



**Report on Lao Civil Society's Participation  
the ASEAN Peoples' Forum 2016 (ACSC/APF12)  
from 2-5 Aug 2016 in Dili, Timor Leste**

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## I. Overview

The ASEAN Civil Society Conference/ASEAN People's Forum (ACSC/APF) 2016 took place in Dili, Timor Leste from 2-5 August 2016. The event, attended by over 850 delegates civil society representatives from 11 countries of South East Asia. It provided a unique networking opportunity for civil society organisations from the ASEAN nations to discuss ASEAN processes and common issues facing their people, and aims to strengthen solidarity and unity of voices, concerns and recommendations of civil society and people in the ASEAN region. A united voice of over 850 people from civil society was presented in a Joint Statement covering issues including development; human rights; women's empowerment; youth; child protection; poverty eradication; climate change; social protection and health; agriculture; environmental issue; land reform; the rights of migrant workers, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities etc.

## II. Detail about Lao CSOs participation ACSC/APF2016

### 2.1 Lao CSO's delegations

Lao CSO's participants for attending the APF2016 in Timor Leste were selected by Lao APF Committee in cooperation with Lao APF Secretariat. The Lao APF Secretariat did an announcement for interested candidates on its website and sent email to its networkgooglegroups. After that the APF Committee screened and selected participants based on criteria and available budget. Total participants selected are 22 people both from Vientiane and other provinces (see list of them attached). It was an independent selection (MOHA/MOFA did not involve in this selection)

### 2.2 Donors

Lao APF Secretariat and LDA was the lead in fundraising from different donors by sent out emails and requests to more than 15 INGO's donors and development partners who are based in Laos and oversea. Finally we received support confirmation from some of them as in the table below:

No	Donor	Amount (US\$)	Remark
1	Helvetas(supports throughLDA for 2 person)	4,000	ContractwithLDA
2	UN RCOffice (UN Team) - 2 person	4,000	UNpaiddirectly
3	International Republican Institute (IRI) - 9person	25,000	Contract with LDA and paid
4	Regional APF Secretariat/Scholarship - 5 person	7,500	Theypaiddirectly
5	The Women's Caucus - 1person	2,000	Theypaiddirectly

6	AVCD (self-funding) - 3 person	6,000	They paid directly
	<b>Total : 22 person</b>	<b>48,500</b>	

### 2.3 Objectives of Lao CSOs on ACSC/APF2016:

- 1) To strengthen within Lao civil society by the joint preparation and participation in the relevant APF events including follow up workshop after each ACSC/APF, and better equipped and prepared to host a positive and successful ACSC/APF future in the Lao PDR
- 2) Strengthen the networking among Lao CSOs and ASEAN's CSO country members, particularly sharing the experience together in thematic workshops
- 3) To follow up and dissemination of the APF's achievements/outcomes and lessons learnt to partners, stakeholders, donors and other NPAs who weren't attend this APF

#### Progress against objective and output

##### Summary of achievements against objective 1

Lao CSO delegates have increased their knowledge on APF and ASEAN through the joint participation in relevant APF workshops and plenary sessions which organised before their departure to Timor Leste on 22nd July in Vientiane and during the APF2016 events in Timor Leste. They learnt from each other's experiences, learnt from CSO member countries how do they organise themselves (organisation of events, methodology, planning, share responsibility, implementation, decision making, solving problems etc.)

##### Summary of achievements against objective 2

Lao CSO's participants have met, discussed and exchanged with ASEAN's CSO colleagues at the relevant regional platforms or panel sessions and strengthened their networking with them. The Lao APF Committee and Lao APF Secretariat will be the representing of Lao CSO to coordinate with ASEAN's CSO networks and APF regional secretariat to make sure that Lao CSOs have meaningful participation in the next APF2017 in the Philippines. The ToRs of Lao APF Committee and Secretariat will be reviewed by Lao CSO's members. After the APF conference the 9 Lao delegates which sponsored by IRI stayed one more day in Timor Leste on the 6th August for a post-APF2016 workshop with IRI's Officers in Dili to feedback on their achievements/expectations and visited some other of IRI's partners organisations there. On the 7th August they visited and exchanged experience with JSMP, Timor's CSO for expanding their networking

##### Summary of achievements against objective 3

The information sharing and consultation workshop between Lao CSOs and development partners on Lao CSOs participation at the APF2016 in Timor-Leste and prepare to attend the APF2017 in the Philippines was organised on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016 at the Lao CSO Network

meeting room. The workshop was attended more than 39 people, 21 female from Government, Embassies, United Nation, INGOs, and NPAs. At the workshop we presented APF2016 outcome/achievement and distributed the APF2016 report to partners, donors, and Lao CSO's members. The report focusing on APF2016 outcomes, lesson learns, challenges and key recommendations shared with meeting participants and those Lao CSOs who weren't attend APF2016 in Timor Leste

We hope the report will make them better understanding APF's activities and the important of common goals and joining hand between Governments and CSOs in the ASEAN countries. It is hoped that by coordination and meaningful participation of the civil society in ASEAN People Forum and with support from partners, donors and government will improve Lao CSO members' knowledge on ASEAN and APF for future strong civil society leaders.

