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Vous trouverez ci-joint un choix d'articles publiés au Laos en anglais dans le quotidien "Vientiane Times"

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## UN launches latest development reports

*(By Times Reporters)*

The United Nations in Laos has launched the Global Human Development Report 2015 and the Least Developed Countries Report. The two reports were launched in Vientiane on Friday in the presence of Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment, Dr Bounthavy Sisouphanthong, and UN Resident Coordinator and UN Resident Representative in Laos, Ms Kaarina Immonen.



*Dr Bounthavy Sisouphanthong and Ms Kaarina Immonen co-chair the meeting.*

The event was also attended by representatives from line ministries, national institutions, development partners, and civil society. The 2015 report is subtitled “Work for Human Development”. This report considers major changes in the world of work, affecting when, how, and where people work. Technological progress, deepening globalisation, ageing societies and environmental challenges are transforming work, posing challenges to all societies with deep implications for human development, Ms Immonen said in her opening remarks. The report argues that the Asia-Pacific region may have been experiencing fast growth and rapid human development, but not necessarily fast job creation. It thus makes calls to tackle one of the world's great development challenges - providing enough decent work and livelihoods for all. This has also been prioritised in the 8th Goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, she added. As many of you know, ensuring decent livelihoods and jobs is one of the key priorities of Laos. Ms Immonen said the UN

will support this objective within the new Laos-UN Partnership Framework 2017-2021. The 2015 Human Development Report provides valuable findings from the global perspective to help countries such as Laos adjust to the changing world of work in ways which will advance human development. The second report launched today, the Least Development Countries Report 2015, has traditionally been the only annual report in the United Nations system that exclusively address issues related to the 48 least developed countries. Issued by the UN Conference of Trade and Development, the report provides a comprehensive and authoritative source of socio-economic analysis and data on the world's most impoverished countries. According to the report, the LDCs are the ground on which the 2030 Agenda will be won or lost. This is where shortfalls from the SDG targets are greatest, where improvement has been slowest, and where the barriers to further progress are highest. Rural development will be central to the quantum leap in the rate of progress required for LDCs to achieve the SDGs. More than two thirds of people in LDCs live in rural areas, where poverty is also most widespread and deepest, and infrastructure and social provision most lacking, Ms Immonen said. The 2015 report, which is subtitled “transforming rural economies”, therefore highlights the critical importance of the structural transformation of rural economies in LDCs for the fulfillment of the SDGs globally. It concludes that such transformation needs to encompass agricultural upgrading and diversification towards rural non-farm activities, and to maximise the synergies between the two, she added. Laos set its target for graduation from Least Developed Country status as early as in 1996 – an important commitment, which has been at the heart of key national policies and strategies, including the 8th

National Socio-Economic Development Plan. The global LDC report therefore provides a useful insight, guiding the country's smooth transition from LDC status. The UN system stands ready to support Laos in co-

operation with development partners, civil society and other partners, to achieve this joint effort of LDC graduation, Ms Immonen said.

*(Vientiane Times 15 February 2016)*

## Government seeks more funding for UXO clearance

*(By Times Reporters)*

The government is seeking more funds to clear unexploded ordnance in Laos, with unexploded devices killing or maiming about 50 people a year.



*Deputy Prime Minister Asang Laoly addresses the meeting in Vientiane on Friday.*

Speaking at a National Regulatory Authority (NRA) meeting in Vientiane on Friday, Deputy Prime Minister Asang Laoly said “UXO is continuing to injure and kill people. It’s an obstacle to economic and social development because land that could be used for agriculture, industry, tourism and the construction of infrastructure is contaminated by UXO.” “UXO clearance requires more funds as the government is unable to finance this work, so we are seeking additional funding from foreign operators.” Director General of the NRA for UXO/Mine Action in the Lao PDR, Mr Phoukhieo Chanthasomboun, said that in the last five years Laos had mobilised US\$175 million through international organisations. The government also contributed US\$6.5 million. “Five years ago, we expected to mobilise US\$50 million a year but

