**World Bank and Government Meeting**

**Achievement of PRF II and Progress of PRF III**

**by: HATTHACHAN PHIMPHANTHAVONG**

May 25, 2016, an official meeting between World Bank and the Government of Laos was organized at the Prime Minister’s Office. Mr. Somsanith Sounyalath, vice minister, Vice Chairman of NCRDPE, on behalf of the Government of Lao PDR expressed his deepest appreciation and acknowledgement to the World Bank for all supports both financial and technical support to fulfill the implementation of PRF as well as NCRDFE, especially on poverty mapping which is a mechanism for targeting for rural development and poverty eradication. Moreover, he also mentioned about relocation of NCRDPE to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest which would be a good opportunity to strengthen the coordination of all efforts to fight rural poverty under leadership of the new minister, and it is a good movement that World Bank still continues to retain a good cooperation in future. In addition, Mr. Somsanith also reported about the progress of PRF III preparation, on 28 April 2016, the negotiation between the Government and Donors had been conducted (waiting for the approval from the Government and World Bank), Project Operation Manual has been revised and sent to World Bank for comment.

Ms. Sally Burmingham, the World Bank Country Manager (in Laos) expressed her thanks to the Government for a good cooperation and strong support for the implementation of PRF, which contributed to the achievement of its development objective. To ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of rural development in future, she very concerned about partnership cooperation for rural development that should follow the same road map or development plan. It is suggested that the Government should develop a very good plan and strategy then call for an official meeting to meet agreement between the Government and development partnerships. She also emphasized that developing comprehensive rural development strategy is a very important mechanism that can be used to monitor the performance progress of rural development in Laos. During this meeting, Shally also informed that the World Bank already approved the implementation of PRF III budget of 30 million USD while the Government also confirmed to contribute 6 million USD for the three-year period of PRFIII.

To conclude this meaningful meeting, the NRDPE and World Bank have agreed to retain a good cooperation and support, the rural development of Laos still needs a strong support from the World Bank in terms of financial and technical aspects, at the same time, the World Bank also affirm to continue a good cooperation and will look forward to continuing to work with NRDPE under MAF to support the government strategy on rural development.