## **Lao CSOs Participation in the thematic working groups and presentations**

### **2.5.1 Participation of Lao CSO's Committee:**

- Dr. Maydom Chanthanasih, Lao CSO Chairman was honourable invited as a Co-chair for opening the ACSC/APF2016 together with Mr. Jerald Joseph, and Mr. Fernando a host from Timor Leste

Dr. Maydom was the second person speaks after the host speech. He speaks on behalf of ASEAN CSOs expressed appreciation to the people and government of Timor Leste... and on behalf of Lao CSOs clarified and answered questions why this ACSC/APF2016 does not held in Laos (for more detail see in the APF2016 agenda and his speech attached)

- Lao CSO's Committee was participated in the Regional Steering Committee (RSC) meeting for their inputs to the APF2016 joint statement, participated in drafting and joining the press conference
- Participated in in the meeting and give inputs to the research statement of Ms. Corinna. Due to too many people commented and asked many questions makes time not enough, thus Lao CSO Committee have to discuss, put their comments in the paper and sent their short inputs about GONGOS and SONGOs to Ms. Corinna and regional secretariat later (fyi see attachment of DR. MAYDOM's comment and reflection on Ms. Corinna's Research Paper/THESIS)

### **2.5.2 Participation of other Lao CSO's delegates:**

#### **Large scale hydropower dams and climate change:**

This topic was presented by CSO Representatives from lower Mekong countries, Vietnam and Cambodia. They said that the international hydropower dam specialists don't want people to construct the hydropower dams, mining, and cutting forests due to worry about the impacts on the living of the affected population. They want people to do other alternative for living e.g. eco-tourist etc. Lao oversea said that in Laos still constructing hydropower dams, mining etc. and don't care about negative impacts to target populations, and people are still poor and have no freedom to express and against this construction...

The presenters raised the construction of Xayabuly and Donesahong dams in Laos that the resettlement and compensation to the effected population was not fair as needed due to there was no proper communication with the effected population in the areas. For this matter, Lao delegates and Dr. Maydom Chanthanasinh explained and clarified to the meeting that there were negatives and positives impact to the target population there. As fact, the positive impacts are more than negatives, therefore the international hydropower dam specialists agreed for Laos to construct those dams with advices that Lao have to be careful implement, respect, and support and well compensate for those affected population. Therefore we will do our best as agreed and advised of the international hydropower dam specialists

#### **Democracy and Human Right working group:**

In this group the presenter asked participants to comment on the Global Bill of Right, Version 11 which consisted of 2 parts and 34 articles. For this matter, Lao delegates have no objection and agreed with that law.

In addition, the meeting was discussed also about the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) that Laos was agreed and accepted, but there is one Clause of UPR that Lao still not sign yet "Clause on Force Disappearance"

Beside attending the mentioned above working groups, Lao CSO's delegates also attended below working groups and topics:

Humanity and Natural: Traditional, Cultural and Alternative Perspectives on Humanity's Relationship with Nature; Capacity Building for Human Right Solidarity – Priorities and Strategies; ASEAN Youth communication; situation of people with disabilities; and the living condition of the people in the lover Mekong River

#### **2.5.3 Lao CSO's Speakers**

Mrs. Khankham Douangvila presented on Role of CSOs on Land Management in Laos – land use conflict and lose right

Ms. Vanna Chomsavanh and Ms. Sookswwhy Lavongcam presented topic "Youths of Vocational and Drugs Addictive", gender equity and child discrimination

Lao prepared 6 speakers, but Mr. Amphone Souvannalath didn't present due to no workshop organised on his topic; Mr. Khampha Keoanichanh couldn't come due to of his emediated sickness; Mr. Thongdam Phongphichit couldn't come due to busy with other urgent international meeting which conflicting schedule

In general Lao Speakers were well presented at the relevant working groups even their prepared topics were not match with the content of the relevant working groups but they enable immediately adjusted and adapted according to the need e.g. Mrs. Khankham Doungsila had changed her presentation's name and content according to the need of the working group

## **2.5 Lao CSOs participated the APF Strategic Workshop in Malaysia, 24-26 October 2016**

After the APF in Timor Leste ASEAN CSOs discussed APF Strategic: ACSC/APF moves forward with 2 sets of Strategic Directions:

- Engaging ASEAN and ASEAN Governments Effectively (where is a place for Timor) and how to engage?
- Effectiveness of ACSC/APF of its nature, Participation and Governance of CSOs in ASEAN

