

Lao staff learn trade skills

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THE Australian and Singaporean Ambassadors yesterday opened a five-day course at the Lao-Singapore Training Centre, to cover international trade law, market access for agricultural and industrial products and WTO negotiations.

Lao staff from various departments and ministries, including the Prime Minister's Office, are attending the course, which is jointly sponsored by Singapore's Foreign Ministry and AusAID (Australian Agency for

International Development) as part of the Singapore-Australia Third Country Training Programme (TCTP).

"This is the first such course in Laos under the Singapore-Australia Trilateral Cooperation Programme," said a Singapore Embassy press release.

The TCTP is part of the Singapore Cooperation Programme (SCP) offering technical assistance for developing countries. The press release said that the SCP believed that human resource development was basic in economic and social progress.

"These joint partnerships

allow Singapore and Australia to pool their expertise and resources to provide customised training to meet the specific needs of the Lao PDR," said Singapore Ambassador Karen Tan at the opening ceremony. This first programme, she added, demonstrates the strong commitment of both countries to helping Laos develop its human resources, she added.

Australian Ambassador Alistair Maclean said, "We are proud to participate in this programme. It is especially pleasing that Australia and Singapore are working together with Laos in serving our common interests."

Singapore's Foreign Ministry and AusAID will continue to explore appropriate TCTP programmes for Lao officials in the near future, said the press release.

The course is being led by Singapore Foreign Ministry consultant for WTO and Trade Issues Ms Margaret Liang and former Counsellor in the WTO Secretariat's Council and Trade Negotiations Division Peter Pederson.

Australian and Singaporean Ambassadors at Vientiane's Lao-Singapore Training Centre.

