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➤ **Vientiane Times:**

- [Demographic changes present unique opportunity for Laos](#)
- [Vietnam considers buying more power from Laos](#)
- [Adventure park draws the crowds in LuangPrabang](#)
- [Agricultural development dialogue for round table process](#)
- [Laos partners with neighbours to monitor Zika](#)
- [Better budgeting needed in health sector](#)
- [Coffee growers hopeful of better price this year-](#)
- [Laos promotes low-carbon growth under Paris Agreement](#)
- [Malaysia to buy power from Laos via Thai power grid](#)
- [New library shelved until 2017](#)
- [Laos tracks increased family planning services](#)

## Demographic changes present unique opportunity for Laos

*(By Times Reporters)*

Laos should start planning for demographic change to ensure it will not miss out on a unique opportunity to boost growth and investment for the future, according to a statement from a Policy Symposium held in Vientiane yesterday. The symposium on changing demographics, human development and the Sustainable Development Goals was jointly organised by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Laos.



### **Ms Kaarina Immonen speaks at the meeting in Vientiane yesterday.**

UNDP's latest Regional Human Development Report, titled *Shaping the Future: How Changing Demographics Can Power Human Development*, notes that Asia-Pacific countries now have more working-aged people and fewer dependents than at any point in history, providing a springboard for growth. In Laos, 61 percent of people are of working age and the number of dependents is dropping rapidly. Among Asean countries, Laos has the youngest population profile. The next 35 years is a period of demographic opportunity for Laos. When a greater share of people are available to work, save and pay taxes, there is opportunity to accelerate sustainable development, said Mr Than-gavel Palanivel, a Lead Author of the report,

who introduced the findings to an audience of representatives from government, academia, development partners and civil society. The report calls for immediate responses and outlines 9 Actions for Sustainable Development. These are concrete policies tailored to the demographic profile of individual countries. Laos is at the beginning state of the transition, with 57 percent of its population currently under 25 years of age. To properly prepare them for the labour market, there is a need to invest in education and healthcare, smooth the transition from school to work, and encourage youth participation in public life. The share of Laos' working age population is expected to reach a peak of 69 percent by 2050. After that, ageing sets in, and the demographic window of opportunity closes, said UNFPA Representative Ms Frederika Meijer. We need to make the right investment in young people now, especially for girls, so that we create an optimal workforce for the future and a competitive economy in the Asean Economic Community. Laos can however benefit from regional expertise. The region's diversity provides room for south-south cooperation. Governments need to share experiences on long-term fiscal planning. Cooperation can also encourage safe migration from younger to older countries within the region. This favourable demography presents opportunities for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, but it also brings new challenges, said UNDP Resident Representative and UN Resident Coordinator, Ms Kaarina Immonen. The process of powering sustainable development through this demographic change is not automatic. Rather, it needs a long-term vision, strategic policies and good governance.

*(Vientiane Times 17 September 2016)*

## Vietnam considers buying more power from Laos

(By Times Reporters)

Vietnam is considering importing more electricity from Laos to fulfil growing demand and offset supply shortages caused by removing polluting power sources, Vietnamese local media reported recently. Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister Trinh Dinh Dung has asked the Ministry of Industry and Trade to submit a master plan to develop power generation sources by 2025, emphasising the need to diversify supply sources and consider supply from Laos, Vietnam Net reported. There were no details concerning the amount of energy required. Lao Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines Viraphonh Viravong told *Vientiane Times* yesterday that a Vietnamese delegation is expected to visit Laos in the coming weeks when it is believed the issue will be discussed. Laos has exported 250MW generated by the Xekhaman III hydropower plant to Vietnam, while the Xekhaman I dam is set to generate 290MW for Vietnam at the experimental-operations stage. Mr Viraphonh said Laos and Vietnam had signed a Memorandum of Understanding in which Vietnam expressed its intention to import as much as 5,000MW from Laos, which has considerable potential for the export of hydropower. Under the plan, Laos is expected to generate 10,000MW by 2020.