Participants: 60 persons attending the workshop, 5 from each member state, plus Timor Lesle; and 5 from Regional Steering Committee

Chair and Co-chairs: Mr. Jerald, Regional Secretariat; Mr. Fernando, Past APF2016 (Timor Leste); and Mr. Boy, Future APF2017 (Philippines)

Delegates from Laos are:

Mr. Cher Her, President of Vulnerable Children & Community Development Association (AVCD), as RSC

Dr. Chansy Phimpachanh, Chair of Planning Family Health Association (PFHA)

Mr. Khanthone Phameuang, President of Environment Conservation & Community Development Association (ECCDA)

Mr. Amphone Souvannalath, Director of Rural Mobilisation & Improvement Association (ARMI)

Mr. Thipmangkone Soulinthong, Asistant of Lao-CSO-Network (and Assistant Head of Lao APF Secretariat)

Main objectives of the workshop: to study the final report of "South East Asia People's Engagement Towards a People-Centred ASEAN: A 10 Years Review of the ASEAN Civil Society Conference ACSC/ASEAN People's Forum 2005-2015", especially its

recommendations to chart a workable 10 years plan for the future of CSO effective engagement with ASEAN

## **2.6 General outcome**

- Lao delegates well participated in relevant discussion groups, and learnt many things from their participation in APF2016. It was the first time for most of them and they were very impressive. They have increased their understanding on APF and ASEAN through the joint participation in relevant APF workshops and plenary sessions during the APF2016 events. They saw and gained new experience in organisation of such big international event e.g. coordination, organisation process, steps, ceremony, preparation of meeting rooms, documentation, cultural exchange, host dinner etc.
- Lao APF Committee planned for Lao CSOs to attend the ACSC/APF2016 in Timor Leste at least 16 delegates, but in actual there were 22 people participated due to team fundraising was well organised on time

## **2.8 Lessons learnt**

- Lao CSOs increased knowledge and capacities in broads and learnt on how to prepare to participate and organise events at national and regional e.g.
  - Need more time to prepare in advance: fundraising, identify suitable speakers and prepare their presentatinos, coordination with organisers and regional secretariat etc.
  - Learnt from each member countries how do they organised themselves (methodology, planning, share responsibility, implementation, decision making, solving problems etc.)
  - Specific learnt on other networking (using network as planform for coordination and sharing of information and experiences)

## **2.9 Challenges/ Difficulties**

- Every year Lao CSO have to do the fundraising and select new Lao CSO's candidates to participate the ACSC/APF which based on availability budget. For this year most of selected participants are new to APF and ASEAN and therefore most of them lack of information and knowledge about APF and other updated information about ASEAN
- Most of selected participants for ACSC/APF2016 have medium of English proficiency and therefore they were not confident in asking questions/comment and speak out

- Lao APF Committee planned for 6 speakers to present at the ACSC/APF2016, but in actual only 2 person presented due to they were not in time selected their presenting topics; and not so well coordinated with regional programme committee

## **2.10 Conclusion**

The contribution and supports from Helvetas; International Republican Institute (IRI); UN Team; Regional Secretariat and other donors made Lao CSOs to implement many of the APF activities in the programme and enable for them to attend the ACSC/ASEAN People Forum in Timor Leste from 2-5August 2016. We are very much appreciated and thanks for those donors

The programme shows strong indication of having raised the knowledge and understanding of the APF and ASEAN. It contributed to building the capacity of many Lao CSO members on organisation of relevant APF events and networking. However, much remains to be done to sustain the momentum made so far and to expand the reach of many of these initiatives. We hoped our above donors and other development partners will continue to support filling the gap for Lao CSO Network and the programme over a longer period in order to strengthen their capabilities and to provide a safe space for Lao CSOs to convene and discuss ways to enhance their involvement in APF and ASEAN events

### **General finding on Lao CSO participation in APF2016**

Compare with previous APF, this time Lao CSO have more discipline of organisation and preparation to attend the said event. Prior to the 2016 APF/ACSC in Timor-Leste, Lao APF Secretariat, LDA and Committee facilitated a training and guidance for selected participants on readiness and understanding of APF and ASEAN in order to strengthen their capacity to engage with CSOs in ASEAN's countries and shared responsibilities (preparation of their action plans and presentations)

They were active and accountable for their assignments; solidarity among them and with other ASEAN CSOs countries (networking) in order to make them understand more about Lao CSO situation and willingness

In addition, in this ACSC/APF2016 we found that:

- Case of Sombath Somphone disappearance also was not the main question like last year (they talk only in a small room with attendance of about 13 people, 5 are Lao and other remaining are Timor Lestes)
- Lao overseas delegates (the majorities are from USA and Europe) are more cooperated, understood and less complaining Lao government and CSOs. In this year they didn't show up their flag with three head of elephant in the plenary session again
- Lao CSO delegates were not join the solidarity protest with Timor Lestes at the Australian Embassy due to sea right's problem

