



PRESS NOTE

The Government, EU and UNICEF launch the National Information Platforms for Nutrition in Laos

Vientiane, 5 October 2018 – The Vice Minister of Planning and Investment, H.E Dr. Kikeo Chanthaboury, launched today the National Information Platforms for Nutrition (NIPN) which aims at strengthening information systems for nutrition to prevent malnutrition and its consequences. This is an international initiative of the European Union with support from the United Kingdom Department for International development (DFID) and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to be implemented in the Lao PDR by UNICEF.

This nutrition information system will generate quality data, perform analyses, track progress and use the information for policy development, contributing to expanding and scaling up effective programmes, and allocating more public funding for nutrition activities. Thanks to this information platform children will benefit from better results.

“The establishment and use of the NIPN initiative will help the Lao PDR to strengthen national capacity to manage and analyse information and data from all sectors which have an influence on nutrition, to track progress, and to disseminate and use information to better inform the policies and strategic decisions that prevent undernutrition and its consequences,” H.E Dr. Chanthaboury said at the launch event.

The overall goal of NIPN is to contribute to the global reduction of stunting (chronic undernutrition) in alignment with the World Health Assembly 2025 targets. Particularly, this initiative will strengthen capacities in the Lao PDR to monitor progress towards under nutrition reduction, contributing to implement more cost-effective and evidence-based policies.

According to the Lao Social Indicator Survey (LSIS-II, 2017), stunting has decreased from 44 per cent in LSIS-I to 33 per cent. Despite this positive downward trend, significant disparities remain across the 18 provinces. Between 2015 (Lao Child Anthropometric Assessment Survey) and 2017, a slight but not significant decrease has occurred in the prevalence of children under 5 years of age who suffer from wasting or acute malnutrition (low weight for height) from 9.6 per cent to 9.0 per cent.

“Strengthening the multi-sectoral approach to combat all forms of malnutrition is also dependent on the availability of nutrition information and related systems. It is an essential step to establish a national information platform that has the capabilities to generate information for policy dialogue and debate and that will contribute significantly to how nutrition programmes can be improved to meet changing conditions and the future context,” stated H.E Mr. Leo Faber, Ambassador of the European Union to the Lao PDR.

Comprehensive data generated from the NIPN will be the basis for the National Nutrition Committee's Annual Progress Report on the implementation of the National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action to 2020 (NNSPA) and monitoring and reporting of the 8th National Socio-economic Development Plan, Sustainable Development Goals and Scaling Up Nutrition movement, monitoring. This will also provide significant information for monitoring and reporting of SDGs.

"The information collected through NIPN will feed into the annual National Nutrition Forums, Round Table Meetings and review meetings. With this system in place, we will be able to maximize the analysis and interpretation of existing information and data on nutrition to understand better the factors that influence it," explained Octavian Bivol, UNICEF Representative, Lao PDR.

This NIPN initiative will be an integral part of the Government nutrition programme, which is supported and implemented jointly by EU Delegation and UNICEF in the context of their Partnership for Improved Nutrition in the Lao PDR in support of the National Nutrition Strategy to 2025 and Plan of Action 2016-2020. The NIPN project will be implemented by the Ministry of Planning and Investment and the National Economic Research Institute (NIER) with support from related line ministries and partners over a 4-year period from 2018 – 2021.

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