

Movement towards mutual co-operation gives real chance

Belarus keen to expand co-operation with Laos

By Vasily Kharitonov

Laos President Choummaly Sayasone's official visit to Belarus has brought new aspects of collaboration between our two states. Dynamically developing South East Asia is becoming ever more attractive to investors and trade partners and Laos is no exception; its annual growth rates exceed 10 per cent. Moreover, Laos boasts major deposits of gold, copper and potash ore. Our Asian partner is interested in Belarus' industrial and agricultural potential, being keen to buy our machinery, food products and medications.

"Belarusian companies and the Belarusian economy as a whole have a strong interest in creating presence in Laos," noted the Head of the Belarusian state. "We strongly hope that we can work together, through our joint ventures in Laos, to trade freely across this vast region."

The Belarusian President added that Laos is one of the richest countries for mineral resources. "We're ready to assist you in investigating underground and, if there's interest, we can help you to extract your mineral deposits," said Mr. Lukashenko.

Belarus is ready to deliver equipment to Laos, with particular application to the development of agriculture. As far as military and technical co-operation is concerned, Belarus can secure supplies and provide repair services for old Soviet equipment remaining in Laos.

According to Mr. Sayasone, negotiations focused on the expansion of interaction in the trade-economic sphere, as well as activating contacts between local au-



President of Laos Choummaly Sayasone visited Minsk Automobile Works JSC

thorities, and mutual support within the international arena and between our parliaments.

Belarus and Laos signed a treaty on friendly relations and co-operation, in addition to inter-governmental agreements: on visa-free trips for holders of diplomatic and service passports; on the promotion and mutual protection of investments; on avoiding double taxation and preventing income tax evasion; and on sci-tech and educational co-operation.

In their joint statement, the presidents underlined their common approach to-

wards global problems, while speaking in favour of forming a fair international order. Moreover, they expressed their refusal to accept any attempt to interfere in the internal affairs of sovereign states. Laos also supports Belarus' aspiration to join the World Trade Organisation.

The President of Laos made his first official visit to our country twenty years ago yet our trade turnover remains modest, although next year marks the 20th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations. Negotiations have revealed several points of coincidence, with our two

sides demonstrating political will to develop business interaction: the determining factor in implementing joint projects in various spheres. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the treaty should inspire mutual collaboration across all areas — from humanitarian to political. His Laotian colleague agreed.

The treaty covers science and education, military-technical co-operation and industrial liaisons. Moreover, Belarus is ready to supply Laos with various technologies and is keen to set up joint ventures.

Naturally, the training

of experts is also essential, as Mr. Lukashenko noted, explaining, "Projects won't be implemented if you lack enough specialists. You're right to pay serious attention to training personnel in the sphere of humanitarian collaboration. Belarus will provide any assistance in training military and civil specialists."

Partnerships are likely to develop diversely, with Belarus hoping for constructive and efficient co-operation. Mr. Lukashenko added, "The structure of our economies is complementary, creating a good basis for business co-

operation. Although we have some experience in certain areas of co-operation, we are early in our journey and have much to achieve in moving our relations to the highest level — as we enjoy with the states neighbouring Laos. Belarus is determined to do all it can to promote bilateral trade and intensify political and diplomatic contacts."

Mr. Sayasone expressed confidence in our future relations, saying, "We enjoyed substantial talks and shared our opinions. The meeting took place in a friendly atmosphere and yielded good fruit. In future, we must enhance co-operation between our two countries." He also invited Mr. Lukashenko to make an official visit to Laos.

The world draws ever closer, with distance becoming less of a barrier to liaisons in this age of globalisation. Distances can be covered quickly while information technologies completely remove borders. States separated by thousands of kilometres are now developing mutually beneficial collaboration.

The official visit of the Laos delegation, headed by President Choummaly Sayasone, was rich in events. Paths of inter-Parliamentary co-operation were discussed and Mr. Sayasone visited the Minsk Automobile Works, seeing a display of freight and passenger vehicles. He watched the main car assembly production line, which produces vehicles already purchased by Vietnam. The President of Laos also visited the Dzerzhinsky industrial complex and participated in the opening ceremony of State Flag Square, watching a parade in honour of Independence Day.

High-level relations enter new stage of interaction

By Mikhail Svetlov

Belarus and Turkey aim at constructive political dialogue

The Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives of Belarus, Viktor Guminsky, has met the Chairman of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Cemil Çiçek. The meeting took place during the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly annual session, in Istanbul.

At the meeting attended

by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Turkey, H.E. Mr. Valery Kolesnik, the parties discussed Belarus-Turkey bilateral co-operation, supporting constructive political dialogue and the strengthening of trade-economic and investment relations.

The Head of the Turkish Parliament said that Belarus-Turkey partnership has reached a very high level. He feels confident that the

current visit by Belarusian MPs to Turkey will promote further strengthening of relations between our two states. Moreover, both sides agree that prompt ratification of inter-governmental agreements between Belarus and Turkey are necessary to ensure mutual cancellation of visas. Mr. Guminsky repeated an invitation to the Chairman of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey to visit Belarus, at any time convenient.

Much achieved together

By Veniamin Mikheev

Belarus and Germany are developing dynamic all-round co-operation, underlines Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Germany, H.E. Mr. Andrei Giro, at solemn reception in Berlin, organised by Belarusian diplomatic mission in honour of Belarus' Independence Day.

Mr. Giro noted the long-term assistance provided by German organisations in overcoming the circumstances of the Chernobyl disaster and expressed hope for further development of contacts

between the twin cities of Belarus and Germany, alongside educational and cultural collaboration. The Ambassador extended an invitation to guests at the reception to visit Belarus for the 2014 IIHF World Championship.

During the reception, a photo exhibition was launched and guests were able to view materials about the economic and tourism potential of Belarus.

Deputy Prime Minister Helmuth Markov attended, as did the Finance Minister of the Federal State of Brandenburg, as well as officials from the former German Demo-

cratic Republic, Bundestag deputies, and officials from the Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany and other ministries and agencies. Representatives of Berlin City Hall and other district administrations took part, alongside CIS and EU member state ambassadors, military attaches from diplomatic missions accredited in Berlin, and representatives of the Belarusian diaspora. They were joined by members of business, scientific and cultural communities, those from humanitarian initiatives and twin city and media representatives.