



National Consultation
South-South Economic Cooperation
Exploring Mekong-Ganga Relationship
25 August 2005, Vientiane Capital, Laos

Objectives:

- To discuss the key findings of the research study presenting the Lao perspective on Trade & Investment between Laos and India.
- To create a network of stakeholders who will exchange regular information on ground realities about trade and investment cooperation between Laos and India.

Background & Context:

India and Laos signed a contract on economy and trade cooperation on November 9, 2000, and the contract has been in effect since December 21, 2001. The relationship on trade between India and Laos in the past has shown that some businessmen of India propose sales of some products, namely agricultural machinery, electronic equipment, medicine, computer, office appliances, and others. India also shows interest on purchasing some products from Laos, such as phosphate, precious stones, wood products, (namman yang), and etc. Besides, there are some interests on establishing weaving factory, cement factory, and vegetable oil factory in the Lao P.D.R. The products that Laos currently exports to India is very limited, only some mineral. The total trade between Laos and India in 2002 was 60,219 US dollars while the import from India was 40,219 US dollars, and export value was only US \$18,000

Trade relationship between Laos and India has not been expanded as it should have been. This is due to the fact that there is difficulty in transportation; the product of India has not yet been widely known in Lao market; and the communication between Lao and Indian businessmen has not been well-cooperated.

The overall atmosphere of trade and investment between Laos and India has shown that basic foundation has been laid out at the government level. Many MOU and contracts have been signed and both governments have agreed many different issues regarding trade and investments. The implementation, however, is still very slow-moving, perhaps due to the lack of information dissemination to the public and business sectors.

The obstacles on the expansion of trade and commercial relation between Laos and India are on the nature of small market in Laos with its land lock position that create extremely high freight charges, particularly on land transportation from Bangkok to Vientiane. According to the Embassy of India, the lack of resourceful local private enterprise and unwillingness on the part of Indian business to launch an aggressive campaign with a long-term perspective is another problem.

The Event:

To involve civil society representatives, academicians, business chambers and government & inter-governmental organizations in interactive sessions so as to take on board diverse views on trade and investment between Laos and India.

The Programme

Thursday, August 25, 2005

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| 9:00 | Registration |
| 9:30- 10:00 | Inaugural Session |
| 10:00-10:15 | Tea break |
| 10:15-12:00 | Exploring Mekong-Ganga Relationship – Trade and Investment |
| 12:00-13:00 | Lunch |
| 13:00- 14:00 | Exploring Mekong-Ganga Relationship – Transport Infrastructure |
| 1400-1500 | Exploring Mekong-Ganga Relationship – Towards a Perspective |
| 1500 | Closing remarks |

Venue: Faculty of Economics and Business Management
Meeting Room

Organised By:

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Invited Guests

Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Commerce
Ministry of Industry and Handicraft
Ministry of Agriculture
Committee for Planning and Cooperation
Chamber of Commerce
Embassy of India
Embassy of Cambodia
Embassy of Vietnam
Ministry of Education
15 state and private enterprises