

Meeting on Support to Official Statistics for Mother and Child related activities and the use of LaoInfo / DevInfo v6.0

Source: UNICEF Lao PDR

A high level meeting to discuss the use of LaoInfo / DevInfo v6.0 was co-hosted by the National Commission for Mothers and Children (NCMC) and Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) was held on 5 April 2010 at Don Chan Palace, Vientiane, Lao PDR.

The Meeting on Support to Official Statistics for Mother and Child related activities was honorable chaired by H.E Mr. Somsavat LENGSAVAD, Standing Deputy Prime Minister, Chairman of the NCMC, and attended by Government officials, the Members of NCMC and representatives from international organizations.

In the remark by the chairman of the meeting, H.E. Mr. Somsavat said that the Lao Government has declared that support to mothers and children is an important part of the social policy of the Government. A presentation on the Lao National Statistics System was done and emphasized on gather, collect and make use of official statistics to track progress of mothers and children situation. Introduced LaoInfo/DevInfo software to audience as a monitoring tool is one of the main purposes for this meeting. The Government was adopted the National Statistics Development Strategy 2010-2020 (NSDS) and also was agreed to propose the Draft of Statistics Law to the National Assembly in June 2010 for approval. These two documents are critical for strengthening of the National Statistics System and providing official statistics database of mothers and children related activities. He also pointed out that the meeting is held in a crucial period as the Government is in the process of ending the 6th National Social Economic Development Plan (2006-2010) (NSED) implementation and formulating the 7th NSED (2011-2015). The 7th NSED will aim at achieving high growth and strengthening responses related to the social sectors including through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The 7th Plan also looks towards Lao PDR graduating from Least Developed Countries (LDC) status by 2020.

During the discussion, participants focused on the use of LaoInfo by decision-makers and strategies to strengthen national statistics system for collection of high quality, reliable, disaggregated and time data as well as coordination of statistics in support of monitoring the progress of MDG-based 7th NSED. LaoInfo will increasingly enable data dissemination and provide policy makers with easier access to data for decision-making.

LaoInfo, localised version of DevInfo, has been introduced to National Statistical System of Lao PDR since 2004 with support of UN agencies, namely UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF with the aim of monitoring the progress towards the achievement of MDGs and other socio-economic indicators in the 6th NSED. The latest version of LaoInfo 5.0 was released in 2009, collating data from the including Population Census 1995 and 2005, Lao Reproductive Health Survey 2000 and 2005, and Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey 3 2006. The Government aims to upgrade LaoInfo to v.6 in 2010.

The Government presented a five year plan outlining the key actions towards strengthening the implementation of LaoInfo under the leadership of Department of Statistics (MPI) who will work in close collaboration with the line Ministries.

Congratulating the Government for hosting this meeting, Ms. Sonam Yangchen Rana, UN Resident Coordinator in Lao PDR, said LaoInfo will enable the Government to collect, organise and share essential data across various Government ministries including at the provincial and district levels. Ms. Sonam confirmed the continued commitment of the UN agencies to work together with the Government in further supporting the use of LaoInfo, but also in addressing critical development issues under the framework of 7th NSEDP and MDGs including poverty, nutrition, maternal and child mortality, food security, gender equality, environmental sustainability and potential consequences of global issues such as climate change and economic crisis.

Referring to UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-Moon's remarks during his visit in Vientiane in 2009, Ms. Sonam emphasised the greater focus on quality and sustainability of growth and investment in the social sectors in Lao PDR in the coming years to achieve MDGs and graduating from LDC status. LaoInfo will make a critical contribution to strengthening the Government's capacity to monitor the results of growth and investment.