Up to 75 percent of this amount is expected to be exported as domestic demand is forecast at only 25 percent, the deputy minister added. By 2030, Laos' power production capacity is expected to rise further to 20,000MW, which will be in excess of domestic demand and set for export to its neighbours. Vietnam is looking to buy more power from Laos as the country's requirements are very high, according to Vietnam Net. In 2015-16, Vietnam generated 150 billion kWh of electricity and will need more than 200 billion kWh by 2020 to run factories and satisfy daily needs. To generate more power, Vietnam has built large coal thermal power plants while planning to import coal at high prices to run the plants, it reported. Deputy chair of the Vietnam Power Association Tran Dinh Long was quoted by the news agency as saying that if Vietnam bought electricity from Laos, it could avoid the burning of coal and building more coal-fired power plants, which would help to protect the environment. With Laos having high potential to produce electricity for export, some 12,500MW of hydropower from Laos would keep 30-60 tonnes of carbon dioxide from being emitted annually, according to Mr Viraphonh.

(*Vientiane Times* 20 September 2016)

## Adventure park draws the crowds in LuangPrabang

*(By PhomphongLaoin)*

LuangPrabang is one of the most popular visitor destinations in Laos and has many attractions, both of cultural interest and scenic beauty.



### **HoiKhuaWaterfallinLuangPrabang province.**

One attraction, the Flower Garden and Hoi Khua Waterfall, has been a great success since it opened to the public in March. Mr Akhom Phommahanh, who owns the site, told Vientiane Times yesterday that the new development is located in Pakleuang village, Chomphet district, and is about 15km south of the provincial capital. We invested over US\$8 million or about 64 billion kip to develop this area. It covers over 20 hectares and we have a 30 year concession on the land granted by the province, he added. The highlight of the site is the adventure activities we have put together such as jungle walking, camping, net crossing, a

rope course, and the zipline. Also of special interest is our beautiful flower garden and of course the waterfall. We also have a restaurant and in the new year we will build a resort. Since we opened we have had over 10,000 visitors, Mr Akhom said. Most people like to wander around the flower garden and waterfall and try their hand at the adventure activities. An entry ticket costs 20,000 kip for Lao nationals and foreigners. According to statistics from the LuangPrabang provincial Department of Information, Culture and Tourism, the number of tourist arrivals increased from 186,819 in 2007 to 378,999 in 2014. In 2014, there were 58 hotels and 254 guesthouses with a total of 5,634 rooms. Also in 2014, there were 49 travel agencies and 28 branches. LuangPrabang has 86 officially designated cultural sites, 34 historical sites and 107 natural sites, all of interest to local and foreign visitors. In 2015, the number of visitors to LuangPrabang province reached 500,000. LuangPrabang is considered the top tourist destination in Laos, with 83 percent of visitors citing it as their first choice, followed by Vientiane. Tourists generally visit temples, admire the architecture, make trips to waterfalls and caves, and observe the lifestyle of local people while enjoying a wide range of local and international cuisines. The town was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1995. LuangPrabang was awarded a gold medal after being voted World's Top City by readers of the British travel magazine Wanderlust in 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2015.

*(Vientiane Times 21 September 2016)*

## **Agricultural development dialogue for round table process**

*(By Times Reporters)*

Government officials, development partners and other stakeholders met yesterday to discuss agriculture and rural development as they prepare to report to the round table meeting in November. Under the round table process, the Sector Working Group on Agriculture and Rural Development (SWG-ARD) is one of ten sector working groups established by the government. The meeting was chaired by Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Dr Phouangparisack Pravongveingkhom and French Ambassador to Laos, Ms Claudine Ledoux. Participants discussed the 10 years of supporting policy dialogue for farmers and agribusiness through the Sub-SWG on farmers and agribusiness. Technical Officer of the Department of Agriculture and Extension and Cooperative, Mr Souvanthong Namvong said the participants reviewed the completed studies, the information services provided, the capacity development component and various perspectives, opportunities and successful experiences for farmers and agribusiness development in Laos. Then the National Committee for Rural Development and Poverty Eradication's Planning and Cooperation Bureau Director General, Mr Chit Thavisay presented the rural development vision to 2030, strategy to 2025 and five year plan to 2020. The Consultant for the Asian Development Bank (ADB) covered the main outcomes of a socio-economic analysis of irri-

