

Laos, Thailand deepen cooperation

Laos and Thailand have agreed to deepen bilateral cooperation in various fields, with Thailand pledging support for regional connectivity and infrastructure development in Laos.



The deals were reached in bilateral talks between Lao Prime Minister Thongsing Thammavong and his Thai counterpart Ms. Yingluck Shinawatra.

Mr. Thongsing visited Thailand from May 31- June 2 to attend the World Economic Forum on East Asia 2012 and afterwards made an official visit in response to an invitation from Ms. Yingluck.

Thailand has agreed to provide assistance in constructing roads from town centers in Laos to connect to Lao-Thai checkpoints in preparation for upgrading temporary checkpoints to international ones. Loan agreements were also signed to have provided financial assistance to fund two projects in Laos.

The first loan of more than 182.3 billion kip (718 million baht) will fund the construction of a 33km road, that will be built from Phudu checkpoint in Thailand's Uttaradit province to Paklai district in Xayaboury province, Laos and second loan of more than 46.7 billion kip (184 million Thai baht) will be used for the second phase of development of Pakxe Airport in Champassak province.

Thailand would consider support for a feasibility study of the construction of the fifth Laos-Thailand Friendship Bridge that would link Laos's central province of Borikhamxay with Thailand's Bung Kan province. The Lao-Thai joint commission on bilateral cooperation also consider supporting a feasibility study for the construction of another bridge connecting Vientiane and Thailand's Nong Khai province, to be used as a railway. Regional governments are pushing for the realization of the regional rail project to connect China's Kunming to Nong Khai via Laos.

The two premiers agreed to increase cooperation to combat human trafficking and cope with illicit drug smuggling. They would also deepen cooperation to promote security along the Mekong River and bolster greater trading and investment between the two neighbours. In addition, the two leaders touched upon the resumption of talks to pursue the ambition to complete land border demarcation by 2014 and water demarcation by 2016.

Prime Minister Thongsing briefed Thai officials on preparations for Laos' hosting of the 9th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in November, as well as preparations to host the 7th Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting. The Thai premier accepted Mr. Thongsing's invitation to attend the ASEM Summit and pledged to extend further support to Laos both for the effort in hosting the meetings and the development of Laos as a whole.

Lao Embassy in Washington, DC., June 7, 2012.