



Appraisal Meeting Minutes

Joint programme Support to an Efficient Lao National Assembly (SELNA)

Tuesday August 5, 2008, 1:45 – 3:30pm
National Assembly Meeting Room

The two co-Chairs, the Hon. Thongteun Xayasene, Member of the National Assembly (NA) Standing committee, Chief of the NA Cabinet and Mr. Stephane Vigié, UNDP Resident Representative (a.i.), welcomed the participants.

Ms. Sousada Phoummasak, Director-General of the NA and NPD of the current project on Strengthening the Lao National Assembly presented the outlines of the Joint programme.

Mr. Matthias Meier, UNDP programme specialist (governance unit) presented an overview of the programme management and assurance mechanisms.

The chairs opened the floor for discussion:

- Ms. Sisomboune Ounavong (DIC) rated the Joint programme (JP) a good example of an appropriate implementation of the Vientiane declaration for aid effectiveness, in which the government and the donors coordinate their efforts to achieve common goals. DIC approves the objectives and outputs introduced by Ms. Sousada. The JP encompasses a broad vision which meets the needs of the NA. She underlined the importance of enhancing the capacities of the NA on oversight and representation at grass-root level. DIC agrees to the management arrangements presented, and particularly acknowledged the accuracy of a Programme board chaired by the Chief of the NA Cabinet.
- Mr. Henry Pranker, *Chargé d'affaires* of the European Commission, asked two questions: a. The JP and the GPAR projects in the provinces are linked actions. How can they best relate together? b. How is envisaged the representation of donors in the steering group of the programme? Does the Programme board mirror the structure of the one in the GPAR province?
- Ms. Mariolein Corein (UNFPA) reiterated the willingness of the agency she represents to co-fund this new programme. Core funds of the agency have been already allocated in this regard. She expressed the interest of UNFPA in being able to address more committees' members than within the current arrangements. She reiterated the need for embedding the management of

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the JP in the Office of the NA rather than creating a distinct management unit. This will improve the capacity building role of the programme. She underlined that the programme as presented may require further resources mobilization efforts involving all donors and agencies.

- Mr. Simon Ingram (UNICEF) stressed that his organisation had already identified the NA as an essential partner for some years. He raised two questions: a. the JP document makes a reference to a communication specialist. What will be his/her role? B. What are the competencies and responsibilities of UNDP as the managing agent of the JP?
- Mr. Matthias Meier mentioned the new component on local councils would clearly link the GPAR and the NA programmes, particularly in activities aimed to improve decentralized service delivery and district development funding. There are also a number of areas where the local councils will impact on the performance and reporting of the administration at local level. On the JP board, he explained it will steer the activities of the programme. The international development partners, along with the NA representatives, will be members of the board. It is the responsibility of the board to assure the quality of the outputs and ensure that activities are in line with expectations, although the day-to-day assurance activities will be delegated to the Programme Assurance Committee. In terms of resource mobilization, the current envelope meets the needs. The managing agent is responsible for the day-to-day support with regard to financial management and administrative issues. The agency in charge will be the one financially accountable. Such arrangement allows a single audit process and a single set of rules to apply.
- Dr. Franck Boulouin, CTA of the NA project detailed the role of the communication specialist. The increasing role of the NA in the country's institutions will require improving the awareness of the citizens on the activities of the legislature. The office of the NA has already a public information department; the communication specialist will together promote the visibility of the donors' actions toward the NA, raise the interest of the national media on the Assembly's activities and play a capacity building role to enhance the NA Public information. The presence of a small administrative unit within the programme team is required to keep the files, process payments and ensure the secretariat of the programme.
- Mr. Francesco Straniero (European Commission delegation) considered communication a very important component of the functions of the programme team. He requested further information on how the activities of the project will end in sustained improvements in the NA, suggesting assisting the NA in creating a position of spokesperson, who could build upon the experience acquired from the communication specialist.

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Comparing the roles of the JP board and the programme assurance group, he recommended a close cooperation among the two entities.