gated agriculture investments. The analysis included a desk review of three small and medium-scale irrigation and infrastructure projects supported by the ADB, definition of a socio-economic framework for investigation and indicators used for analysis, field investigations of 15 sub-projects and an examination of financial and economic returns and impacts on community organisations and cohesion. After the National Assembly approved the new government at the beginning of this year, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is trying to improve its role and structure and in that process some sectors have been transferred under the ministry, Dr Phouangparisack said. Agriculture is a main sector in the efforts to help Lao people escape from poverty, ensure food security, and enhance nutrition promotion to ensure good health for development. To reach the goal, cooperation and coordination between the government, development partners and other stakeholders is necessary to seek better systems in implementing agricultural development projects for family living improvements. The meeting also announced the date and venue for the celebration of the 2016 World Food Day that is to be jointly organised with International Day and National Week for the Eradication of Poverty, reporting that it will take place in Xayaboury province on October 15.

*(Vientiane Times 21 September 2016)*

## **Laos partners with neighbours to monitor Zika**

*(By Times Reporters)*

The government will continue to collaborate with other Asean countries to monitor the global and regional situation concerning Zika virus infections. Minister of Health, Associate Prof. Dr Bounkong Syhavong, told a press conference in Vientiane on Monday that he had discussed the issue during a video conference among Asean health ministers

on the threat posed by the Zika virus in the region. The video conference was also attended by WHO Representative to Laos, Dr Juliet Fleischl. Assoc. Prof. Dr Bounkong said that on behalf of the Lao government, he voiced his commitment to cooperating closely with other Asean member states in Zika infection prevention, control and response.

However, there are no known cases of the virus in Laos. We have defined the geographical distribution of Zika in the country. We are also carrying out regular analyses of rashes and fever and dengue-like illnesses through the national health system, and ensuring we have adequate capacity for Zika testing and the regular update of test results, he said. To ensure that hospitals report any cases of microcephaly, the ministry monitors for Guillain-Barre syndrome and congenital malformations in newborns, and adopts World Health Organisation (WHO) clinical management guidelines, he added. He explained that in terms of risk communication, the ministry has ensured that the 166 hotline function and key messages concerning Zika are distributed to the general population and special groups. The ministry also monitors mainstream and social media for rumours circulating about Zika and is stepping up mosquito vector control and mosquito surveillance. Assoc. Prof. Dr Bounkong noted that after the Zika outbreak came to the attention of the WHO, Laos took immediate action. In February, the Prime Minister's Office issued an order instructing the relevant sectors to prepare for an outbreak of the

virus. Since then Zika interim guidelines have been developed and strengthened through various surveillance programmes. The ministry conducted a joint risk assessment with WHO for Zika, strengthened vector control measures (the same as used for dengue and the Chikungunya virus), and collected and shared information on Zika infection with WHO via International Health Regulations mechanisms. The ministry also monitored the global, regional and country Zika infection situation regularly through its Emergency Operations Centre. According to Thailand's *The Nation* newspaper, the number of detected Zika infections in that country jumped significantly this year compared to recent years. Between 2012 and 2015, an average of just five people were recorded as infected with the Zika virus each year. But in the first six months of this year, at least 97 people were diagnosed with the disease. Over the past week, new infections were detected in Chiang Mai, Chanthaburi, Phetchabun and Beung Khan provinces. In Laos, 18 cases of the Zika virus were discovered in laboratory screenings from 2013 to 2015, but there have been no more cases since then.

*(Vientiane Times 21 September 2016)*

## **Better budgeting needed in health sector**

*(By Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth)*

Laos will need stronger financial management planning and budgeting in the health sector if it is to provide free healthcare for people in target provinces. For several years, health officials have lacked financial and management support from the government and partners in using money provided by various projects for free healthcare services in impoverished communities, a top health official has said. Speaking at a meeting on the subject yesterday, Director General of the Ministry of Health's Department of Planning and International Cooperation, Dr Pa-songsidh Boupha, said it was necessary to ensure that support programmes allocated

their budget in a way that was more effective. The meeting was held to discuss capacity development and technical assistance to improve financial management planning and budgeting among provincial health sector personnel. This was necessary to implement the five-year health sector development plan (2016-2020) and efforts to overcome challenges to meet the health-related Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and Sustainable Development Goal targets. The meeting would help to strengthen financial management planning and budgeting in local systems, and the building and training of quality health officials, especially village physi-

