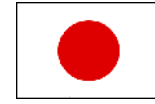


Press Release

The Embassy of Japan to the Lao PDR



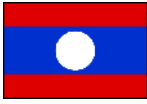
17 March 2016

Vientiane Capital Water Supply Expansion Project supported by Japanese Government

Vientiane, 17th March 2016 - The exchange of notes for the Vientiane Capital Water Supply Expansion project was signed at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Vientiane between H.E. Mr. Takeshi Hikihara, Ambassador of Japan to the Lao PDR, and H.E. Mrs. Khamphao Ernthavanh, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Lao PDR. The ceremony was witnessed by H.E. Mr. Keophilavanh Aphaylath, Vice-Mayor of Vientiane Capital, H.E. Mr. Masahiko Shibayama, Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Japan, and other officials. This project will be implemented by a concessional loan, which amounts to 10.3 billion Japanese yen (approximately 90 million US dollar).

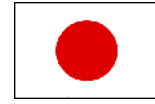


The population in Vientiane Capital is rapidly increasing and is expected to exceed one million by 2020. With the rapid economic growth and urban population increase, an expansion of water supply production capacity is urgently needed. The water supply sector has been one of the priority sectors for Japan's development cooperation to Laos. Therefore, Japan not only constructed the water treatment plants in Vientiane Capital and provinces, but also extended technical cooperation, by dispatching Japanese experts and officers from local governments in Japan to improve the residents' sanitary conditions and promote industrial development. However, some water treatment plants are already deteriorating with age and have been forced to produce above their capacity.



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H.E. Mr. Shibayama mentioned in his speech that, “A safe and steady water supply is fundamental to socio-economic activities and people’s livelihoods and forms the base of human security. This project requires sophisticated techniques. Japanese cooperation, under the initiative known as 'quality infrastructure partnership,' is indispensable to implement this project. It is my great pleasure to witness the signing of the Exchange of Notes today, which will commence the implementation of the project.”

He went on to say, “Japan-Laos relations have been elevated to a 'strategic partnership' on the occasion of the 60th year anniversary of diplomatic relations, and are now at an all-time high. Prime Minister Abe would like to share Japan’s know-how and techniques and contribute to the 'high-quality growth' of the Lao PDR. We plan to steadily implement our cooperation and work together with the Lao PDR, in the spirit of our mutual commitment to growth.”

Last year, Prime Minister Abe announced “quality infrastructure partnership” and “industrial human resource development cooperation initiatives” that Japan is developing in Asia. This project, implemented under the framework of “quality infrastructure partnership,” aims to reduce poverty and help the Lao PDR graduate from least-developed country status in 2020 as targeted in the 8th national socio-economic development plan of the Lao PDR.

H.E. Mr. Sibayama mentioned that Laos has become the first country to assume the ASEAN chair following the launch of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), and concluded, “Japan will spare no efforts to extend our assistance to the Lao PDR as ASEAN chair in achieving success in its eight Lao priority areas and in its overall role as chair, through its assistance to improving regional connectivity and developing human resources. Japan will continue to further strengthen the strategic partnership with the Lao PDR.”