

## Weekly news update of week 5, November 2017 related land and natural resources in Laos

Summarized by LIWG Communication Officer.

### English news

#### **Three officials under fire over illegal wood shipment in Attapeu: Vientiane Times**

Three state officials are facing criminal charges over their alleged involvement in a shipment of illegally harvested wood that was discovered in Attapeu province, according to a senior provincial official.

Twenty-seven trucks carrying more than 13,000 cubic metres of illicit timber were stopped in June by authorities at the Phoukeua International Checkpoint as they were crossing from Attapeu into Vietnam.

The newly-appointed provincial Governor, Mr Leth Sayaphone, who recently replaced Dr Nam Vinhaketh, told media that legal measures would be strictly enforced against the offenders, according to Attapeu Online, which is published by the provincial Administration Office.

#### **Nam Ou 3 Dam Eliminates River Cruises: The Laotian Times**

On Monday, November 20, a river cruise option popular amongst tourists and locals on the Nam Ou River in Laos, was officially cancelled as the impact of a new dam ends an era of river cruising.

Eliminating the popular Nam Ou river cruises will disappoint many tourists, as the boats provide the best way to experience the natural beauty of northern Laos from a relaxing river perspective.

#### **Powering Investment in Laos: Thailand Business News**

By the end of 2016, with US\$5.4 billion worth of funding already in place, China was by far the largest overseas investor in Laos.

China and Laos jointly initiated work on the second phase of the 1,156-megawatt Nam Ou Cascade Hydropower Project earlier this year. The project, set on Laos' principal river, is seen as one of the country's key contributions to China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Under the terms of the project, all electricity generated will be sold to EDL. Significantly, Nam Ou is the first project for which a Chinese enterprise has secured the whole basin rights for planning and development.

In addition to the Nam Ou project, China is also involved with other hydropower installations, including Don Sahong, Pak Beng and Xayaburi.

#### **High-speed Rail Project Will Force Thousands of Lao Families to Relocate: RFA**

Provincial task force committees in areas through which the railway will pass have estimated that 4,411 families must be relocated along the planned 420-kilometer (261-mile) route through Laos, according to Rattanamong Khounnivong, deputy minister at the Lao Ministry of Public Works and Transport and one of the heads of the construction unit for the single-track, standard-gauge rail network.

Though more than 3,800 hectares (9,500 acres) of land have been reserved for the mega-project, the total number needed will likely be less than previously estimated.

**Round Table meeting agrees on closer partnership for development: Vientiane Times**

The Round Table Implementation Meeting 2017 held under the theme “Greater Partnership for Implementation of the 8 NSEDP: Realising LDC Graduation and Achieving SDGs”. The meeting took place on November 22-23.

Discussions focused on four key areas: Graduation from Least Developed Country status and integration of the Sustainable Development Goals; Realising quality private sector investment for sustainable development; Investment in skills and labour force for human development; and Enhancing south-south cooperation and triangular cooperation.

**NA President Visits Nam Ngiep 1 Project: KPL**

The Nam Ngiep 1 Hydropower Project is expected to relocate approximately 520 Project Affected Households from Borikhamxay and Xaysomboun Provinces to pave the way for the construction of the project.

Currently, approximately 80 households are now living in the resettlement village at Houay Soup Resettlement Area. The remaining households have chosen self-resettlement, resettling themselves either in Borikhamxay or Xaysomboun Provinces, and all resettlement is expected to be completed by the end of 2017.

Socially and environmentally, the NA president considered the project to be one the best examples of hydropower projects in Laos.

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