

WORLD WETLANDS DAY IN VIENTIANE, LAO PDR

Date: 2nd February 2009

Venue: National University of Laos

Lao PDR government representatives, teachers and students, and civil society participants came together with IUCN Lao PDR at the National University of Laos (NUoL) to celebrate World Wetlands Day.

Participants were treated to dance and song performances from university and school students, and learnt about the value of wetlands and wetland resources in Lao PDR and internationally

The day's activities were ably organised and hosted by NUoL students, including:

- Speeches by government and civil society representatives
- A quiz about wetlands for students
- A play about conflict over wetland resources (Photo 1)
- Children's activities such as the WWD origami frog and filling in the frog cartoon (Photos 2 and 3).

The theme of this year's event was "Upstream-downstream: wetlands connect us all", emphasising that water is the critical element upon which all life depends, and it is wetlands – rivers, lakes, marshes, floodplains – that capture, store and transport water for all of us.

The conservation and sustainable use of Lao PDR's wetlands is an issue of particular importance for the country at the moment, with the Government currently considering adoption of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

Quote from Ms Latsamay Sylavong, Country Representative of IUCN Lao PDR

"The water resources, as well as the diversity of plants, animals and fish found in Lao PDR's wetlands are vital for the Lao people in many ways, from supporting livelihoods to attracting tourists to maintaining cultural heritage. I am also very happy that this year's theme stresses that what happens in rivers and wetlands outside of Lao PDR can affect us, and what we do in our country affects people downstream".



World Wetlands Day at the National University of Laos



Performing a World Wetlands Day play



Kids' activities – enjoying the cartoon



Constructing frogs and making them jump