



LAOS



GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

President BOUNNYANG Vorachit

Head of Government

Prime Minister THONGLOUN Sisoulit

Government Type

communist state

Capital

Vientiane (Viangchan)

Legislature

unicameral National Assembly or Sapha Heng Xat (149 seats; 5-year terms)

Judiciary

People's Supreme Court (consists of the court president and organized into criminal, civil, administrative, commercial, family, and juvenile chambers, each with a vice president and several judges)

Ambassador to US

Ambassador MAI Xaignavong

US Ambassador

Ambassador Rena BITTER

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 236,800 sq km

Land: 230,800 sq km

Water: 6,000 sq km

Climate

tropical monsoon; rainy season (May to November); dry season (December to April)

Natural Resources

timber, hydropower, gypsum, tin, gold, gemstones

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

began decentralizing control of the economy and encouraging private enterprise in 1986 and has experienced strong growth—more than 7% annually—over the past decade; heavily dependent on capital-intensive natural resource exports; suffers from underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly in rural areas

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity)

\$49.34 billion (2017 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity)

\$7,400 (2017 est.)

Exports

\$3.65 billion (2018 est.)

partners: Thailand 42.6%, China 28.7%, Vietnam 10.4%, India 4.4% (2017 est.)

Imports

\$4.98 billion (2017 est.)

partners: Thailand 59.1%, China 21.5%, Vietnam 9.8% (2017 est.)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

7.2 million (July 2018 est.)

Population Growth

1.48% (2018 est.)

Ethnicity

Lao 53.2%, Khmou 11%, Hmong 9.2%, Phouthay 3.4%, Tai 3.1%, Makong 2.5%, Katong 2.2%, Lue 2%, Akha 1.8%, other 11.6% (2015 est.)

Language

Lao (official), French, English, various ethnic languages

Religion

Buddhist 64.7%, Christian 1.7%, none 31.4%, other/not stated 2.1% (2015 est.)

Urbanization

urban population: 35.6% of total population (2019)

rate of urbanization: 3.28% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

Literacy

84.7% (2015)

