

## National News

# Laos tackles malnutrition Round Table Meeting on National Nutrition Policy held

(KPL) Despite the economic growth that has taken place in Laos in the past ten years nutrition standards, especially among ethnic groups, have not improved.

But the Government of Lao PDR and the development community are taking steps to address this challenge, with a meeting on 11 January to discuss the creation of a landmark national nutrition policy document.

Chronic malnutrition among children under five years of age remains very high, in particular in the highlands and among ethnic groups. This issue is very important for the fu-

ture of the country. Malnourished children cannot reach their full physical and mental potential and are unable to fully contribute to the socio-economic development in the country.

The National Nutrition Policy (NNP) 2008 - 2020 document will be the Government's first official policy for improving nutrition and Lao PDR's alarmingly high malnutrition rates. Ministry of Health officials drafted the document with support from UN agencies (UNICEF, WHO and WFP), coordinated by FAO.

The meeting was chaired

by HE Dr. Bounkoungh Phichit, Vice Minister of the MOH and co-chaired by the Vice-Minister Ministry of Planning and Investment.

The meeting brought together around 60 Governmental officials. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO), as well as Asian Development Bank (ADB), European Commission (EC) and World Bank (WB) joined the meeting.

At the meeting, different ministries shared their comments on the draft

NNP 2020. If consensus is found and approval given by MOH it will then be presented to the National Assembly later this year, after consultation with national stakeholders.

A National Nutrition Strategy and Action Plan for 2008 - 2011 will also be drafted and is expected to be finalized mid 2008.

The development of the NNP 2020 is one of the activities supported by the EC/FAO Food Security "Information for Action" Programme in the Lao PDR. The programme is implemented by FAO with financial support from the European Union.

Source: KPL  
Date: 14/01/2008  
Issue: 280  
Remark: National Nutrition Policy/FAO



FAO Representation  
P.O.Box 1640  
Vientiane, Lao PDR  
Office: (856-21) 413 205, 414 503