## **2.11. Recommendation**

AACSC/APF becoming more popular among Lao CSOs and attract them to participate and exchange with ASEAN CSOs. Thus we recommended to donors, DPs, Govt and Lao APF Committee as below:

- To government body (MOHA, MOFA, IFA): more collaboration and support Lao CSOs both support funds and advice and understanding that that APF is a CSO's event, thus the participation of Lao CSOs should be freedom participation and expression
- To DPs/donors: to support funds for Lao CSOs on time as requested in order to implement of the APF planned workshops to design a strategic plan for Lao CSO participation in the APF2017 especially IRI who has already committed to support Lao CSOs due to we want in time invite local or regional ASEAN CSO leaders to the workshop, who will help identify and develop a plan to address regional issue areas for Lao CSOs and to help on the development of Lao CSO Speakers and Penalists for their readiness to participate and speak at the APF2017
- Lao APF Committee: In order to overcome the weaknesses and turn ownership of Lao CSO to join the ACSC/APF2017 in the Philippines. We proposed that the Lao APF Organizing, Steering, Program, and Drafting Committees should be well prepared before attending the APF2017 such as the information about APF and ASEAN; should seek for support funds in advance and well identify the representatives to participate in each panel sessions and speakers/moderators in the relevant workshop
- The selection of Lao CSO representatives to participate the ACSC/APF2017 should more focus on those who used to participate in the last ACSC/APF2016 in Timor Leste and those who are active and have of English proficiency. If cannot find the qualified representatives who have of English proficiency then translator is needed
- Full time for APF focal point person or public communication need to be discussed and seek for financial support

## **III. Financial report**

The Lao APF Secretariat team and LDA received support funds from IRI; Helvetas; UN Team; APF Regional Secretariat/scholarship; the Women's Caucus and AVCD self-funding total 48,500 US\$ (in kind) except for Helvetas 4,000 US\$ and IRI partly amount contracted with LDA for organisation of training workshops/meetings before and after the mission to Dili, Timor Leste for strengthening the capability of Lao CSOs on AAPP and ASEAN.

The expenditure was for the air-tickets to and returns from Vientiane to Dili, Timor Leste, accommodations, allowances and registration for participants. Most of expenditure was paid by above donors for participants directly (see overview donor in the above table, donor 2.2).

In addition, IRI committed and agreed to continue to support for Lao CSOs to strengthen their capacities and their participation the APF2017 in the Philippines for at least 5 new Lao CSO's delegates (see future plan activities below)

#### **IV. Future plan for follow up activities**

- With support fund from IRI, Learning Development Association (LDA) and the Lao APF Secretariat to facilitate relevant trainings and workshops to strengthen the capacity of Lao CSOs to actively engage with regional and international bodies at APF2017
- Leading up to the 2017 APF, LDA will organize a planning workshop to design a strategic plan for Lao CSO participation in the APF 2017. The representatives who attended the APF2016 will be invited to the workshop, as well as 5 new Lao CSO representatives, who will attend the upcoming APF2017 in the Philippines with IRI support. We will additionally invite local or regional ASEAN CSO leaders/experts to the workshop, who will help identify and develop a plan to address regional issue areas for Lao CSOs.
- Conduct a special training workshop on development of Lao CSO Speakers and Penalists for their readiness to participate and speak at the APF2017 and other ASEAN CSOs events
  - Invite local or peer regional experiences CSO's speakers to come to Laos for exchange and coaching Lao CSO's speakers and to design the road mapping for participation the APF 2017 in Philippines in consultations with relevant stakeholders
  - Participants who are interested to be a speaker/presenter will be invited for exchange and coaching including Lao APF Committee

These strategy workshops provide a venue for Lao CSOs/NPAs and CBOs to be more involved in the APF process and regional civil society mechanisms. The purpose of these ongoing workshops is to provide a safe space for Lao CSOs to convene and discuss ways to enhance their involvement in APF events.

- Report and disseminate of the APF2016's achievements/outcomes and lessons learnt to relevant partners (MOHA, MOFA, INGOs/donors) and other NPAs who weren't attend this APF in order for them to pass to their target communities

- Plan for fundraising in advance to support the participation of Lao CSO representatives to the ACSC/APF2017 in the Philippines
- Review the organizational structure of Lao APF NOC as appropriated

## **V. Annexes**

Annex 1: ACSC/APF2016 – CSO Joint Statement

Annex 2: Agenda ACSC/APF2016 in Timor Leste

Annex 3: Maydom’s opening speech and comments

Annex 4: List of Lao CSO participants

Annex 5: Photo

Annex 6: Action plan of Lao CSO for ACSC/APF2017

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