



Union Aid Abroad-APHEDA Lao PDR

Summary paper on Asbestos Situation and APHEDA projects in Lao PDR For ABAN annual conference 2015 6-7 September, 2015, in Hanoi, Vietnam

Lao team:

- (1) Mr. Khampasong Siharath-Country Manager of Union Aid Abroad APHEDA
- (2) Dr. Bounthome Samountry- Pathologist, Vice Dean of Basic Sciences, Deputy of the division of Pathology Academic Affairs and Research, MOH
- (3) Mr. Thongphim Vongrapha, Head of OHS Division, LFTU
- (4) Mr. Vilakone NOUKHAIYANGKONGJI- MOIC

Introduction

- i. General information about Laos
- ii. Information about Asbestos in Lao PDR
- iii. APHEDA Projects and partners in Lao PDR
 - a. Partners capacity development
 - b. Employers and workers awareness raising through information sharing and training program
 - c. Chemical law support and development
 - d. National Asbestos Profile development
- iv. Challenges
- v. Future action plan

I. General information about Laos

- Laos is a least developed country in South East Asia and has a total land of 236,800 sq km
- The population of Laos is around 6.9 M (2014)
- Laos has been moving to a market-oriented economy since the 1990s, and promoted FDI..
- The govt of Laos aims to reach market economy and achieve the industrialized status by 2020
- The labour force – around 3,69 M. more than 2 M. under 18 years old.
- Main industries and labor force - by occupation (2012 est.):
 - Agriculture: 73.1%
 - Industry: 13-14%
 - Services: 20.6%
- Poverty rate 22% (2013)
- 1/3 of the population live under the poverty line of US\$ 1.5/day
- GDP – 7.40% (2014)
 - GDP per capital – US\$ 793.94
 - GDP per capital (PPP) – US\$ 4,924.95



Ref:

- *First Labour Force and Child Labour Surveys (ILO) 2010* http://www.ilo.org/asia/info/public/pr/WCMS_202297/lang--en/index.htm
- UNDP <http://www.la.undp.org/content/laopdr/en/home/countryinfo/>
- Lao GDP <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/laos/gdp>

II. Information about Asbestos in Lao PDR

- Since 2012 – The govt. of Laos issued regulation to ban Blue and Brown Asbestos. Chrysotile restricts use and prohibited to build new roof tile factory.
- Chrysotile is used mainly for roofing tiles. No national mapping and figures of where else it is used for other products.
- Chrysotile is imported from Kazakhstan, Russia, China

No.	Year (Oct.-Sep.)	Chrysotile (Tones)
1	2009-2010	3,375
2	2010-2011	5,003
3	2011-2012	5,345
4	2012-2013	8,066
	Total	21,789

III. APHEDA and partners in Lao PDR

Laos opens country to move for market economy and aims to become the industrialized country by 2020. Therefore, roof tile factories (15 factories) established that are one part of the socio-economic development. ACTU has provided support through Union Aid APHEDA to assist Laos to begin Asbestos campaign project and instantly stop using Asbestos since 2010. Most of roof sheet factory workers have never known that they are working with silent killer. APHEDA has been working with three main partners on the Asbestos campaign including the Lao Federation of Trade Union (LFTU), Ministry of Industry and Handicraft (MOIC) and Ministry of Health (MOH) since 2010.

IV. APHEDA and partners project activities in Lao PDR

a. Partners capacity development

- APHEDA has provided support for the government partners' capacity development through training, study tour, workshops and information sharing among countries in Asia Countries (Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Korea, Bangladesh, Japan, Thai, Australia and etc)
- Develop networking ABAN, TBAN, VBAN and getting technical support from neighboring countries e.g. VGCL

b. Employers and workers awareness raising through information sharing and training program

- LFTU conducted training on the danger of Asbestos and how to protect themselves from hazardous disease for workers and employers in 14 roof tile factories (350-400 young workers).
- LFTU provided the impact of Asbestos via media program e.g. TV, Radio, newspapers, leaflets, posters, and providing PPE.

c. Data survey to support NAPL

- LFTU conducted data survey in 10 roof sheet factories in 9 provinces e.g. size of factory, type of investment [domestic/FDI], figures of imported Asbestos, and history of workers..
- MOIC conducted survey about the figures of Asbestos imported and main supplied countries and materials contained hazardous substance in 10 customers' office in immigration borders.
- MOH conducted survey on lung cancers in 9 main hospitals in 6 big cities in Laos.

- d. **Technical back up support** from neighboring e.g. VGCL, Japan, Thai, Australia to develop knowledge of govt. partners and networking development.
- e. **Established the Asbestos Technical Working Group [AWG] in 2013**
 - o Establish AWG including 8 ministries and institutions e.g. MOIC, LFTU, MOH, National Cancer Center, Food/Drug Department, MOLSW, MONRE and MoF.
- f. **Develop a National Asbestos Profile**
 - o MOIC with collaboration with AWG and getting technical support by neighboring technical experts to complete the draft of NAPL and this will be finalized by end of 2015.
- g. **Support Chemical Law development**
 - o APHEDA has supported MOIC to develop the 1st chemical law in Laos. Law will also cover and support the Asbestos elimination strategy as well. Anticipating getting the approval by the National Assembly by December 2015. <http://laotradeportal.gov.la/index.php?r=site/display&iid=888>
- h. **Develop a National Strategy on the Elimination of Asbestos from 2015-** APHEDA has already initially talked with MOIC and AWG to set up the national strategy for the elimination of Asbestos with collaboration with Vietnam and other neighboring countries and ABAN networking.

V. Challenges

- o There is no any particular rule and regulation to manage the imported and used of asbestos.

- Some of legal information and figures to put in the NAPL are unclear and not consent among ministries (Rare to find scientific evidence)
- A few information about the Asbestos related disease disseminated to the public
- Employers and workers have very few knowledge about asbestos and its impact [ARD].
- Few government official have knowledge and information about the danger and impact of Asbestos substance
- There is no any institution, specialist, researcher can conduct the diagnosis to provide scientific evidence and prove occupational diseases, particularly ARD.
- Take time for Asbestos banning due to FDI booming and govt. strategic plan for country development [sensitive issues if we do not have any scientific evidence to prove that]
- There is still unclear information between banning group and business groups that made key implementing partners confusion [high lobbying from challenger sites].

VI. Future action plan

- Continue support MOIC to finalize the Chemical Law of Laos by end of 2015
- Continue supporting AWG to collect data to update and develop NAPL
- Support MOIC and AWG to compile and finalize the NAPL by 2015
- Share information and exchange study on Asbestos elimination process with regional and global Asbestos networks.
- Require back up technical support from regional/global Asbestos networks [joint regional scientific research program]
- Participate annual meeting e.g. ABAN annual meeting, training and other workshop in the region.
- Provide information to increase public awareness raising on the danger of ARD and govt. institutions via media, training, website and National Assembly

- Develop a National Strategic and Action Plan on Elimination Asbestos around 2017 to go along with other neighboring country