we received about US\$30 million, which is not enough,” he said. “This year we need US\$35 million for all sectors of operation in UXO clearance. Meanwhile, the number of donors has decreased because some are now assisting other sectors. This year we will focus on clearing UXO for development projects in the provinces and focal development areas as required by the government,” Mr Phoukhieo said. According to an NRA report for 2011-2015, the authority has worked with international organisations to clear UXO on 29,701 hectares of land including 18,541 hectares of agricultural land and 11,160 hectares of development land. Some 552,968 cluster munitions have been destroyed in addition to 1,489 larger bombs, 259,421 sub-munitions, 837 mines, and 291,221 other items of UXO. Most UXO-related accidents have occurred in Savannakhet, Saravan and Xiengkhuang provinces. Explosions typically occur during the transport, dismantling or burning of UXO, or while villagers are working in their fields. The NRA reported that since 2009 there had been 319 incidents involving unexploded ordnance, claiming 522 victims. Of these, 391 people were injured and 131 were killed while over 20,000 people survived unscathed. Friday’s meeting was also attended by Minister to the Government Office and Chairman of the Board of the NRA, Mr Bounheuang Douangphachanh, and other officials.

*(Vientiane Times 15 February 2016)*

## **Mahosot claims success with new breast cancer treatment**

*(By PhetphoxaySengpaseuth)*

Mahosot Hospital has presented the results of the so-called neutrino-medicine method doctors have been using to treat women with breast cancer this year, hoping to reduce the high mortality rate from this disease. This method has been used by experts from the Lao Breast Cancer Association since the end of 2015. In January and February this year, some 420 women in Laos presented with abnormalities in the breast, indicating probable breast cancer. Of this number, 38 survived after being treated using the new method. Speaking at a workshop organised by the Lao Breast Cancer Association on Friday, a key researcher in the new treatment and president of the association Dr Saifone-Phounsavan told doctors and nurses at Mahosot that the new method included the examination, treatment and prevention of breast cancer. Tests of the new method to date had shown that women with breast cancer survived the disease, which is usually fatal. The disease can be so aggressive that if women don't receive treatment promptly they can die within one week or one month, Dr Saifone said. He said the new method would play an important role in helping to improve the detection and treatment of cancer. The main benefit is the improved detection of tissue abnormalities, so that suspi-

rious areas are more quickly identified. Using older methods, out of 100 women who presented with symptoms of breast cancer, about 50 women would die because the disease spread very quickly. It took a long time to make a definitive diagnosis and frequently women with the disease died before it was even detected, Dr Saifone said. He explained that research into the neutrino-medicine method began in 2000 when experts from the Lao Breast Cancer Association teamed up with specialists from medical schools in China and the United States. The success of this new method was confirmed by the results of research undertaken at these universities. Dr Saifone said "I studied the examination, treatment and prevention of this disease including examination and treatment using the old method." Based on 16 years of experience in the field of breast cancer in the world and at Mahosot Hospital, he could confirm that the neutrino-medicine method lowered the risk of mortality. From 2000 to 2016, breast cancer was detected in about 500 women in Laos, of whom 100 women are still living. Worldwide, about 500,000 women die from breast cancer, with women in the 45-50 age group particularly at risk.

*(Vientiane Times 15 February 2016)*

## Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar in line for US\$180m loan

(By Times Reporters)

The Climate-Friendly Agribusiness Value Chains Sector Project will provide a US\$180 million loan to finance initiatives in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar to boost the capacity of commercial production in the three countries. A senior official from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr Vinoth Vansy, told *Vientiane Times* on Monday that project officials are currently considering the division of this loan. "It's expected that Laos may receive about US\$50 or US\$60 million. Most of the money will come from the Asian Development Bank (ADB)," he said. Speaking at an inception workshop for the project last Thursday, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Dr Phouangparisack Pravongviengkham said the project would focus on specific targets. These were named as agribusiness value chain infrastructure improvement, bio-energy use and sustainable biomass management expansion as well as agribusiness policy and capacity support services, strengthened value chains, and infrastructure improvement. Laos is now preparing a team to design a project on climate-friendly agribusiness value chains. The project design should be finalised by March next year before it is submitted to the Asian Development Bank for approval. Director of SEER\ADB, Jiangfeng Zhang, said most Asian countries including Laos are experiencing significant economic transformation

