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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Laos and U.S.-based International NGO Renew  
Commitment to Address Agent Orange Legacy**

**Vientiane, Laos (October 27, 2023)** – The government of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and War Legacies Project (WLP) have come together to address the enduring effects of Agent Orange on human health in Laos.

The signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) marks the continuation of a 5-year-old partnership that aims to resume surveying and addressing the human health impacts of Agent Orange, while also providing critical assistance to those living with an illness associated with exposure to this toxic herbicide. Through this partnership, WLP will continue their survey, which identified, between 2018 and 2021, over 500 people with birth defects and disabilities associated with Agent Orange in 126 villages in southeastern Laos—findings that resulted in the U.S. Congressional allocation of \$3 million USD to support health and rehabilitation programs in Laos for fiscal years 2022 and 2023.

"We are honored to partner with the Government of Laos in this noble endeavor," says Susan Hammond, Executive Director of WLP. "We aim to bring hope to the afflicted, redress the errors of the past, and be part of a movement to create a healthier, more sustainable future for the people of Laos."

**Historical Background**

The Secret War in Laos, which took place during the U.S. war in Vietnam, saw the extensive aerial spraying of Agent Orange over vast areas of southeastern Laos. Agent Orange was one of many color-coded chemical herbicides contaminated with Dioxin, and it was used to defoliate the verdant tropical-agricultural landscape that provided cover along the former Ho Chi Minh trail and subsistence for counterinsurgency forces. It is estimated that, between 1964 and 1970, approximately 1.6 million liters of Agent Orange and other herbicides were sprayed on Laos.

This partnership between the government of Laos—through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and National Regulatory Authority for UXO and Mine Action Sector in the Lao PDR—and WLP recognizes the urgent need to understand and mitigate the human health consequences of Agent Orange in Laos.

**Key Objectives of the Partnership**

1. **Comprehensive and Systematic Surveys:** WLP will conduct extensive surveys in areas previously sprayed with Agent Orange and identify individuals living with a birth defect or malady associated with exposure to the herbicide, providing a first-ever account of the scope of the problem in post-war Laos.
2. **Health Support and Rehabilitation:** Surveying efforts will ensure that identified affected individuals in the 119 villages of 3 Lao districts—the Nong, Vilabouly, and Ta Oey districts of Savannakhet and Salavan provinces—receive the medical care and support they need. This includes medical treatment, vocational training, transportation services, and more.
3. **Public Awareness and Education:** WLP will launch several public awareness and education campaigns and create marketing collateral, including flyers and other brochures, to communicate the survey's findings and help promote better understanding about the public health implications of Agent Orange in Laos and how those impacted can access assistance and services.

The signing of the MoU represents a renewed commitment to heal war's many wounds and provide hope to the people of Laos. Together, the Government of Laos and War Legacies Project will shed a needed light on this tragic chapter in history and work to bring an end to the legacy of Agent Orange.

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