



## **Comité de Coopération avec le Laos**

Boîte postale 4791, Vientiane, Laos

Tél : (856-21) 25 40 39 - Télécopie : (856-21) 21 69 25

Email : [cclvientiane@ccl-laos.org](mailto:cclvientiane@ccl-laos.org)

Site : [www.ccl-laos.org](http://www.ccl-laos.org)

### **Revue de presse du 11 au 15 Mai 2015**

Vous trouverez ci-joint un choix d'articles publiés au Laos en anglais dans le quotidien "Vientiane Times" et en français dans l'hebdomadaire le "Rénovateur".

Bonne réception et bonne lecture,  
Cordialement,  
Bureau du CCL à Vientiane

➤ **Vientiane Times :**

- [Swiss project gives boost to mother and child health](#)
- [New law promulgated to regulate alcoholic beverages](#)
- [US to provide 48 billion kip to improve child nutrition](#)
- [New workshops built with Lao, German support](#)
- [Stolen Buddha images returned to Laos](#)
- [Laos secures soft loan to fund hospital, bridge projects](#)
- [Japan strengthens health services in southern provinces](#)
- [Swiss doctor vows to help Lao mothers and babies until his dying day](#)

## Swiss project gives boost to mother and child health

*(By Times Reporters)*

The Swiss Laos Hospital Project and the Mother and Newborn Hospital yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the improvement of maternal and child health. The agreement was signed by the President of the Swiss project, Dr Urs Lauper, and hospital Director General, Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh Saensathit, witnessed by officials from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The three-year programme will run from the date of approval until December 31, 2018, at a cost of US\$847,000 (more than 6.8 billion kip). It will focus on improving perinatal care and gynaeco obstetric surgery; support the upgrade of standards at the new Mother and Newborn Hospital in Nongphaya village; collaborate with the Humanitarian Association Hospital Marguerite-Marie; provide newborn home delivery kits; prevent vertical HIV transmission to children of HIV positive mothers; bolster the neonatal network; support the work of family doctors in Kham, Khoun and Nonghet districts in Xieng Khuang province; provide oxygen concentrators; and foster the partnership between the Kantonspital Winterthur and Xieng Khuang provincial Hospital. Dr Lau-

per said the Swiss Laos Hospital Project was responsible for providing the following management support by carrying out project activities under the MOU. These include the recruitment and management of staff; coordination with partners of the Lao government; management of project activities; organisation of training and workshops; monitoring project activities and financial management of the project and reporting to the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh said Swiss assistance would directly improve maternal and child health in line with Millennium Development Goals 5 and 4. According to the 2012 Lao Social Indicator Survey, the death rate of birthing mothers is 357 out of every 100,000 births. The death rate of children under one year is 68 out of every 1,000 live births, and for children under five it is 79 out of every 1,000 live births. This is high compared to other countries in the region. Dr Bouavanh said that since the Swiss project began in 2000, many aspects of mother and child health had improved throughout the country, in particular the use of ultrasound.

*(Vientiane Times 12 May 2015)*

## **New law promulgated to regulate alcoholic beverages**

*(By Times Reporters)*

A new law promulgated recently aims to better regulate alcoholic beverage businesses and their advertisements, hopefully preventing people from drinking to excess and lessening the resultant social and economic impacts. According to Article 20 of the 26 page Law on Alcoholic Beverages, venues offering alcoholic beverages are not allowed to be located near healthcare and education centres, state offices, religious venues, embassies, public parks, opera houses, passenger vehicle stations, petrol stations, sports complexes and factories. In addition, advertisements for alcoholic beverage products must not attempt to persuade members of the public into drinking alcoholic beverages and trademarks of the product must not be shown on the advertisements. The advertisements are also required to carry warning messages on the consequent health risks of drinking excessive amounts of alcohol. The warning messages must also be attached to the packaging boxes. Retail sales of alcoholic beverages are only permitted between the hours of 4:00pm to 11:00pm, with allowances made for exceptional cases as defined by specific regulations. Sellers are also prohibited from selling alcoholic beverages to anyone under 18 years of age, to people who are intoxicated, to people in uniform or to drivers of motor vehicles. When sponsoring an event such as a charity event, alcoholic beverage business operators are not allowed to promote alcoholic beverages through advertisements or even the provision of drinks, according to the law. The law also stipulates that all alcoholic beverages, both imported and domestically brewed beverages, must be of good quality to ensure the safety of customers. President Choummaly Sayasone recently issued an ordinance to promulgate the law. Welcoming the law, Head of the Health Promotion Division under the Ministry of Health Dr Khatthanaphone Phan-

