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Laos makes progress on treaties

Somsack Pongkhao

International treaties have been actively implemented in Laos through legislative improvements and initiatives, accompanied by monitoring and regular reporting, a senior official said yesterday.

But some treaties to which Laos is a party have not yet been adequately implemented, monitored and reported upon, said Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Phongsavat Boupha.

Mr Phongsavat was speaking at a workshop in Vientiane yesterday, when more than 100 officials gathered to discuss and assess the implementation of treaties to which Laos is a party.

Participants discussed areas in which implementation was successful and instances where difficulties were encountered.

Laos is a party to 100

multilateral treaties, over 300 bilateral treaties and more than 100 Asian and other regional treaties and agreements.

According to the Director General of the Department of Treaty and Law, Mr Khamkheuang Bountheum, international treaties are in line with Party and government policy and the desire of the Lao people for closer cooperation with friendly countries.

Treaties that Laos is a party to include the areas of anti-terrorism, prevention of transnational crimes, reduction of human rights.

Mr Khamkheuang said the main area in which the government had encountered difficulties was in education and dissemination.

There weren't enough people employed in these sectors, he said, nor was there sufficient funding.



Mr Phongsavat Boupha (right) and Ms Sonam Yangchen Rana open the workshop in Vientiane yesterday.

UN Resident Coordinator

Ms Sonam Yangchen Rana said a treaty as a binding legal instrument was an important avenue for international relations. It allowed a country such as Laos to use the international legal framework to pursue and enhance international interests in its engagement with the rest of the international community.

The implementation of a treaty in Lao laws requires a national effort. First it requires appropriate preparatory work by the relevant ministries for submission to the National Assembly. "It also requires legislative action by the National

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Assembly to pass the specific laws that implement the relevant terms of the treaty," Ms Rana said.

"Once the laws are passed, information agencies, mass organisations and civil society organisations have to promote community awareness of the laws."

Law enforcement agencies were required to monitor and enforce the laws to ensure compliance, she said.

Ms Rana said the national institutional effort in the implementation of treaties in the domestic law of Laos demanded a high degree of coordination if their implementation was to be successful. It also demanded considerable human and material resources.

The two-day workshop, organised by the International Law Project, supported by UNDP, the government of Finland and the European Union, was attended by treaty experts from Cambodia, China, Thailand and Vietnam who explained how treaties were implemented in their countries.