

## Home news

## Education officials attend UNESCO conference in Paris

Times Reporters

Senior Lao education officials led by Deputy Minister of Education and Sports Lytou Bouapao recently attended the 36th meeting of UNESCO's General Conference from October 25 to November 10 in Paris, France.

According to a report from the UNESCO Lao National Commission, the deputy minister and his group were welcomed by UNESCO Director General Ms Irina Bokova.

In her opening address to the conference Ms Bokova stressed the need to reinforce cooperation in the face of the challenges confronting the world today.

She pointed out that the stakes of peace and sustainable development today lie precisely in education, the sciences, culture and knowledge sharing. All of this calls for a greater and better UNESCO.

President of the 36th session, Katalina Bogyay of Hungary, opened the event and spoke of issues on the agenda, including UNESCO's proposed programme and budget for the 2012-2013 bienniums.

The agenda also featured discussions on sustainable development and a culture of peace and non-violence, with a special emphasis on gender equality, Africa, youth and the Education for All programme.

Chairperson of the UNESCO Executive Board Eleonora Mitrofanova drew the participants' attention to poverty reduction and illiteracy problems. She updated the attendees on UNESCO's activities towards gender equality provisions.

A leaders' forum with the theme "How does UNESCO contribute to building a culture of peace and to sustainable development?" was also held as part of the session.

Delegations from 193 member states, heads of state and government, as well as observers from non-member states, intergovernmental organisations and non-governmental organisations were also present, the commission reported.



Workshop participants share their experiences in paediatric care.

## Lao, Vietnamese medics team up for better child care

Times Reporters

Staff at the newly opened Children's Hospital in Vientiane are gearing up to provide better quality medical services after holding a workshop with their Vietnamese counterparts.

The two-day workshop began yesterday, attended by the hospital's Acting Director, Associate Prof. Dr Bounleua Oudavong.

During the workshop, 40 participants from the Children's Hospital and

Mother and Child, Mahosot, Mittaphab, Setthathirath, 103 and 109 hospitals discussed birthing and the monitoring of children following surgery with seven pediatricians from Hanoi Hospital in Vietnam.

They also had the opportunity to observe practical skills in paediatric treatment.

Dr Bounleua said the workshop was significant because it would not only help to improve medical care in Vientiane's major hospitals, but would also help to ensure the quality of services offered

at the new Children's Hospital, which opened on November 11.

"If pediatricians upgrade their skills regularly, this would lead to better health care. This also directly supports the policy of the Ministry of Health for achieving the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 by reducing maternal and infant mortality rates," she said.

Participants were confident that the workshop would help them to improve services in their respective hospitals.

## Laos makes progress in human trafficking prevention

Ounkham Pimmata

Laos has made positive progress in combating child sex tourism and human trafficking since joining the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) last year.

The UPR is a peer to peer review process by which the human rights record of a United Nations member is appraised, and is an innovation of the Human Rights Council that follows the principle of equal treatment for all countries.

It provides an opportunity for all states to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situation in their country and to overcome barriers to human rights protection.

This was the view expressed by Acting Director General of the Treaties and Law Department, Ms Viengvone Kittavong, following a review to raise awareness of the current situation of human trafficking in Laos and the UPR recommendations on human trafficking and their implementation.

She said the discussions among representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, United Nations Development Programme, AusAID, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, World Vision Laos and INTERPOL would lead to a new national initiative to protect the children of Laos, similar to initiatives already established in Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia.

Regarding the analysis of Laos' legal framework, a review on sex tourism will be conducted to identify a national focal point for Project Childhood (Protection Pillar) to work on recommendations for future law reform.

She said the government has reviewed 107 recommendations and is accepting 71 of them and supporting parts of 15 others. The remaining 21 have been rejected.

Some of the recommendations are important, she said, because they support the government's stance against human trafficking and child sex



Ms Viengvone Kittavong addresses the workshop.

tourism.

Ms Viengvone hoped the review would push forward the implementation of the recommendations, aligning Laos with the wider region and the rest of the world before the 2014 UPR target for implementation.

She also stated her belief that the review would begin the process of solving the problem of human trafficking while protecting and promoting the human rights of Lao ethnic groups.

## WFP outlines plan to fight under-nutrition in Laos

Times Reporters

Nutrition is at the heart of the new country programme for Laos approved by the Executive Board of the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) in Rome during its Second Regular Session from November 14 to 17.

According to a press release from the WFP, the programme details WFP's projects to fight malnutrition in Laos from 2012 to 2015.

The projects to improve the nutrition and food security of more than 750,000 men, women and children in the country will require US\$69 million in funding to be fully implemented.

"The country programme was developed in full consultation with our partners in the Lao government and other development partners," WFP Representative in Laos Ms Eri Kudo said.

"Together, we defined the most pressing hunger challenges Laos is facing and the activities we believe will be most effective in addressing them."

The WFP is working to help Laos become free from under-nutrition and its debilitating impact on human potential and national development.

The WFP will work with partners in the health, education

and agriculture sectors to address the full range of factors affecting under-nutrition.

The new country programme focuses on alleviating chronic malnutrition, which affects every second child in rural areas and prevents them from developing to their full potential.

"Chronic malnutrition is an inter-generational problem; malnourished mothers are more likely to bear malnourished children. To break this cycle, the WFP addresses the multiple causes of under-nutrition at different stages in life," Ms Kudo said.

The country programme focuses on pregnant women and young children during the critical first 1,000 days of life, in which a lack of nutrients can lead to permanent damage to physical and mental development, through the Mother and Child Health and Nutrition Programme, schoolchildren through the School Meals Programme, and adults through the Livelihoods Initiatives for Nutrition and Nutrition Education.

The WFP will continue to be a strong partner for the Lao government in disaster preparedness and in emergencies. The WFP also provides specialised nutrition products to prevent and treat malnutrition in children.

The WFP's new country

programme will also address hidden hunger in the form of micronutrient deficiencies. Anaemia and vitamin A deficiency affect large sections of the Lao population, leading to illness and disability.

Building on its comparative advantage in purchasing power and logistics, the WFP will work to ensure certain common food products are fortified and to provide part of the market for those commodities.

The WFP country programme is in line with the Lao government's Seventh National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2011-15) and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2012-15), and supports the achievement of Millennium Development Goal 1 (MDG 1) to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.

Despite steady economic growth over the past two decades, large parts of the Lao population still suffer from under-nutrition.

According to the MDG Progress Report for Laos, the MDG 1 target - to reduce by half by 2015 the proportion of people who suffer from hunger - remains "seriously off track", making its achievement a priority for the Lao government, the UN system and other development partners in the country.

### Phanhmaly Garden, Manivanh Garden

Flowers, potted plants, trees, garden landscaping Ban Souanemone,

Thadeua Road, KM-5 Turn left at Souanemone Market.

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#### Lao Press in Foreign Languages

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