duangsy said the law will be a fundamental instrument to regulate the sale of alcoholic beverages. However she noted that the content of the law is too general and said there is a need to draft regulations to translate the content of the law into detail in order to ease its implementation. Dr Khatthanaphone stated that proper management of alcoholic beverage businesses requires collective cooperation from relevant ministries to “take action to strictly enforce the law.” Members of the National Assembly (NA) have welcomed the introduction of the law, hoping its promulgation would help reduce the negative impacts of excessive drinking. During the recent NA session, law makers noted that drinking alcohol could harm your health, families and even society and the economy. NA member for Luang Prabang province, Ms Amphone Sivilaisack said that many women and children have suffered from violence at the hands of drunken husbands. Parliamentarians also suggested that overconsumption of alcoholic beverages can also lead to certain and chronic diseases, cause road accidents and crimes that cause economic loss. Many said the absence of proper regulations to manage alcoholic beverage businesses and the promotion of alcohol through advertisements is responsible for the widespread and at times excessive consumption of alcohol in Laos. A survey revealed recently by the World Health Organisation (WHO) suggested that on average Lao people consume more alcohol than those in any other of the Asean countries – the 10-member regional bloc of which Laos is a member. According to the survey, average consumption in Laos has reached the equivalent of 7 litres of pure alcohol equivalent per annum. The new law states that society, communities and families have collective responsibility in educating the young people to be aware of the potential health threats of

drinking alcoholic products. Laos has also proclaimed December 19, the day the NA resolved the law, as Alcohol-Free Day, on

which alcohol business operators are prohibited from selling alcohol.

*(Vientiane Times 13 May 2015)*

## **US to provide 48 billion kip to improve child nutrition**

*(By Khonesavanh Latsaphao)*

The United States of America will support a project starting at the end of this year to improve child nutrition in Laos, and to help reduce the very serious rate of stunting in children under the age of five. According to a report from the US Ambassador to Laos Mr Daniel A. Clune on Wednesday, the US will begin a two-year US\$6 million (over 48 billion kip) programme. This programme will support the Multisectoral National Nutrition Strategy and Plan of Action, which aims to improve the nutritional status of women and children through community-based activities involving community sanitation and child feeding practices. Children in the targeted areas for whom stunting is prevented as a result of this support are expected to experience reduced occurrences of illness, better learning outcomes, and greater earning potential as adults. Last year, the United States provided US\$675,000 (almost 5.5 billion kip) to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to provide nutritional supplements and deworming tablets for pregnant and lactating women and for children under five, particularly in remote areas. Later this year the United States is expected to announce a significant new maternal and child health programme. The United States is contributing US\$27 million (about 219 billion kip) to the World Food Programme (WFP) to provide nutritious meals and snacks to more than 170,000 schoolchildren

in Laos over the next three years. The support will help improve the nutrition of children in 1,747 schools. Over the past decade, the United States has given nearly US\$54 million (over 365 billion kip) to support WFP activities in Laos. The US President's Malaria Initiative has also given more than US\$1.2 million (almost 10 billion kip) in nets, medicine, and technical assistance to fight malaria. According to the Nutrition Centre under the Ministry of Health, many Lao children are considered short for their age compared to their peers in neighbouring countries within Asean. There is one main reason for this. They are short because of inadequate nutrition and this is mostly found in rural and remote areas of the country. The main causes of death in children in remote areas are poor nutrition and an inability to fight diseases because of weak immune systems. The proportion of children who are stunted through inadequate nutrition is about 44 percent in Laos which is very high compared to Vietnam at only 22 percent. In addition, the current death rate among children is quite high in Laos compared to Vietnam. According to the 2012 Lao Social Indicator Survey, the death rate of birthing mothers is 357 out of every 100,000 births. The death rate of children under one year is 68 out of every 1,000 live births, and for children aged one to five it is 79 out of every 1,000 live births.

