



Press release

The Government of the Federal Republic of Germany and UNODC provides support to former opium poppy farmers in Phongsaly Province

There were an estimated 2056 villages in which communities had depended on a livelihood that included opium poppy cultivation in 1998. Many of these villages are in the poorest most isolated regions of the country. In 2006 the Government of the Lao PDR declared its success in being able to significantly reduce opium poppy cultivation by over 93%. However much more remains to be done to continue sustaining opium elimination and to improve the livelihoods and socio-economic development of communities living in northern Laos.

The Phongsaly Alternative Development Fund Project will contribute to the national action plan targeting 1000 former opium poppy growing villages in Laos and will assist the Government of the Lao PDR to sustain opium elimination and assist poverty reduction efforts for approximately 10,000 former opium farmers from over 30 villages in the districts of Koua and Mai of Phongsaly province by supporting community based alternative development activities, drug demand reduction, law enforcement and civic awareness programs to the target communities.

The project is funded by the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, with a total fund of Euro 1,375,000 and executed by the United Nations Office for Drug Control in close cooperation with the Lao National Commission for Drug Control and Supervision. The project will be implemented for three years from 2007 until 2010.

The letter of agreement of support was signed by His Excellency Mr. Peter Wienand, Ambassador of Germany to the Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Mr. Leik Boonwaat, UNODC Country Representative to the Lao PDR. Also attending as witness were Ms. Sonam Yangchen Rana, UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Kou Chansina, acting Vice Chairman of the Lao Commission on Drug Control and Supervision, as well as other Government Officials.

Vientiane, 28th September 2007