

LAOS to host ASEAN Rubber Conference 2009

Vientiane, Laos - December 9, 2008. Almost 700 rubber industry experts and policy makers from 25 countries will meet in Vientiane next year at the Asean Rubber Conference.



Dr Bounthong Bouahom (right) exchanges documents with Mr Paul Yeo to certify that Laos will host the fifth Asean Rubber Conference in 2009.

Officials from Asean member countries, the United States, Europe and Asia will meet to discuss issues concerning the world's natural rubber demand and supply trends, sustainable and profitable strategies for natural rubber, development of small rubber enterprises and technology to meet global competitiveness, and the price outlook for 2009 and 2010.

A memorandum of agreement for Laos to host the conference was signed yesterday in Vientiane between Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry Office Head, Dr Bounthong Bouahom, and organising chairman of the 2009 Asean Rubber Conference, Mr Paul Yeo.

The event will run from June 18 to 20 under the theme 'Technology, innovation and market driven strategies: keys to global development of the natural rubber industry'.

The conference aims to provide a forum for discussions on rubber production in the Asean region, with a view to identifying mechanisms for the production and supply of rubber to regional and global markets.

According to a statement from the Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Mr Sitaheng Latsaphon, Laos has experienced a boom in rubber plantations over the past few years supported by market demand for latex and investor interest from neighbouring countries. "Amidst this rapid increase in rubber plantations, the government strives to ensure that current interest is channelled to maximise potential returns for the national economy, as well as social and environmental protection," he said.

He said the meeting would have a strong impact on local rubber enterprises and policy makers who were championing the cause of the rubber industry as a vital source of income for farmers.

Mr Sitaheng said Laos was an ideal investment location for companies involved in the rubber industry because there were many attractive incentives to encourage foreign investment.

The conference will provide an opportunity for rubber producers and investors in Laos to meet with buyers from many countries and expand their export markets.

Participants will get access to the latest research findings and developments on new high yielding rubber varieties and measures to prevent diseases that affect rubber trees.

Farmers and investors involved in the rubber industry in other countries establish groups or associations to maximise profits and create networks for future business collaborations.

Dr Bounthong said this was a good model for Laos and pledged his ministry would encourage the industry to follow this system to ensure rubber plantations were beneficial to local people and investors alike.