

Laos and China enhance cooperation



President Choummaly Sayasone (left) greets Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao yesterday at the Presidential Palace during his working visit to Laos .

A high -ranking delegation from China led by Prime Minister Wen Jiabao arrived in Vientiane on Saturday for an official visit aimed at enhancing cooperation with Laos.

The visit of Mr Wen Jiabao was in response to an invitation from his Lao counterpart, Mr Bouasone Bouphavanh.

An official welcoming ceremony took place yesterday at the National Assembly's esplanade, where Mr Wen Jiabao inspected the guard of honour, accompanied by Mr Bouasone.

Bilateral talks between both sides later took place at the Prime Minister's Office.

Following the meeting, the two sides signed seven agreements, including economic development for which the Chinese government provided grant assistance of 50 million yuan to Laos, a 50-million yuan low-interest loan, a grant from China to renovate the national Nateuy-Oudomxay road, a credit loan to purchase a Z9 helicopters, an optical fibre project, and a coal-powered electricity in Xayaboury province.

At the bilateral talks, the two prime ministers said how much they valued the long-standing bilateral friendly relationship and comprehensive cooperation between their two Parties, governments and peoples.

Prime Minister Bouasone noted this was the third time Mr Wen Jiabao had paid an official visit to Laos as Chinese Prime Minister, which marked the new era of enhanced cooperation between the two countries.

The two sides discussed future cooperation and regional and international issues of mutual interest.

Mr Bouasone reconfirmed the support of the Lao government for the One-China policy as well as support for the national unity of the Chinese people through amicable methods.

Both sides reached consensus in fostering economic, trade and investment cooperation based on their mutual interests by focusing on priority sectors such as agriculture and forestry, mining and hydropower.

They agreed to cooperate in national defence and security, foreign affairs, culture, human resource development, public health, tourism and sport.

The two sides placed a high value on the state visit to Laos by Chinese President Hu Jintao in 2006, which was significant in enhancing the friendly relations and comprehensive cooperation of the two countries.

They also confirmed the importance of exchange visits by high-ranking delegations.

Mr Bouasone wholeheartedly thanked the Chinese Communist Party, government and people for their invaluable assistance in the national construction and development of Laos.

He congratulated his counterpart on his reappointment as Prime Minister of China.

During his stay in Laos, Mr Wen Jiabao called on President Choummaly Sayasone at the Presidential Palace. President Choummaly welcomed Mr Wen Jiabao and through him congratulated his counterpart, Mr Hu Jintao, on his reelection as president of China.

Mr Wen Jiabao is attending the Third Greater Mekong Subregion Summit taking place in Vientiane from March 30-31.