*(Vientiane Times 14 May 2015)*

## **New workshops built with Lao, German support**

*(By Times Reporters)*

Lao-German Technical College (LGTC) has received additional support of €3.8 million (more than 34.6 billion kip) from the German and Lao governments for the construction of new buildings and up-to-date equipment for different trades. Two new workshop buildings and the equipment for the electric and automotive sections were inaugurated and officially handed over to the school yesterday in Vientiane. The German government contributed €3.4 million while Laos contributed €400,000. A handover ceremony was conducted in the presence of German Ambassador to Laos Mr Michael Grau, Ms Christine De Barros Said from the German Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, and Deputy Minister of Education and Sports Prof. Dr Kongsy Sengmany, along with senior officials from relevant sectors, teachers and students. Associate Prof. Dr Kongsy mentioned during the inauguration that the German government and people had provided ongoing assistance for vocational education and training over the last decade and LGTC's new school buildings and modern technical equipment were significant for the advancement of teaching quality and would help the Lao labour force to boost economic development in the country and the region. The school would become a model school for

vocational education and influence the sector in the country, he added. Meanwhile Ms De Barros Said highlighted the flow on benefits the new facilities would have. "I'm happy to see, that with the ongoing support of the German government, LGTS has become a role model school here in Laos for the successful alliance between a vocational education school and the private sector. This is a concrete contribution to the economic development of Laos," she said. With new facilities, the school will be able to accommodate up to 1,500 students. A new dormitory will allow it to accommodate another 200 students living close to the school. Currently, the school has 1,072 students and 67 teachers. Ms De Barros Said explained the German government through KfW Development Bank was supporting the vocational training sector in Laos in the field of financial cooperation. Until 2015, a total of 10 vocational schools had been rehabilitated or newly constructed and equipped with machinery, teaching aids and tools in selected trades. In the northern provinces these schools are located in Oudomxay, Xieng Khuang, Luang Namtha, Phongsaly, Huaphan, and Xayaboury and have been in operation since 2010. In the southern provinces an additional three schools in Xekong, Saravan, and Attapeu started operation in 2014.

*(Vientiane Times 14 May 2015)*

## **Stolen Buddha images returned to Laos**

*(By Phaisythong Chandara)*

An Austrian national, Dr Reinhold Mittersakschmoller, recently returned two Buddha images to Laos through the Lao Embassy in Vienna after he determined they had been unlawfully taken from a cave in Luang Prabang province. According to a press release from the Lao Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday, Dr Mittersakschmoller contacted the Lao Embassy in Vienna about returning the Buddha images after he bought them in Thailand in 2007. After lengthy negotiations, Dr Mittersakschmoller finally handed over the two Buddha images on May 12 at the Lao Embassy in Vienna where he gave them to the Lao Ambassador to Austria, Mr Phoukhao Phommavongsa. Dr Mittersakschmoller said he was convinced the wooden Buddha images he was returning were two of just many that had been taken by local people or tourists from Ting cave on the Nam Ou river in the world heritage town of Luang Prabang. Dr Mittersakschmoller explained that he had asked experts studying the Buddha images housed in Ting cave about the figures he possessed, which were 41.7 cm in height. The experts confirmed the images had come from the cave but could not assess their age. But further investigations surrounding the origins of the Buddha images revealed they date back to the time of the Lane Xang Kingdom and were stolen

from Ting cave before being put on sale in Thailand. According to a recent report from the Luang Prabang Information, Culture and Tourism Department, over the years many Buddha images have been stolen from the cave for sale in other countries. However, the hypothesis of a theft from villages near the cave should also be checked out. This is not the first time that stolen religious objects have been returned, after a series of misfortunes and bad luck that believers attribute to particular powers contained in these objects and especially attached to deities or Buddha images. In the past few years, a Japanese art collector returned a Buddha head to Laos which he had acquired from a dealer in antiquities. It is thought the piece might have originated from Champassak province. Everyone living in Laos is obliged to participate in the protection, conservation, restoration and rehabilitation of the country's cultural heritage. Foreigners and tourists have the same obligation to participate in the protection and conservation of Lao heritage. According to the updated Law on National Heritage, Article 71, any person or organisation that breaks the law will be reeducated and/or fined based on the severity of the offence. The new regulations came into effect by Presidential decree on January 28, 2014.