driven by industrialisation, urbanisation, trade, and commercialisation of the agriculture sector as they evolve from low-income to middle-income countries. However there are several challenges to producing and supplying more nutritious and safe food to the growing middle class and urban populations in the face of shrinking natural resources, degrading environments, climate change, disaster risks, and changing demographics and labour profiles. The ADB's midterm review of its Strategy 2020 recognised the essential role of investment in agriculture and natural resources in advancing food security, creating and expanding economic opportunities, promoting inclusive economic growth, and reducing vulnerability and inequality. Laos' increasing integration into the regional and global economy supported by policies favouring foreign direct investment and exports and capitalising on the country's natural assets, has resulted in fast economic growth and a reduction in poverty. The ADB team and the consultant team will work with the government and other stakeholders to decide the focus of the project. It is important that agreement is reached on key priorities for investment under the project with clear implementation arrangements. There should be close alignment of the project with national policies and strategies.

(*Vientiane Times* 16 February 2016)

## WWF-Laos to further raise awareness of environmental protection

*(By Times Reporters)*

The World Wide Fund-Laos (WWF-Laos) will focus on ensuring the security of livelihoods for communities that live in and around priority sites and landscapes to help reduce pressure on natural resources. From 2015-2020, WWF-Laos will be committed to protecting forests, freshwater and wildlife. This will not only be a critical contribution to the WWF's global conservation goals, but will also help reduce poverty through sustainable natural resource management. Core to this is the 'landscape approach' to conservation, which seeks to reconcile conservation and development through interventions in different components of the landscape, some of which are managed towards livelihood and development goals and others for conservation. WWF has identified two priority landscapes, namely the Central Annamites Landscape (shared with WWF-Vietnam), and the Mekong Flooded Forests Landscape (shared with WWF-Cambodia). It will also build upon previous activities in three priority sites. In the northwest of the country, the Nam Pouy priority site encompasses one of the most significant National Biodiversity Conservation Areas in the country, a place of critical importance for conservation of the Asian elephant. The central Laos priority site is where the rattan Forest Stewardship Council certification and community fisheries were successfully piloted. The Savannakhet priority site is home to the endangered Eld's deer and is located within the lower Mekong dry forests where spatial land use planning and participatory

conservation approaches have been introduced. To deliver effective and sustainable conservation outcomes, WWF-Laos will foster positive relationships with the government, businesses, civil society organisations, communities and individuals, while strengthening and empowering these actors in their decision-making processes. This was the key message delivered during a workshop on renewable energy and environmental protection held on Friday at the National University of Laos. The event was organised by WWF-Laos in collaboration with the university's Faculty of Forestry and Faculty of Social Sciences. The workshop was attended by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Forestry, Dr Khamla Phanvilay, Director of WWF-Laos, Mr Somphone Bouasavanh, and students. "The power used in Laos is mostly from hydropower plants, coal-fired power plants and other renewable energy sources including solar, wind and biomass power," Mr Somphone said in his opening remarks at the workshop. The meeting's aim was to raise awareness among students and make them realise the importance of protecting forests and water resources and also the use of renewable energy to reduce air and ecological pollution in the country and the world at large. Even though WWF-Laos and its partners have worked to raise awareness among people from all walks of life about the importance of protecting and preserving forests and water resources, illegal logging and wildlife hunting still continue.

*(Vientiane Times 16 February 2016)*

## US-Asean Summit kicks off, leaders agree to deepen cooperation

(By Souksakhone Vaenkeo)

**Sunnylands, California, the United States:** The landmark US-Asean Summit kicked off here on Monday afternoon local time with leaders agreeing to deepen cooperation for shared prosperity, peace and security.



President Choummaly Sayasone (left) sits alongside US President Barack Obama (centre) at the Asean plenary session meeting at Sunnylands in Rancho Mirage, California. --Photo AP

