

Swiss project gives boost to mother and child health

Times Reporters

The Swiss Laos Hospital Project and the Mother and Newborn Hospital yesterday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the improvement of maternal and child health.

The agreement was signed by the President of the Swiss project, Dr Urs Lauper, and hospital Director General, Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh Saensathit, witnessed by officials from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The three-year programme will run from the date of approval until December 31, 2018, at a cost of US\$847,000 (more than 6.8 billion kip).

It will focus on improving perinatal care and gynaeco-obstetric surgery; support the upgrade of standards at the new Mother and Newborn Hospital in Nongphaya

village; collaborate with the Humanitarian Association Hospital Marguerite-Marie; provide newborn home delivery kits; prevent vertical HIV transmission to children of HIV positive mothers; bolster the neonatal network; support the work of family doctors in Kham, Khoun and Nonghet districts in Xieng Khuang province; provide oxygen concentrators; and foster the partnership between the Kantonspital Winterthur and Xieng Khuang provincial Hospital.

Dr Lauper said the Swiss Laos Hospital Project was responsible for providing the following management support by carrying out project activities under the MOU.

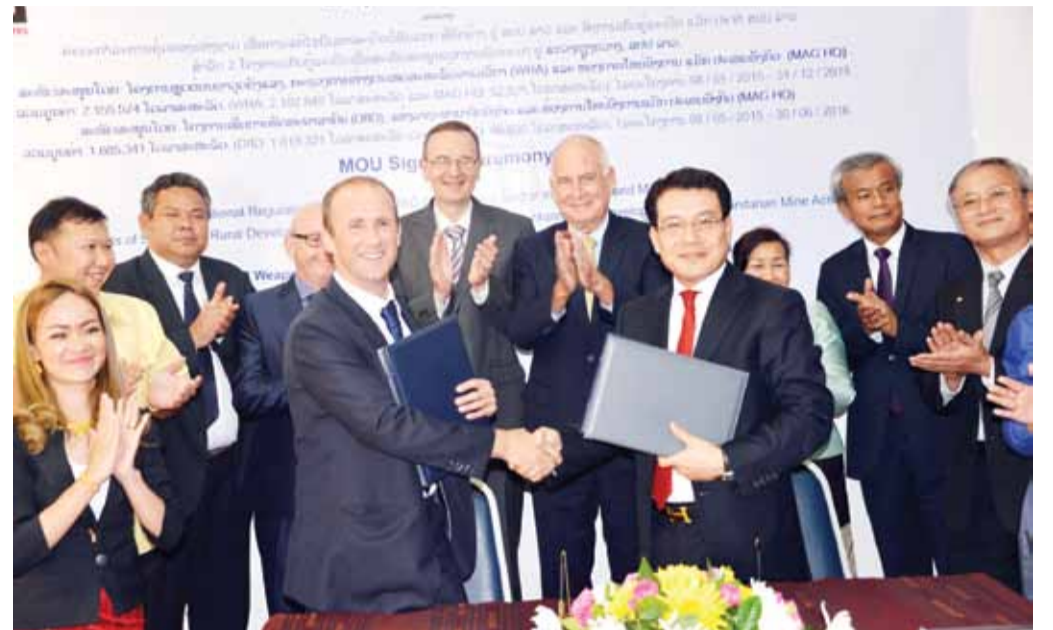
These include the recruitment and management of staff; coordination with partners of the Lao government; management of project activities; organisation

of training and workshops; monitoring project activities and financial management of the project and reporting to the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh said Swiss assistance would directly improve maternal and child health in line with Millennium Development Goals 5 and 4.

According to the 2012 Lao Social Indicator Survey, the death rate of birthing mothers is 357 out of every 100,000 births. The death rate of children under one year is 68 out of every 1,000 live births, and for children under five it is 79 out of every 1,000 live births. This is high compared to other countries in the region.

Dr Bouavanh said that since the Swiss project began in 2000, many aspects of mother and child health had improved throughout the country, in particular the use of ultrasound.



Mr Phoukhieo Chanthasomboune (right) and Mr Simon Rea shake hands after signing an MoU on UXO clearance in Xieng Khuang province.

US, UK govts back UXO clearance

Khonesavanh Latsaphao

The governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom on Friday agreed to fund surveys and UXO clearance operations in Xieng Khuang province at a cost of more than US\$3.8 million (over 30 billion kip).

The funding will support two projects run by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG).

The first project will be funded by a grant of more than US\$2.1 million (over 16 billion kip) from the US Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (WRA) and a contribution of almost US\$53,000 (over 428 million kip) from MAG Headquarters in the UK.

As agreed with the National Regulatory Authority (NRA), Xieng Khuang province and district authorities, the funds will be used to survey and clear UXO in Xieng Khuang province

over a period of 12 months, Country Director of MAG Laos Mr Simon Rea said at the signing ceremony.

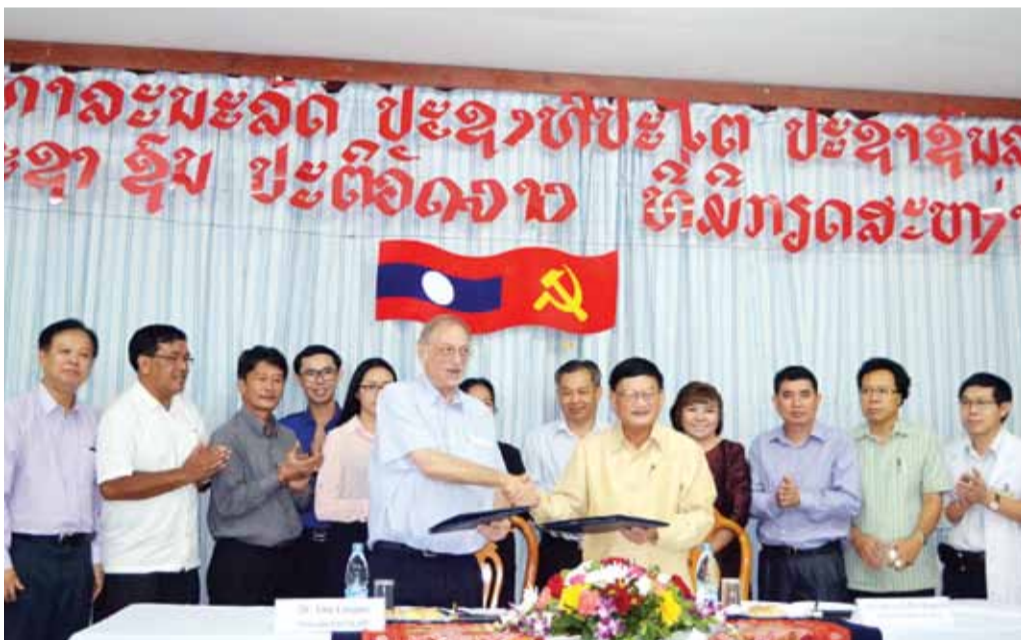
MAG's WRA funded operations will undertake land release in 48 villages and 16 focal development areas.

The second project will be funded by a grant from the UK government's Department for International Development of almost US\$1.7 million (over 13

billion kip) with a contribution of US\$66,000 (over 534 million kip) from MAG Headquarters in the UK.

The funds will be used for survey and clearance work in Xieng Khuang province over a period of 21 months. There is also an extensive Mine Risk Education element which will target school age children in particular.

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Dr Urs Lauper (left) shakes hands with Associate Professor Dr Bouavanh Saensathit after signing the project agreement.

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