*(Vientiane Times 15 May 2015)*

## **Laos secures soft loan to fund hospital, bridge projects**

*(By Times Reporters)*

The government has secured low-interest loans of more than 564 billion kip (61.8 million euros) to modernise and extend Mittaphap Hospital in Vientiane and build a bridge across the Mekong River in the northern province of Bokeo. UniCredit Bank Austria AG and UniCredit Bank Czech Republic and Slovakia have provided a soft loan of more than 482.7 billion kip (52.8

million euros) to finance the Friendship Hospital-Modernisation and Extension project. In addition, UniCredit Bank Austria AG has provided a loan of almost 82 billion kip (8.9 million euros) to fund the construction of the Koneteun bridge across the Mekong River along National Road 11 linking Xayaboury and Bokeo provinces, according to the Ministry of Finance. Deputy Minister

of Finance Ms Thippakone Chanthavongsa represented the Lao government in signing the loan agreements with bank representatives in Vienna, the capital of Austria, on May 8. Officials from both sides witnessed the signing ceremony. Head of Office of the Ministry of Health Dr Nao Boutta told *Vientiane Times* yesterday the loan will be used to build a modern block at Mittaphap Hospital and to buy medical equipment. The planned building will house various facilities including operating theatres, health-check rooms, diagnostics rooms, treatment rooms and patient wards. The

equipment needed for these facilities will also be purchased under the loan.

“It [the planned building] will be developed as a modern treatment facility,” Dr Nao said, adding that the design of the building is being finalised. Director of the Public Works and Transport Department of Bokeo province, Mr Chom Xaisongkham, said the bridge to be financed by the loan will be built across the Mekong River to improve transport links. The bridge, to be built in Koneteun village, Paktha district, will be about 456 metres long, but the final design details have yet to be decided.

*(Vientiane Times 15 May 2015)*

## **Japan strengthens health services in southern provinces**

*(By Times Reporters)*

The Japanese government has funded a project beginning in 2013 to strengthen health service networks in the southern provinces, namely Attapeu, Champassak, Saravan and Xekong, with a grant worth 741 million JPY (more than 49.8 billion kip), according to the Japanese Embassy in Vientiane. The newly constructed medical facilities and other amenities provided under the project were officially handed over in Attapeu province on Wednesday by the Japanese Ambassador to Laos, Mr Hiroyuki Kishino, to provincial authorities. Ambassador Kishino said “In the four southern provinces, progress in MDGs 4 (infant mortality) and 5 (maternal health) has been far behind the national target. This is because health infrastructure, such as health centres and water supplies, has been underdeveloped, and the quality of health services provided has been poor. This is why the Japanese government approved this project.” “Japan is steadfast in its commitment to this important sector and will continue to support the Lao govern-

ment's efforts to improve health infrastructure and services,” he added. According to the Japanese Embassy, through this project, 37 health centres with medical equipment and 16 staff dormitories have been newly constructed, 23 water supply projects have been initiated, and medical equipment has been renewed at 16 existing health centres. When all the facilities are completed, more than 300,000 residents in the four provinces will benefit. Japan has supported Laos in its socio-economic development for many years. In the health sector, Japan has provided more than 8 billion JPY for various JICA projects to improve health infrastructure and services and more than US\$8.6 million for grassroots human security projects, the embassy reported. Through these, a total of 289 health infrastructure projects were implemented, including construction of 125 health centres, construction and renovation of 52 hospitals, and 57 water supply projects throughout the country.