cians, midwives, specialists and health facilities, Dr Pasongsidh said. He stressed that free health checks for poor families, especially children and pregnant women, were needed. In some communities, poor people have to pay for all services offered such as health checks at hospitals and dispensaries, he added. A senior official who asked not to be named said that although maternal, newborn and child death rates in Laos have continued to decline, many poor women in remote areas of the country can't access health services because they don't have enough money to pay for a hospital visit. He said hospitals and local dispensaries are not responding to the policy of the ministry and

people in the target communities cannot access health services. These health facilities claimed that they didn't have sufficient budget to comply with this policy. Although the ministry does have funding to allocate to the treatment of poor people, it hasn't been used according to the set plan. This funding is intended to increase access to better quality health services for mothers and their children, provide health funding for the poor, and improve the quality of human resources in the health sector. The project will be implemented in the provinces of Phongsaly, Luang Namtha, Bokeo, Xayaboury, Luang Prabang, Oudomxay, Huaphan, Xieng Khuang and Xaysomboun.

*(Vientiane Times 22 September 2016)*

## **Coffee growers hopeful of better price this year**

*(By Times Reporters)*

The Lao Coffee Association is hopeful that growers will get more for their coffee this year thanks to rising prices in the world market. Arabica coffee currently sells for about US\$3,200 per tonne and Robusta for US\$1,400, while last year Arabica was only fetching US\$2,500, although the sale price of Robusta price was much the same, an association official, Mr Sivilay Xayaseng, told *Vientiane Times* yesterday. At the start of harvesting last year, the price of cherry beans was just 1,700 kip a kg, while green beans for export sold for 3,000 kip. But Mr Sivilay hoped the price would be higher this year as the market was picking up. Growers around the country are currently preparing to harvest their coffee crop for sale and export. After being hard hit by falling coffee prices over the past three years, some coffee growers in the southern provinces decided to cut their losses and sell their farms, while others have switched to other commercial crops. Many farmers have stopped growing the crop after losing so much capital but large numbers are still operating under the contract farming system and have sufficient

funds to tide them over. Farmers can stay afloat if the coffee price remains over 2,500 kip a kg but may run into difficulties if it falls any lower, Mr Sivilay said. Of this amount, growers pay 1,000 kip to the workers who pick the coffee cherries, while the rest goes to management and farming development. In years when the coffee price was high, many growers expanded their farms but some have had to sell their land since the price slumped. Mr Sivilay said the optimum size of a coffee plantation was three hectares per producer and growers may struggle if their farm is larger and they cannot be certain of a buyer. The shortage of workers is another major issue plaguing the industry, to which there is no solution in sight. Several countries are investing in coffee farms in Laos, such as Vietnam, Thailand, the Republic of Korea, Chinese Taiwan, Singapore and India. Most of the Lao coffee crop is exported to Chinese Taiwan, Italy, Japan, Spain, Poland, Germany, the US, France, Belgium, Sweden, Thailand and Vietnam. But due to fluctuations on the world market, the sale price of Lao coffee and ex-

port figures have been declining. In 2013 Laos exported 30,000 tonnes of coffee valued at US\$72 million. In 2014 total coffee exports dropped to 26,000 tonnes worth

US\$60 million. Last year exports fell further to 23,000 tonnes valued at US\$50 million, the Lao Coffee Association reported.

*(Vientiane Times 22 September 2016)*

## **Laos promotes low-carbon growth under Paris Agreement**

*(By Times Reporters)*

Laos has joined forces with other nations to promote low-carbon growth and a more sustainable future under the Paris Agreement which will enter into force at the end of this year. Since the Paris Agreement will serve as a legal instrument for countries to combat climate change, Laos is the first country among Southeast Asian nations to ratify the landmark deal.



