



Lao People's Democratic Republic
Peace Independence Democracy Unity Prosperity

Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
Department of Forestry

Report on
International Day for Biological Diversity Celebration in Lao PDR

This year, The International Day for Biological Diversity celebration was held in Paek District, Xieng Khouang Province; Lao PDR on 24th May 2011. Xieng Khouang Province is one of the field sites for work under The Agro-Biodiversity Initiative Project (TABI). The province is well-known for historic sites, rich agricultural and natural beauty in Lao PDR.



The United Nations proclaimed that 22nd May of every year is the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) in order to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. This year the theme for the IDB, as set by United Nations and Lao PDR, was: “Forest for People”. Forests provide us with a host of services, including climatic regulation and habitat protection for wildlife and aquatic animals. In addition, the United Nations has also designated 2011 as “the International Year of Forests”. Celebration of the IDB contributes to implementation of the International Year for Forest.

This important event was chaired by Vice Governor of Xieng Khouang, Mr. Douangchit CHANGXAYVANG. It was co-organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and the Xieng Khouang Administration Office, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Agro-biodiversity Initiative Project (TABI) and International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Lao PDR.

The diverse group of participants included representatives from the central agencies, neighboring provinces, provincial district government agencies, teachers, students, journalists, civil society, international organizations and NGOs. There were about 200 people in attendance.

The event was important for raising awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity in Xieng Khuang Provinces as well as in the country as whole, by reaching out to policy makers from the central levels, local people.

Mr. Douangchit spoke on behalf of the Xieng Khouang Administration Office about the importance of biodiversity and called for all residents of the province to apply sustainable practices in using the province's natural resources.



He also praised the good work being done by SDC/TABI in Phou Kood District. The event was a great opportunity for all participants, especially local people to better understand Lao PDR's commitment to the CBD and its achievements in biodiversity conservation. There were presentations by Mr. Khamphanh Nanthavong, Deputy Director of Department of Forestry and CBD National Focal Point. While agro-biodiversity conservation is important throughout the whole country, Xieng

Khouang Province is particularly famous for some of its agro-biodiversity resources, including its hearty species of cattle and the unique rice species, 'Khao Kai Noi'. In addition, a new species of salamander was recently discovered in the province and scientists expect that additional new species will be identified in the future.

The celebration meeting was divided in to two parts, the main event was held in the morning and a technical session was held in the afternoon. In the morning, the chairman and the CBD National Focal Point in Lao PDR have speeches on the following topics:

- The history of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- The importance of biodiversity on socio-economic development and poverty reduction
- TV interviews were also conducted in the morning.

The technical session in the afternoon covered the following topics:

- Dissemination of results and achievements of COP 10 in Nagoya, Japan which a Lao delegation participated in.
- The importance of biodiversity for socio-economic development.



The technical session provided opportunities for participants to share their thoughts and opinions on biodiversity issues. In Lao PDR, forests are vital for the country's biodiversity. Forest maintenance is essential for the production of nutritious food and other agricultural goods and generally supports livelihoods.

In addition, to the sessions, there was an exhibition organized by TABI, IUCN and the provincial authority to display products that demonstrate the area's Agro-biodiversity. There were also maps, reports, posters, leaflets and other materials about work under TABI and species identification posts made by school children on display.

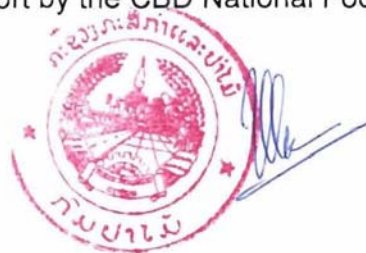


IUCN distributed some booklets and other materials to the participants including the Forest Law, Aquatic and Wildlife Law, Agricultural guide books and national reports on biodiversity in both English and Lao language. Movies produced by IUCN Lao PDR and the National Agriculture and Forestry Institute (NAFRI) relevant to biodiversity conservation were also screened.

The celebration ended the same day at 16: 15 pm.

Vientiane Capital, 5th September, 2011

Report by the CBD National Focal Point in Lao PDR.



Mr. Khamphanh NANTHAVONG