



Lao PDR receives over \$50 million in World Bank Group support for early childhood education and environment

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The Government of Lao PDR and the World Bank signed today financing agreements for the Early Childhood Education Project and the Protected Area and Wildlife Project. H.E. Mme. Thipphakone Chanthavongsa, Vice Minister of Finance of the Lao PDR, and Mr. Ulrich Zachau, Country Director for the World Bank in Southeast Asia, signed the agreements. Specifically, the new financing commitment includes: US\$28 million from the International Development Association (IDA) for the Early Childhood Education project (a US\$14 million grant and a US\$14 million credit). The project will increase the coverage and improve the quality of early childhood education in disadvantaged communities. US\$23.83 million for the Protected Area and Wildlife Project, which includes a US\$12.5 million credit from IDA, a US\$4.5 million IDA grant, and a US\$6.83 million grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The project aims to strengthen management systems for national protected conservation areas and for enforcement of wildlife laws in Lao PDR. The ceremony today reaffirms the commitment and cooperation between the Government of Lao PDR and the World Bank in supporting Government priorities as outlined in our National Socio-Economic Development Plan. The two projects will contribute to improving environmental and social outcomes by enhancing the quality of the environmental conservation management framework and early childhood education, said H.E. Mme. Thipphakone Chanthavongsa, Vice Minister of Finance of the Lao PDR. The Early Childhood Education Project and the Protected Area and Wildlife Project form a critical part of the World Bank Group's Country Partnership Strategy 2012-2016 with Lao PDR, which aims to improve sustainable natural resource management, inclusive development, public sector management, and competitiveness and connectivity, by supporting policies and institutional reforms. Improving the quality of education and strengthening the environmental management system are vital for the sustainable and inclusive development of Lao PDR, said Mr. Ulrich Zachau, Country Director for the World Bank to Southeast Asia. "We aim to deepen our commitment to support the Government of Lao PDR's agenda on education development and environmental conservation and protection - these are essential investments for the future of Lao PDR." The World Bank
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