

UXO clearance group explains its work

□ PHOONSAB THEVONGSA

THE Mines Advisory Group (MAG) Lao hosted an informal gathering for those working in the field of unexploded ordnance (UXO) and mine clearance on Monday at the French Language Centre.

The event was based around the theme "Six things you might not know about MAG Lao" and included demonstrations, displays and a documentary film presentation.

"MAG is unique in that we are involved in numerous activities in the UXO sector, not only in the physical process of clearing ordnance," said MAG Lao's Communications Official, Lin Syphavong. "And we held this event to get that message across."

Highlights from a new Australian documentary film entitled *Bomb Harvest* were also shown. Produced by Lemur Films during 2006-2007, the film features MAG staff working alongside UXO Lao staff in southern Laos.

To the delight of the audience, three stars from the film - two Lao and one Australian - were present for the showing.

Guests included government and embassy staff, NGO and donor representatives, specialists from the UXO sector,

and members of the Lao business community.

Members of the public interested in the group's work are welcome to visit the UXO Visitor Information Centre at the MAG Vientiane office, on Fa Ngum Rd, 200 metres upstream from the Mekong River Commission.

According to UXO Lao, MAG projects have seen the removal of unexploded ordnance in the provinces of Xieng Khuang, Khammuan and Saravan, since they were first begun in 2004.

Laos is one of the most heavily bombed countries in the world, suffering from intense ground combat and aerial bombardments during the Indochina War.

Over 580,000 bombing missions run by American war planes, dropped more than two million tonnes of ordnance on Lao soil during the 1960's and 70's.

MAG is currently working in 11 countries, including Iraq, Sudan, and Cambodia. The organisation's aim is to save lives and build futures in some of the world's most vulnerable communities, by removing the physical threat posed by landmines and unexploded bombs, which in turn frees more land for agricultural and commercial use.



Laos aims for

□ KHAMPHONE SYVONGXAY

THE Agriculture Department is reviewing almost 60 years of implementation of the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) in Laos for the improvement of disease control measures and pest resistance.

Officials from the ministries of Agriculture and Forestry and Public Health and experts from the Commonwealth Agriculture Bureau International met on Tuesday at the Novotel in Vientiane to plan the best

application of plant protection measures in Laos.

The meeting was held to review previous quarantine, inspection and protection methods.

Reaching international standards in phytosanitary measures in Laos is important for the development of the quarantine and protection department, Mr Phannourath.

He said the department will help the commercial agriculture sector to be more competitive.

Manual to inform

□ XAYXANA LEUKAI

THE International Labour Organisation (ILO) has launched a new 'Code of Practice' manual on HIV/AIDS with special relevance for the workplace, aiming to raise awareness for employees and employers.

Approximately 50 manuals have been provided to officials from the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, the Lao Trade Union and the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

These books will be used to inform workers and managers of the dangers of HIV/AIDS and how to deal with it in the workplace by counselling, training and through the provision of better information.

"These books can help staff understand how to protect themselves from this deadly epidemic, to reduce the impact on business, workers and their families and society," said the Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Mr Laoly Faiphengyoua, at a Workshop



A man examines HIV/AIDS manual.

on HIV/AIDS in the Lao PDR in Vientiane on Monday.

He thanked the ILO for funding the publishing of the manuals and transferring the material into Lao. "The Lao trainers to give the message about HIV/AIDS to employees, employers,

Vientiane library celebrates

□ OUNKHAM PIMMATA

THE Vientiane Library celebrated its first anniversary on Saturday with a day of activities for all library users and a review of its progress since December last year, when it opened to the public.

The event was supported by the Japanese Aichi Children's Home

with more than 80,000 people, 1,700 members, have the library's reading room to develop their knowledge and the Director General of the Department of Public Information, Ministry of Information and Culture, Mr Sivongkeo Konnivorong.

Mr Siviengkheo Konnivorong said the library was working to