



Participants of the recent World Friends Korea Workshop in Vientiane.

Govt, KOICA officials discuss Korean volunteer programme

Times Reporters

Government representatives and staff from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) met in Vientiane recently to discuss KOICA's volunteer programme in Laos.

KOICA arranged the World Friends Korea (WFK) Workshop on its volunteer programme in Laos for 35 local participants from sectors including education and sports, healthcare, industrial energy, agriculture and forestry, with support from the Ministry of Planning and Investment.

The workshop aimed to review and evaluate KOICA's volunteer programme by sharing the long term strategies of the WFK programme. The workshop also presented an analysis of the volunteer organisation's satisfaction over the previous year with volunteer-related organisations.

Presentations also aimed to enhance the programme's effectiveness by sharing volunteer activities and receiving suggestions through small group discussions, according to a press statement from the KOICA Office in Laos.

The workshop provided a platform to discuss various issues, promote better policies and ensure effective implementation of the volunteer mobilisation policy.

Speaking at the meeting, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Laos Mr Yun Kang-hyeon emphasised the importance of cooperation between Laos and the Republic of Korea.

"It is expected the relationship between both countries will be closer

through the WFK volunteer programme, and this meeting will help participants to gain mutual understanding to achieve goals," he said.

The WFK volunteer programme was designed by KOICA to make practical contributions to socio-economic and human resource development in 96 partner countries by dispatching qualified Korean volunteers as well as sharing expertise, knowledge, and experiences.

Since Laos and the Republic of Korea agreed upon the WFK volunteer programme in 2000, 67 WFK volunteers have accomplished humanitarian missions in significant fields of education, healthcare,

public administration, industrial energy and agriculture and forestry over a three year period.

There are 39 WFK volunteers currently working in seven provinces of Laos.

In 2009, the Korean government consolidated WFK volunteer programmes provided by six different government agencies into a single brand.

This government initiative gave birth to World Friends Korea, Korea integrated WFK volunteer programmes.

As Korea's iconic participatory development cooperation programme, WFK has deployed 20,000 overseas volunteers to partner countries from 2009 to 2017.

More Lao nationals head for studies in Cuba

Times Reporters

The Cuban government has provided scholarships for five more Lao nationals to study at the Latin American School of Medicine in Cuba.

A ceremony to bid farewell to the scholarship awardees took place in Vientiane on Monday evening and was attended by the Cuban Ambassador to Laos, Mr Pablo Antonio.

This academic year 2017-2018, they will study at the Latin American School of Medicine, Elam, in Havana, an institution of international prestige.

The group leaves Laos for Cuba today. They will first study Spanish for a year and then begin a six year medical degree.

Cuba has granted several hundred scholarships to Lao nationals over the years and about 140 people have graduated from Cuban universities. They took degrees in medicine, economics, law, sports, Hispanic language, philology, architecture, engineering and veterinary science.

In 1963 the first Cuban medical team went to Algeria on an international mission. Since then 131,933



Participants at a reception held at the Cuban residence on Monday to bid farewell to medical students heading for Cuba.

Cuban health professionals have provided assistance in 104 countries, including Laos, where the first Cuban medical team arrived during the war. They worked in the caves in liberated areas, taking care of the soldiers and the civilian population.

In 1998, the then Cuban president, Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz, established the Latin American School of Medicine to provide free education for young people from the so-called "third world" countries, as well as for young and impoverished people from developed countries including the United States.

Since then, more than

25,000 doctors have graduated from Elam, coming from 117 nations where more than 100 ethnic groups are represented. In this diversity lies the strength of this project, according to a press release from the Cuban Embassy.

Mr Ya you a k h a Houatouxay, 24, one of the group heading for Cuba today, said "I am very happy and excited to be studying medicine in Cuba. When I've finished my studies I will have gained new skills to help develop Laos and I will be able to help treat Lao people. I would like to thank the Cuban government for giving me this great opportunity."

Khammuan explains govt decision on eligible, prohibited wood products

Times Reporters

Khammuan province: The province yesterday circulated a Decision on the Approval of the List of Eligible and Prohibited Wood Products for Export among the relevant government sectors, district authorities and wood processing businesses in the province.

A meeting on the decision took place here yesterday and was presided over by the President of the Khammuan provincial State Inspection Organisation, Mr Khamphong Vongphachanh.

The meeting was in response to the implementation of Prime Ministerial Order No. 15 issued on May 13, 2016, on Enhancing Strictness on the Management and Inspection of Timber Exploitation, Timber Movement and



Mr Khamphong Vongphachanh (centre) addresses the meeting in Khammuan province.

Timber Businesses and the dissemination of the Decision on the Approval of the List of Eligible and Prohibited Wood Products for Export No. 1833/MoIC, issued on October 3, 2016.

Businesses that process wood products for export have played a role in revenue generation for the

government's budget, but it has been observed that many businesses didn't understand the rules surrounding wood production for export. They had been unable to export their products and had to repeat processing, meaning they lost money because they had to spend extra on transport and labour, Mr

Khamphong said.

The meeting was held to explain Decision No. 1833/MoIC to participants so that they better understood what the government was trying to achieve in terms of management and promotion of the wood business, he added.

The decision stipulates that eligible wood products for export comprise 12 categories: wooden briquettes, pellets; wooden charcoal; wooden parquet, interior flooring; plywood; wooden handle products; builders' joinery and wooden carpentry; other wooden articles; wooden furniture; bamboo and rattan products; split poles; piles, pickets, stakes of wood and sawn wood; wood shavings, sawdust; and wood chips.

Items prohibited for export also fall into 12 categories: columns;

columns and laminated beams; large tables and chairs made from slabs of timber; large cutting boards; large planted timber; other black charcoal; S2S, S4S E4E decking; moulded timber products; truck body joinery; coffins; balustrades; stair rails and laminated stair rails.

The decision also notes that all wood products not mentioned in the list of eligible products are banned from export.

Prior to the meeting, participants visited three wood processing factories in Yommalath, Thakhaek and Hinboun districts.

The meeting also disseminated the Notification on the Application to Certify Natural Wood Products and Planted Wood Products for Export and legislation related to the export of wood products.

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Tel: (856-21) 336042, fax: (856-21) 336041

info@vientianetimes.la

Supervisor:
Savankhone Razmouny

Tel: 021 336042
info@vientianetimes.la

Editor-in-Chief:
Thonglor Duangsavanh

Deputy Editor-in-Chief:
Phonekeo Vorakhoun

Tel: 021 336042
vorakhoun@gmail.com

Deputy Editor-in-Chief:
Phon Thikeyo
Tel: 55624351, 021 336042
phonethikeyo28@yahoo.com

Features Editor:
Manichanh Pansivongxay
Tel: 020 55607017, 021 336047

Fax: 021 336046
chanfeature@hotmail.com

News Editor:
Sisay Vilaysack
Tel: 55615716, 021-336045,
Fax: 336046
sisay69@gmail.com

Business Editor:
Phonsavanh Vongsay
Tel: 021-336047, 020 5522818

Graphic Designer/IT:
Malaythong Phayanouvong
Tel: 021 336048, 020 55729209

Copy Sub-editor:
Elizabeth Winch

Finance Manager:
Somphone Vongsa
Tel: 336040, 020 55647291

Marketing Manager:
Phouthasack Inthakoummane
Tel: 021 336042,
Fax: 336041
Mobile: 020 55599209
sale.adv@gmail.com

If you have a problem accessing the website, please call directly to
Tel: +856-21 336048; 020 55729209,
Email: info@vientianetimes.la



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