- Mr. Charles Schmit (Luxembourg Embassy, Bangkok) noted that Luxembourg is mentioned as a donor to the programme, but underlined that official commitment was still pending reception of an official request from the concerned UN agencies and the corresponding internal appraisal process.
- Mr. Serge Verniau (UN Resident Coordinator a.i., FAO resident representative) declared he shared the opinion of Ms. Sonam Yangchen Rana's (UN RC, UNDP Res. Rep.). The diversity of the UN agencies engaged in this JP is a guaranty for success, while they will deliver as one.
- Dr. Peter Wienand (Ambassador of Germany) confirmed the interest of his country to contribute to the joint support to the NA through the sponsoring of two experts to be embedded in committees by the Centrum fuer Internationale Migration (CIM).
- Mr. Sengthong Phothisane (World Bank) confirmed the institution concurs to continue to provide its support to the NA, particularly in enhancing the capacities of the legislature in public finance management. Budget estimates are currently under consideration as to the envelope which will be made available for this assistance.
- Mr. Henry Prankerd indicated that the EC contribution had been already approved in principle. The administrative process is still undergoing to ensure the funds are made available.
- Ms. Sousada Phoummasak confirmed the matter of a sustainable communication structure of the NA was one of the expected outcomes of the JP.
- Mr. Matthias Meier made clear that the programme assurance group (PAG) is due to report to the JP board on a regular basis. There is no reason which would preclude donors to participate in the meetings of the PAG. The specific role of each UN agency in the implementation of the workplan is detailed in Annex A of the document. Individual UN agencies have been identified to take the lead in areas of their specific expertise. Of course, some activities are cross-cutting, such as the inter-session capacity building programmes.

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Conclusion:

Mr. Thongteun Xayasene and Mr. Stephane Vigié thanked the participants for their contributions and remarks and declared the meeting adjourned. It is thus recommended that the Joint Programme, **Support to an Efficient Lao National Assembly (SELNA)**, is submitted for endorsement to the relevant Lao authorities. Participating organizations and donors are encouraged to formalize their commitments in accordance with their internal processes.

Minutes approved by/on behalf of the chairpersons:

Date: August 27, 2008

Date: ...8/9/8...

Hon. Mr. Thongteun Xayasene

Ms. Sonam Yangchen Rana

Member of the National Assembly
Chief of the National Assembly
Cabinet

United Nations Resident Coordinator



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List of Participants

No	Name	Organisation
1	Hon. Thongteun Xayasene	NA, Chief Cabinet
2	Chanpheng Bouasavanh	NA, DG Social Culture Dept
3	Kongsy Sengdeuane	NA, Vice Chief Cabinet
4	Khampheng Vilaphan	NA, Vice Chief Cabinet
5	Viseth Svengsuksa	NA, Vice Chief Cabinet
6	Khampasong Ratsachack	NA
7	Sousada Phoummasack	NA
8	Stephane Vigie	UNDP
9	Khamlay Manivong	UNDP
10	Dirk Wagener	UNDP
11	Oraxone Vissapra	UNDP
12	Matthias Meier	UNDP
13	Franck Boulin	UNDP
14	Pafoualee Leechuefoung	UNFPA
15	Mariolein Coren	UNFPA
16	Tabongphet Phenthavong	UNICEF
17	Simon Ingram	UNICEF
18	Somphrathai Siripholdej	UNIFEM
19	Richard Philippart	UNODC
20	Sari Karkkainen	UNAIDS
21	Sengthong Phothisane	World Bank
22	Saysanith Vongviengkham	World Bank
23	Sisomboun Ounavong	DDC/DIC
24	Ms. Bangthong	DIC
25	Francesco Straniero	E.C
26	Henry Prankerd	EC
27	Serge Verniau	FAO
28	Peter Wienand	German Embassy
29	Charles Schmit	Luxembourg Embassy BKK
30	Louise Scott	Office of UN RC

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