US President Barack Obama welcomed leaders from the 10 Asean member countries who arrived at the summit venue, the Sunnylands Estate, at about 3pm. The presidents of the US and the Lao PDR, which this year takes the chair of Asean, are co-chairing the summit. The first-ever standalone US-Asean summit demonstrates President Obama's desire to engage with the Asean region. In their first session, held shortly after the welcoming ceremony, US and Asean leaders agreed to work together to deepen their decades-long relations and cooperation. The first session focused on economic cooperation, specifically on promoting an innovative entrepreneurial Asean economic community. In his opening remarks, President Obama recalled that the US and Asean elevated their cooperation into a strategic partnership last year, saying that the sustained engagement between the US and Asean is delivering concrete results that benefit all sides - a momentum that the US and Asean can build on at this summit. "Together, we can continue to increase the trade and economic partnerships that create jobs and opportunities for our peoples," he said. Trade in goods be-

tween the US and the 10 Asean member countries has expanded by 55 percent during Mr Obama's administration. The Asean region is now the US's fourth largest goods trading partner, including US exports that support more than 500,000 American jobs. Meanwhile, US companies have been the largest source of foreign investment in Asean - one of the many reasons that the region's GDP has surged in recent years, lifting people from poverty into the middle class, Mr Obama said. President Obama congratulated Asean leaders on the formation of the Asean Community, which is another important step towards integrating their economies. "At this summit, we can build on this progress and do more to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation so that growth and development is sustainable and inclusive and benefits all people," he said. In his remarks, President Choummaly Sayasone agreed that the summit provided a great opportunity for Asean and the US to exchange views on ways to further enhance their strategic partnership for long-term peace and security and for the prosperity of the US and Asean peoples. "The Lao PDR as Chair of Asean in 2016 is prepared to work with all Asean member countries and the United States to translate the strategic partnership to gain greater results," President Choummaly told the session. "I believe that our discussions at this summit will achieve successful outcomes." He added that the US has been one of the important dialogue partners of Asean and US-Asean cooperation has developed satisfactorily. On Tuesday, US and Asean leaders will hold talks on protecting peace, prosperity and security in the Asia Pacific. President Obama said both sides can also continue to increase security cooperation to meet shared challenges following the recent terrorist attack in Jakarta, Indonesia, which reminds all sides to stand together and

stay vigilant, share more information and work cooperatively to protect their people. He said leaders can advance their shared vision of a regional order where international rules and norms, including freedom of navigation, are upheld and where

disputes are resolved through peaceful, legal means. President Obama stressed the need to implement the Paris climate change agreement and step up investment in clean, affordable energy, including in developing countries.

*(Vientiane Times 17 February 2016)*

## **Pakxe development on the drawing board**

*(By Times Reporters)*

Following the recent signing agreement of a low interest loan of over US\$31 million from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), work on the Pakxe Urban Environment Improvement Project in Pakxe district, Champassak province, is scheduled to begin in October.



**An aerial view of Pakxe town centre in Champassak province. -  
-Photo Champamai Newspaper**

In an interview with *Vientiane Times* yesterday, Deputy Director of the provincial Public Works and Transport Department, Mr Bounnao Fongkhamdaeng, said the project is now in the design phase. “Pakxe district will become an economic and tourism hub in southern Laos once the project is complete.” Mr Bounnao, who is in charge of the project, said it would begin with a focus on improving garbage management and disposal, improving canals and waterways by raising embankments, and building the capacity of local authorities. “The project is in line with the provincial authorities’ framework to turn the provincial capital, and the whole of Pakxe district, into a city in the future,” he add-

ed. Pakxe district, which is the provincial capital, has all the requisite conditions for being named a city, including other criteria, Mr Bounnao said. The district has a population of over 130,000 people, which is above the number defined in the draft Law on Municipality and City presently being considered by the government. This piece of legislation states that a city should have a population of not less than 80,000. Mr Bounnao said that based on these conditions the authorities wanted to redesign the town to facilitate the development of industrial and service facilities in more appropriate locations. The project proposal was prepared in 2009 and the feasibility study has been finished. The initiative is expected to improve the living conditions of over one million people living in nearby communities. The impact of the project will be the improved competitiveness of Pakxe as a regional economic and tourism centre in the south of Laos. The outcome will be increased quality, reliability and coverage of urban infrastructure and environmental improvements in the greater Pakxe urban area. By 2018, the project will enhance the urban environment, improve public health, and contribute to improved urban services for about 135,000 residents in the project area. This will be achieved through an integrated programme of investments in priority infrastructure rehabilitation, improvement and extension of urban services, and the organisational and capacity development of urban development and management agencies. Pakxe is the second largest town in Laos after Vientiane, according to the authorities.

*(Vientiane Times 17 February 2016)*