*(Vientiane Times 15 May 2015)*



## Swiss doctor vows to help Lao mothers and babies until his dying day

*(By Xayxana Leukai)*

“I will help Lao women and children until I draw my last breath.” These are the remarkable words of the President of the Swiss Laos Hospital Project (SLHP), Dr Urs Lauper, who has worked to improve maternal and child health in Laos since 2000. The SLHP has been actively involved in Laos for 15 years, aiming to reduce mother and child mortality here. All of its activities have been carried out under mutual informal agreements between the Mother and Child Health Hospital (MCHH) and the SLHP, with the consent of the Ministry of Health. Under the leadership of Dr Lauper, 69, the SLHP has focused on improving obstetrics services, mainly in the MCHH. The project has developed antenatal care, introduced ultrasound diagnostics and cardiotocography, and taught hospital staff about care during delivery, in a bid to reduce mother and child morbidity and mortality during and after birthing. In this first period, the project also supplied medical instruments, technical devices and financing for an extension and renovation of the delivery department of the MCHH. Another focus was the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. In a second step, the SLHP started to support neonatal services in the MCHH starting in 2003. Since then the department of neonatal care developed very strongly into a training centre for all other neonatal services in the country. Also in this field, numerous medical instruments and technical devices were provided, as well as financing for renovation of the newborn care unit and the paediatric department of the MCHH. At the same time, the SLHP expanded its support from the MCHH to the northern provinces, supporting obstetrics and newborn care at the Xieng Khuang provincial hospital. Over time, the SLHP also provided new maternity services and an operating theatre at Kham district hospital. Dr Lauper said that all the success

has resulted from the strong collaboration between MCHH and other Lao partners, especially the Director General of MCHH, Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh Saensathit, which has helped to drive the project forward over the years. The SLHP and local Lao partners are now setting up a neonatal network. The goal is to establish newborn care departments in all of the large provinces. These neonatal departments should have close collaboration, regular workshops on relevant topics in neonatal care, exchange programmes for training staff, appropriate facilities and financial support for medication and supplies. Additionally, neonatal departments will play a key role in training smaller facilities at the district level in primary resuscitation and newborn care. Since a large proportion of deliveries in Laos still take place at home, part of the SLHP activities focused on improving home delivery by inventing a “delivery kit”, which provides the minimum materials needed for a clean, hygienic birth and sterile cut of the umbilical cord as well as cord disinfection to prevent neonatal sepsis. This aspect of the SLHP is expanding and will provide nationwide distribution and instruction on use of the delivery kit. As clean water plays a large part in ensuring general health, the SLHP has supported several clean water projects, for example an ecological wastewater clearing facility for the district hospital in Kham district and several villages in the same province. In addition, a group of general practitioners joined the project, working regularly at Kham district hospital, focusing on teaching general medicine to the local staff. This part of the programme has since extended to Khoun and Nonghet districts. Since 2010, a Swiss hospital in the city of Winterthur has taken on special responsibility for the Xieng Khuang provincial hospital. Both hospitals agreed informally on a mutual partnership.

This collaboration is incorporated in the Swiss Laos Hospital Project. Since 2011 another strong collaboration has developed between a team of obstetricians and midwives in the Swiss city of Frauenfeld, providing teaching, medical equipment and appliances to the Huaphan provincial hospital. Associate Prof. Dr Bouavanh Saensathit said Dr Lauper's outline of the SLHP project was just a small part of what had been achieved since the Swiss team first began helping Lao women and children in 2000. "I think it's very rare to meet such a good-hearted person who really wants to help Laos like Dr Lauper does," he said. "I can say that now Dr Lauper has become half Swiss and half Lao.

This is because he spends six months of the year using his time and his life to help people in Laos, and lives in Switzerland for the other six months." The SLHP led by Dr Lauper and his Swiss colleagues aims to help medical staff by ensuring they are able to understand the new procedures they are taught and can carry them out themselves. For example, SLHP provided ultrasound machines to provincial hospitals and staff at these hospitals have been encouraged to learn how to use the equipment. "All of the Swiss assistance directly reduces the death rate of mothers and children in Laos," Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh said.

*(Vientiane Times 15 May 2015)*