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LAO AMBASSADOR TO OPEN LAO CULTURAL PROGRAM WITH PRINCE SOMSANITH AT WORLD BANK HEADQUARTERS

Sharon Fine Gallery To Host Reception in Bethesda, Maryland

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INVITATION TO ATTEND/COVER: Lao Cultural Show co-sponsored by the World Bank, International Finance Corp., Asian American Forum, and Asia Society Washington Center Thursday, March 30, 1:00-2:00 p.m.

International Finance Corporation (IFC) Auditorium,
2121 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, D.C.

The Lao Heritage Foundation (LHF) is proud to present a Promotion of Lao Culture Show at the IFC Auditorium in Washington, D.C. The event will feature Lao traditional dancing and music, arts and crafts, and textiles from various ethnic groups of Laos. The Lao Heritage Foundation (www.laoheritagefoundation.org) was incorporated in 2004 with the mission of preserving, promoting, and advancing all aspects of Lao culture.

This event will showcase the collaborative efforts of Lao-Americans, young and old, to preserve their culture. The Ambassador of Laos to the United States, Phanthong Phommahaxay, will open the event; his remarks will be followed by traditional dancing performed by the Lao American Women Association. A quartet of traditional Lao violins will also perform, led by Thongtanh Souvannapanh, one of the last traditional Lao music masters in the Washington, D.C. area. Mr. Souvannapanh performed in the classical orchestra at the royal palace of Luang Prabang, Laos, before he immigrated to the United States of America in 1965.

A fashion show will then highlight the ethnic diversity of Laos, with apparel on loan from the private collection of Prince Nithakhong Somsanith, artist and researcher of ethnic tribes in the Mekong River Valley. Prince Somsanith, a French citizen and resident since 1985, is one of the last gold-thread embroiderers from the royal court. He has worked tirelessly to promote and preserve Lao culture in Laos and abroad. He is the primary cultural advisor to LHF and has worked with UNESCO in its restoration efforts in Luang Prabang, a World Heritage site. He continues to exhibit his artwork and collection of Lao artifacts in Europe, Laos, and the United States. He will be at the San Francisco Museum of Art for the month of April 2006 and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 2007.

A reception with Prince Nithakhong Somsanith will follow at the Sharon Fine Gallery, 5504 Cornish Road, Bethesda, MD, from 7-9pm. Selected pieces of Prince Somsanith's painting and embroidery will be on sale to raise funds to support LHF's programming. The selected pieces will be available at the Sharon Fine Gallery from March 30th to April 2nd.

Please RSVP at: <http://www.laoheritagefoundation.org/rsvp/>