

Laos prepares an initial report under ICCPR

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with the support of the UNDP, EU and Finland - funded International Law Project (ILP), organized a workshop on drafting National Report under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) on 8-9 September 2011. More than 70 representatives from line ministries and agencies, mass organizations, social organizations and academics attended the workshop.



Mr. Vichit Xindavong, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who chaired the workshop, said that the workshop is of great importance as the Lao PDR has reporting obligation to fulfill under the Convention. The ratification of this treaty by the Lao PDR in 2009 was an important decision made by the country based on the national Constitution, the foreign policy of peace, independence, friendship and cooperation of mutual benefits. The ratification and implementation of this convention supports the efforts of the Lao Government on the way to build a Rule of Law State by 2020 through undertaking necessary legislative, executive and judicial and other appropriate measures to give effect to Covenant rights. The aim of the initial report is to assess the progress made by the country in the implementation of the ICCPR, identify challenges and rooms for improvement to ensure the enjoyment of human rights by the Lao people of all ethnic groups on an equal basis without discrimination on any grounds. During this two day workshop participants will reinforce their awareness and understanding of the ICCPR provisions and will be familiarized with the guidelines for reporting



adopted by the UN Human Rights Committee, the treaty body monitoring the implementation of the Covenant by now the 167 State Parties. After this workshop a drafting group will be proposed to be set up comprising representatives of all concerned ministries and other relevant stakeholders. .

The MoFA Permanent Secretary said that the Lao Government always attaches importance to the promotion and protection of human rights of the Lao people whose fundamental human rights are enshrined in the national Constitution, which provides for the political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights of all Lao citizens without distinction as to sex, social status, education, religion, ethnicity or any other ground. In addition, these rights are also protected and concretized in various national laws and other legal instruments adopted thus far by the National Assembly and the Government. The Lao PDR has played an active role in the international cooperation to promote and protect human rights within the UN framework, the regional arrangements especially the ASEAN Inter-Governmental Commission on Human Rights, the drafting of ASEAN Human Rights Declaration as well as the bilateral exchanges of lessons, experience and good practices in the promotion and protection of

human rights through the human rights dialogues with Australia and the European Union.

The Lao PDR regards its proactive international cooperation in the area of human rights as one of its international commitments as a full-fledged member of the international community. To date, of the 9 core human rights treaties of the United Nations the Lao PDR has ratified 6 conventions, namely International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the International on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Convention on Elimination of All Forms against Racial Discrimination (ICERD), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). The country has also signed Convention Against Torture (CAT) and Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CPAPED) which are in the process of national consultations for their early ratification.