releases and related documents during the ASEP7 meeting.

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 Savankhone Razmountry, 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 schools learn what it means to live green

Ounkham Pimmata

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 the necessary 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 jury members. On December 14, four of the 10 schools will be awarded prizes for their efforts.

The school in first place will receive US\$6,000, second place will receive US\$4,000,

third place will get US\$2,000 and fourth place will receive US\$1,000.

The project will involve schools from all of the city's nine 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 spaces 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



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

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.

Laos to clamp down on sexual exploitation of children

Times Reporters

The Ministry of Justice is strengthening the legal framework concerning offences relating to the sexual exploitation of children in tourism.

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 AusAID-funded Project Childhood.

The 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.

The discussions, chaired by Chief of Cabinet of the Ministry of Justice, Mr Vilath Phiewon, brought together law enforcement officials, justice officials, prosecutors, police officers, judges and other relevant officials to discuss and review the plan 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 and ensure that laws meet international standards.

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

Weather forecast

Xieng Khuang				
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather	
	Min	Max		
25/10/2012	14	26		Morning fog
26/10/2012	14	26		Morning fog
27/10/2012	14	27		Morning fog
Luang Namtha				
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather	
	Min	Max		
25/10/2012	17	31		Morning mist
26/10/2012	17	31		Morning mist
27/10/2012	17	31		Morning mist
Luang Prabang				
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather	
	Min	Max		
25/10/2012	22	33		Morning mist
26/10/2012	22	33		Partly cloudy
27/10/2012	22	32		Partly cloudy
Vientiane				
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather	
	Min	Max		
25/10/2012	23	33		Morning mist
26/10/2012	23	34		Morning mist
27/10/2012	23	33		Partly cloudy
Savannakhet				
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather	
	Min	Max		
25/10/2012	22	33		Morning mist
26/10/2012	22	33		Isolated showers
27/10/2012	21	33		Thunder showers
Pakxe				
Date	Temperature in (C)		Weather	
	Min	Max		
25/10/2012	22	33		Morning mist
26/10/2012	22	33		Partly cloudy
27/10/2012	22	32		Isolated showers

World of opportunity awaits...

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membership in 1997, and has since completed all WTO requirements and bilateral agreements with the required countries, according to the ministry.

Since 2000, Laos has enacted more than 90 new or

improved laws, decrees and regulations relating to trade.

Under WTO rules, the average tariff on agricultural products is set at 19.3 percent and 18.7 percent for industrial products.

The current Lao tariff is

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

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