**Mr Saleumxay Kommasith (left) shakes hands with Mr Ban Ki-moon at the high-level event on Wednesday at the UN Headquarters in New York.**

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon convened a special high-level event on Wednesday at the UN Headquarters in New York which was also attended by Lao Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr Saleumxay Kommasith. At the event, 31 additional countries deposited their instruments of ratification for the agreement, bringing the total to 60 countries that together represent more than 47.5 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Among the 31 nations were three Asean member states - Brunei Darussalam, Singapore and Thailand. The high-level event also provided an opportunity to other countries to publicly commit to joining the Paris Agreement before the end of this year. The Paris Agreement calls on countries in the world to accelerate and intensify the actions

and investments needed for a sustainable low-carbon future, and to adapt to the increasing impacts of climate change. Specifically, it seeks to limit global temperature rise to well below 2 degrees Celsius, and to strive for 1.5 degrees Celsius, according to a UN report. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said the global climate agreement would accelerate the growth of clean energy, help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, strengthen international stability and security, save lives and improve human well-being. The remarkable support for this agreement reflects the urgency and magnitude of the challenge. Emissions continue to rise. So does the global thermostat and the risks, the UN chief said. Climate impacts are increasing. No nation or community is immune, but the vulnerable are feeling the effects first and worst. Laos is not exempt from the impacts of climate change despite being a land-locked country. In recent years, Laos has experienced severe flooding and drought, affecting livelihoods and socio-economic development. The government is working in cooperation with friendly nations and international organisations to respond to climate change and focusing on sustainable use of natural resources. The 31 countries depositing their instruments of ratification at Wednesday's event in New York were: Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Dominica, Ghana, Guinea, Honduras, Iceland, Kiribati, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Thailand, Tonga, Uganda, United Arab Emi-

rates, and Vanuatu. Some 14 countries announced their commitment to join the Agreement in 2016: Austria, Australia, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Canada, Costa Rica, Cote

d'Ivoire, France, Germany, Hungary, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Poland, and the Republic of Korea; along with the European Union.

(Vientiane Times 23 September 2016)

## Malaysia to buy power from Laos via Thai power grid

(By Times Reporters)

Laos, Thailand and Malaysia concluded a deal on Wednesday which will see Malaysia buy 100 MW of electricity from Laos via Thailand's power grid. Top energy officials of the three countries signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the sidelines of the 34th Asean Ministers on Energy Meeting (AMEM) in the Myanmar capital of Nay Pyi Taw, according to the Lao Ministry of Energy and Mines.



**(From left) Mr Viraphonh Viravong, Gen. Anataporn Kanjanarat and Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili shake hands after signing the MoU.**

Officials hailed the landmark agreement as the first multilateral power trade to be implemented under the Asean Power Grid Initiative. Under the agreement, Malaysia will buy up to 100 MW of power from Laos, to be transmitted through Thailand's national power grid, the ministry said in a press release. The MoU was signed by Lao Deputy Minister of Energy and Mines, Viraphonh Viravong, Malaysia's Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water, Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus Johnity Ongkili, and Thai Energy Minister, Gen. Anataporn Kanjanarat. A joint statement said the initiative is aimed at enhancing energy security in Asean through the establishment of a network of interconnections between the three member

states. It is also hoped that this pilot project will pave the way for other multilateral power trading in Asean as a means to enhance energy security in the region, the statement said. Mr Viraphonh was quoted as saying that there is more work to be done, and many more details to be ironed out. However, we believe our hard work will pay off, billions of dollars will be saved, and our people will benefit for decades to come, he said. It is anticipated that the power integration project will be extended to Singapore. While Singapore is not a party to this MoU, we salute Singapore for the support and expertise given over many months and many meetings, Mr Viraphonh added. Together we will make the dream of sharing clean energy over three national grids from Laos to Singapore a reality. Citing the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry, Malaysia's *The Star* reported that the MoU would pave the way for Malaysia to purchase up to 100 MW of hydro power from Laos via Thailand's network by 2018. The MoU also marked Malaysia's commitment to increase the share of renewable energy in its fuel mix by 2020 as part of mitigation action to reduce carbon emissions in the power sector, it said. The initial capacity of 100 MW could be increased in the future and would positively balance our fuel mix to be more environmentally friendly, the Malaysian ministry was quoted as saying by *The Star*. In a separate session, Lao and Myanmar officials discussed an MoU calling for the two countries' national utilities to conduct feasibility studies on how they can optimise benefits from power sharing, according to the Lao ministry. A small amount of power is already ex-

changed in the Lao-Myanmar border area. Earlier in the day, Deputy Minister Viraphonh told AMEM delegates that Laos can produce far more clean, green, renewable energy than it can use. Laos is keen to promote power trades in ways everyone can benefit from. We are unapologetic about building dams and developing all of our abundant hydropower resources as rapidly and responsibly as possible, he said. We urge you

to further the momentum for Asean power sharing by establishing high-voltage interconnections between national grids. Speaking on behalf of senior leaders on energy from the Asean states, Myanmar's U Htein Lwin said development of renewable energy technologies will help address the challenges of sustainable energy growth, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as climate change impacts the region.

*(Vientiane Times 23 September 2016)*

## **New library shelved until 2017**

*(By Times Reporters)*

Relocation of the National Library is being postponed to next year because construction is not progressing to plan, according to an official. The new National Library is situated in Sivilay village, near the Kaysone Phomvihane Museum in Xaythany district, Vientiane. Deputy Director of the National Library of Laos, Mr Bounpasith Voradeth told *Vientiane Times* yesterday that construction of the new building was about 97 percent complete but the interior still had to be finished and then the collection relocated. Chitchareun Construction Co., Ltd started work on the building in 2013, which originally was to take two years to complete, so they should have been finished by mid-2015. But now the move to the new National Library will be next year, he confirmed. Once complete the new library should contain around 700,000 books while the existing public facility has only about 400,000 books. The 700,000 books will be made up of the old library's collection along with donations from companies and individuals in

society. We welcome any support from interested sponsors who would like to provide books relating to Asean topics and agriculture along with social science and history because we want to broaden students' knowledge of the history of the country and the regional bloc Mr Bounpasith said. Although the library would contain thousands of books eager readers should n't find it difficult tracking down titles as an e-library system would be used for searches, he said. The new National Library is four storeys in height, measuring 83.1 by 41.6 metres and being built on an area of 11,780 square metres. The exterior features Lao style designs while the interior will have modern European decor. According to the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, the construction will cost about 40 billion kip (US\$5 million). Under the terms of the agreement the ministry will give the existing downtown library to the contractor for redevelopment purposes.

*(Vientiane Times 23 September 2016)*

## **Laos tracks increased family planning services**

*(By Somxay Sengdara)*

Laos is attempting to increase access to family planning information and services, with the goal to reach 80 percent of women by 2025. The target was made public at a consensus building workshop held in Vientiane

yesterday; following this week's Track20 monitoring and evaluation training; which aimed to improve the progress and monitoring of family planning programs. During the meeting it was revealed that around 50 per-

cent of women currently use family planning, while 18 percent of them did not have access to such services; which the government hopes to decrease to 8 percent by 2025. Plans to increase the coverage of family planning services are also in the works, with a focus on long-term pregnancy prevention, including IUDs. According to a document released at the meeting, 20 percent of women in the country would like to delay or stop childbearing, but are not using any method of contraception. The need for contraception is high throughout Laos; particularly among young women, women with little education and those in poverty. The adolescent birth rate, in women between the ages of 15 and 19, in Laos is among the highest in the region, with 94 in 1,000 girls becoming pregnant. The Lao government has doubled its efforts to improve women's livelihoods through family planning programmes, committing to the global Family Planning 2020 (FP2020) movement early this year. FP2020 is a global partnership dedicated to improve voluntary access to family planning information, services and supplies for women and girls in low income countries. The commitment was led by the Ministry of Health and endorsed by the Ministry of Planning and Investment, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Family planning is important for a

woman's ability to choose if and when she has children, and has a direct impact on her health and well-being. In his remarks at the workshop, Deputy Minister of Health Dr Phouthone Mounpak mentioned the family planning project as one of the ten strategic objectives in the maternal reproductive and health integrated strategy, with targets to be met from now to 2020 and 2025. Evidence suggests that women who have more than four children are at an increased risk of maternal mortality. Particularly, young women need access to family planning information and services, since they are at an increased risk of complications and death from early childbearing as well as unplanned pregnancy. Speaking at the meeting, the United Nations Population Fund Representative, Ma Frederika Meijer noted the importance of capacity building in health services, through the use new tools and understanding family planning data and programme results. As well as tracking the progress of programmes and their effectiveness in order to meet the FP2020 commitment target. Understanding and interpreting family planning data is key to design interventions that give access to quality family planning service. And in the end, this is what we want: that every pregnancy is wanted and safe, she said.

*(Vientiane Times 23 September 2016)*